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CANONICAL PSEUDONYMITY
EXEMPLARITY IN THE CATHOLIC
EPISTLE COLLECTION

Kelsie Gayle Rodenbiker

Submitted in fulfillment of the degree of Doctor of Philosophy
The Faculty of Arts and Humanities
The Department of Theology and Religion
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ABSTRACT

Canonical Pseudonymity: Exemplarity in the Catholic Epistle Collection

Kelsie Gayle Rodenbiker

In the Catholic Epistles – James, 1–2 Peter, 1–3 John, and Jude – canonicity and exemplarity are intertwined. In part one of this thesis, I address the fraught role of the Catholic collection in the formation of the New Testament. Key antecedents prepared the ground for a sevenfold Catholic collection: the Muratorian fragment, the early manuscript tradition, and ancient references to “catholic epistles.” The first unambiguous designation of seven Catholic letters comes courtesy of Eusebius, but he relegates James, 2 Peter, 2 and 3 John, and Jude to a group of ἀντιλεγόμενα, and this liminal status continues beyond the fourth century. The canonical process was not an inevitable plod toward a teleological end resulting in the now-familiar New Testament, and it is the perceived pseudonymity of the majority of the Catholic Epistles that throws a wrench in the gears. In part two, I show that pseudonymity is a facet of exemplarity, a rhetorical strategy involving the accumulation of tradition around characters of prestige. Pseudonymous exemplarity is at work in the apostolic author portraits of James, Peter, John, and Jude, while illustrative exemplarity is shown by positive and negative exemplars from the scriptural past. These exempla not only demonstrate the composite accumulation of tradition used in their characterization, they also reveal links to now-canonical and paracanonical material, beyond an intracanonial conception of “the New Testament use of the Old Testament.” Because of the diverse intertraditionality represented by the author portraits and illustrative scriptural exempla, there remains a sense of porousness that cannot be overcome by closure—even a fixed canonical boundary cannot seal off the permeability that results from the tethers between texts that become, for some, “canonical” and those that do not. Exemplarity in the Catholic Epistle collection is therefore inherently tied to its canonical reception.

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ABBREVIATIONS

All abbreviations of ancient literature, academic journals, and monograph series follow the style indicated in *SBL Handbook of Style: For Biblical Studies and Related Disciplines*, Second ed. (Atlanta, GA: Society of Biblical Literature, 2014).

Both now-canonical texts, which are traditionally not italicized, and noncanonical texts are italicized, except in the case of original non-italics in quotations or titles. This is in order to emphasize that there is no inherent difference between such texts.

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INTRODUCTION

There was apparently no figure of any serious caliber in early Christianity who did not leave a wake of pseudepigraphical tradition behind them; the practice of Christian pseudepigraphy and pseudonymous attribution was widespread.¹ There also existed in the ancient church a serious concern over the authenticity of apostolic literature being considered for inclusion among an increasingly authoritative New Testament collection. In the late second or early third century, Bishop Serapion of Antioch, writing to a community in Rhossus regarding a supposed *Gospel of Peter*, declared that “we accept both Peter and the other apostles as if they were Christ, but as people of experience [ἔμπειροι] we reject the writings falsely ascribed to them [τὰ ὀνόματι αὐτῶν ψευδεπίγραφα], knowing that such things we did not receive [οὐ παρελάμβομεν] (*Hist. eccl.* 6.12.3).² In the fourth century, Eusebius contended that spurious writings “brought forward by heretics in the names of the apostles” should be utterly rejected as detestable and ungodly (*Hist. eccl.* 3.25.6–7), while Athanasius also declared that pseudepigraphal literature is a tool of heretics (*Epist. fest.* 39.21). How, then, did a collection of “apostolic” letters – the Catholic Epistles – whose authorial authenticity was widely questioned in an ancient context come to be included among the New Testament collection?³

The “canonical” history of the Catholic Epistle collection was both contingent upon and troubled by pseudonymity. While *1 Peter* and *1 John* enjoyed early and almost ubiquitous acceptance, the ancient concern over the perceived pseudonymity of *James*, *2 Peter*, *2* and *3 John*, and *Jude* prevented the unhesitating inclusion of all seven Catholic letters in an emerging New Testament collection. Yet, their apostolic association—despite earlier doubts about

¹ Hamman, “Pseudepigrapha,” 723. There are, of course, many minor figures represented in pseudepigraphical tradition, as well, including Jude. Short titles are used in the notes, and full bibliographic details can be found in the final bibliography.

² Translation from Watson, see *Gospel Writing*, 447–48.

³ As Gamble puts it, “it was in connection with the contents of this collection that the issue of authenticity most exercised the early church,” “Pseudonymity,” 343.

authenticity—also contributes to the collection’s acceptance, at least in the West, by the end of the fourth century. The apostolic or quasi-apostolic authorial portraits of James, Peter, John, and Jude therefore play a key role in the reception of the Catholic Epistle collection. Reading the Catholic Epistles as a unit, one glimpses an aspect of the interior connective tissue of the Catholic collection: the letters together reveal a web of intertraditional ties in their substantial use of scriptural exempla, such as Abraham, Elijah, Balaam, or Sodom and Gomorrah.⁴ Pseudonymity and the use of illustrative scriptural exempla can be considered two facets of exemplarity, a rhetorical strategy involving the use of either positive or negative exemplars as models of appropriate or inappropriate conduct or to fulfill some persuasive goal. There is an analogy between an author’s use of exemplary figures from the scriptural past, on the one hand, and the use of an authorial pseudonym on the other, though these remain distinct forms of exemplarity. In both cases, key, stable elements of tradition underwrite the use of a figure whose characterization also remains malleable. That is, for both the authorial portraits of the Catholic Epistles and their use of illustrative exempla, tradition is strategically pliable. There is a tension between the fact that both the authorial pseudonyms and the scriptural examples are established figures from tradition and that they can be reshaped for the rhetorical purposes of the author. The characterization of both positive and negative exempla throughout the Catholic Epistles also reveals a broad range of intertraditional tethers, casting doubt on the illusion of straightforwardly intracanonical intertextuality by maintaining a porousness between literature now considered “canonical” and “paracanonical.” The pseudonymous and illustrative exemplarity of the Catholic Epistles therefore both contribute to the liminality of the Catholic Epistle collection in the history of the New Testament canon.

⁴ “Intertraditional” is a broader term than intertextual, combining both textual and other potential sources of tradition, so I use this term throughout.

1. PSEUDONYMITY AND CANONICITY

If imitation is said to be the sincerest form of flattery, perhaps one might also say that pseudepigraphy is the sincerest form of veneration. Eva Mroczek writes of the practice of pseudonymous attribution that, “rather than texts in search of authors, we sometimes have something like the opposite—characters in search of stories. That is, linking texts and figures was sometimes less about filling a bibliographic gap than about expanding lore about a popular cultural figure.”⁵ This project proposes an extension to Mroczek’s apt description of pseudepigraphy in the context of Jewish literature—that in a Christian context there are also *apostles in search of traditions*. In some cases, apostolic figures are linked to previously anonymous or semi-anonymous texts (as in the case of *1 John*, which is anonymous, and *2* and *3 John*, which are attributed to “the Elder”). But as author figures, regardless of the historical authenticity of the texts ascribed to them, they also utilize and extend existing tradition tied to their names, such that further generative apostolic tradition accumulates around key figures. The Catholic Epistles represent seven such texts contributing to the authorial portraits of the apostolic figures of James, Peter, John, and Jude.

Hindy Najman’s concepts of textual vitality and “discourse tied to a founder” also come into play here. The notion of scriptural vitality accentuates the generative nature of tradition and its accumulation: texts benefit from association to prestigious figures, while the continued production of literature tied to these figures enhances their reputations.⁶ Furthermore, in an essay on “Exemplarity and its Discontents,” Najman and Reinhardt identify exempla both as sage-like figures employed as uniquely knowledgeable narrators (or pseudonyms) and as ideal figures characterized by a text.⁷ That is, both the authors of a text and the employment of exemplary figures therein can be considered forms of exemplarity—and the generativity and

⁵ Mroczek, *The Literary Imagination in Jewish Antiquity*, 16.

⁶ Najman, “The Vitality of Scripture,” 517.

⁷ Najman and Reinhardt, “Exemplarity and Its Discontents,” 14; Najman and Peirano, “Pseudepigraphy,” 18.

accumulation of tradition applies both to apostolic author construction and to the use of illustrative scriptural exempla. Therefore, rather than referring to “Apostolic Discourse,” following Najman’s use of “Mosaic Discourse”⁸ to identify tradition surrounding Moses as the author of the Pentateuch, I extend the notion of discourse tied to a founder in order to encompass not only its contribution to authorial attribution and character development in apostolic tradition, but also the use of scriptural exempla within the Catholic Epistles. Pseudonymity and the illustrative use of exempla both represent the accumulation of tradition orbiting a key figure from the past as its gravitational center.

A brief word is necessary about my use of the terms pseudepigraphy and pseudonymity.⁹ Pseudepigraphy implies the active writing of a letter using a pseudonym (such as in the cases of *James*, *1* and *2 Peter*, and *Jude*). Pseudonymity can refer both to the use of a pseudonym and to the later application of a pseudonym to a text, such as in the case of *1*, *2*, and *3 John*, as *1 John* is anonymous and *2* and *3 John* are from a vague author called “the Elder,” though all three epistles have been received in the Johannine tradition. For my purposes, these terms are essentially synonymous in that they indicate that the authors of the Catholic Epistles are not necessarily the historical apostles whose names are affixed to the letters. David Brakke, reviewing Bart Ehrman’s *Forgery and Counterforgery*, helpfully clarifies between forgery, plagiarism, and attribution: “[n]ot all forgeries are pseudonymous, that is, written under a false name” and “[f]orgery is not plagiarism, the presentation of

⁸ See chapter one, “Mosaic Discourse” in Najman, *Seconding Sinai*, 1–40.

⁹ For definitions of pseudepigraphy and pseudonymity, see Peirano, *The Rhetoric of the Roman Fake*, 1–7, 37–39; Clarke, “The Problem of Pseudonymity,” 440–68, esp. 440–42; and Ehrman, “Terms and Taxonomies” in idem, *Forgery and Counterforgery*, 29–67. Ehrman distinguishes between forgery (writing in the name of another) and misattribution (an anonymous text attributed to someone else), 30–31. Further significant works on pseudepigraphy and pseudonymity include: Reed, “Pseudepigraphy, Authorship, and the Reception of ‘the Bible,’” 467–90; Meade, *Pseudonymity and Canon*; Nienhuis, *Not By Paul Alone*, especially chapter three, “Reading James as a Canon-conscious Pseudepigraph”; Gamble, “Pseudonymity and the New Testament Canon,” 333–362; Metzger, “Literary Forgeries and Canonical Pseudepigrapha,” 3–24; Aune, “Reconceptualizing the Phenomenon of Ancient Pseudepigraphy,” 789–824. See also Baum, who claims that “[a]lthough authenticity did not compel canonical acceptance, it was generally regarded as an indispensable requirement for canonicity,” in “Literarische Echtheit als Kanonkriterium in der alten Kirche,” 110, my translation.

someone else's work as one's own; indeed, it is the opposite of plagiarism, the presentation of one's own work as someone else's."¹⁰ Hindy Najman and Irene Peirano have also helpfully problematized “forgery” and “fake” terminology for the inherent lack of genuineness implied by such terms, while still using “pseudo-“ terminology to emphasize the interpretive nature of pseudepigraphy.¹¹ It is key to my thesis that textual apostolicity becomes understood as something more than historical authenticity; yet the ancient concern over authenticity persisted, as we will see. I use the terms pseudepigraphy and pseudonymity in this light, highlighting the role of pseudepigraphy in the ancient *reception* of the Catholic Epistles more so than in their *production*. Regardless of the actual historicity of the Catholic Epistles' authorship, their *perceived* inauthenticity posed a problem for the inclusion as scriptures in the New Testament collection. But this concern abates over time. As we will see in part one, the “canonical” reception of the Catholic Epistles did not go hand-in-hand with apologetic arguments for their historical authenticity, despite their liminal position in the New Testament canon throughout the fourth century and into the fifth. In part two I situate pseudepigraphy under the broader umbrella of exemplarity, along with the use of scriptural exempla, emphasizing that both provide examples of the generativity of tradition orbiting key figures of prestige. Both parts contribute to the liminal canonicity of the Catholic Epistle collection.

The language of canon and canonicity is also fraught territory. The Greek word κανών refers to a rule or standard—a reed or stick against which other lengths are measured. But this literal definition has taken on far more interpretive weight. “Canon” can indicate both an object and a process; a descriptive list (such as a phonebook or dictionary) and a prescriptive norm (such as the Levitical catalogue of lawfully edible and inedible animals); an open collection with the potential to take on new contents or one whose authority in part rests on its definitive

¹⁰ Brakke, “Early Christian Lies and the Lying Liars Who Wrote Them,” 381.

¹¹ Najman and Peirano Garrison, “Pseudepigraphy as an Interpretive Construct”; Najman, *Seconding Sinai*, 1–16, esp. 3 n. 6; Peirano Garrison, *The Rhetoric of the Roman Fake*, 1–35.

closure.¹² I understand the notion of canon as a historical phenomenon encompassing both the process of delineating books to be included in an authoritative collection and the “canonical” object(s) that this process produced. I do not understand canonicity to indicate an inherent “canonical” quality in texts considered authoritative, nor do I consider the Catholic Epistles, or the New Testament collection, to be canonically inevitable.¹³ Jonathan Z. Smith, in a famous essay on the “sacred persistence” of canonicity, argues that canons are by nature limited, but that this closure necessitates the emergence of an interpretive tradition that opens a static collection to hermeneutical ingenuity.¹⁴ This is not to say that such interpretations always remain secondary to the authoritative norm of the “original” canon, but that the usage and interpretation of a canon contributes to its “sacred persistence.” Bringing Smith’s understanding of exegetical ingenuity and sacred persistence into conversation with Najman’s notions of textual vitality and discourse tied to a founder, a tether can be strung from the generative nature of exemplarity as found in both the authorial portraits of the Catholic Epistles and their use of scriptural exempla and exemplarity as a function of canonicity. That is, exemplarity involves the use and production of scriptural tradition, which carries implications for the relationship between exempla and “the canon.” As we will see, the author portraits and the characterization of exemplary figures found throughout the Catholic Epistles often reveal composite use of tradition, combining tradition from the Hebrew Bible and now-paracanonical material. This undermines an intracanonical reading of the Old and New Testaments, necessitating a broader sense of scriptural authority in early Christianity.

¹² For an overview of various notions of the biblical canon, see Barton, *The Spirit and the Letter*, esp. 1–34; Metzger, *The Canon of the New Testament*, esp. 1–8, 289–93; Nienhuis, *Not by Paul Alone*, 5–7; Sheppard, “Canonical Criticism,” 861–66; Thomassen, ed., *Canon and Canonicity*, esp. idem, “Some Notes on the Development of Christian Ideas about a Canon,” 9–28; McDonald, *The Biblical Canon*, esp. 38–68; McDonald and Sanders, eds., *The Canon Debate*, esp. Ulrich, “The Notion and Definition of Canon,” 21–35; Sanders, *From Sacred Story to Sacred Text*, esp. 9–39; Rine, “Canon Lists Are Not Just Lists,” 809–31.

¹³ For challenges to traditional notions of canonicity and biblical authority as normative, see Brakke, “Canon Formation and Social Conflict” and “Scriptural Practices”; Mrozcek, *The Literary Imagination in Jewish Antiquity*, 3–18, 156–83; Najman, “The Vitality of Scripture”; Klostergaard Petersen, “The Riverrun of Rewriting Scripture.”

¹⁴ Smith, “Sacred Persistence,” 44–52.

As I consider canonicity an historical phenomenon related to textual authority and reception, I also use terms such as “parabiblical” and “paracanonical” in a similar acknowledgement of the closure (for some, such as Athanasius) of scriptural collections and the resulting body of literature that sits outside the boundary of such collections.¹⁵ Parabiblical and paracanonical literature are understood here to be texts that were not included in the now-canonical collection(s), but which inhabit the same narrative world as many of the now-canonical works, whether as commentary or rewriting and/or adding new context, such as *Jubilees*, the *Testament of Abraham*, or the *Testament of Job*. Charlesworth argues that such texts are not anti-canonical and are rather canon-extending¹⁶, but this designation still defines parabiblical literature as secondary to or proceeding from the normative canon. As I mean it here, the term parabiblical is not a derogatory or derivative description but rather one that recognizes the role of creative exegesis in the reception and generation of scripture without making a claim to the primacy of now-canonical texts. I use the term parabiblical in order to recognize *not* that such texts were originally penned with reference to a closed canon of biblical texts, but rather to acknowledge that they are now situated alongside, but not within, the Old or New Testament.¹⁷

2. RECENT APPROACHES TO THE CATHOLIC EPISTLES AS A COLLECTION

The Catholic Epistle collection has been so disregarded by modern scholarship that it has become customary in introductions to comment on their individual and collective neglected status.¹⁸ Deemed “miscellaneous,” “general,” “other,” or even “non-Pauline,” lumped together

¹⁵ For a substantial overview of the term “parabiblical” and related terminology, see Falk, *The Parabiblical Texts*, 1–25. On why “rewritten scripture” is a better term than “rewritten bible,” see Klostergaard Petersen “The Riverrun of Rewriting Scripture,” 475, 479, 484–85.

¹⁶ Charlesworth, “In the Crucible,” 25.

¹⁷ Though it is important to note that parabiblical material often functioned as scripture in some communities.

¹⁸ For just a few examples, see Bauckham, *Relatives*, 134; Davids, *The Letters of 2 Peter and Jude*, 7; Horrell, *1 Peter*, 1; Elliott, “The Rehabilitation of an Exegetical Step-Child,” 243; Nienhuis and Wall, *Reading the Epistles*

with or without *Hebrews*, and often missing the Johannine letters, the Catholic Epistles are “offered up as the leftovers of the New Testament, an optional plate of ‘other writings’ to be consumed, should one desire, after the main courses of Gospel and Paul.”¹⁹ That these seven letters comprise a coherent and historical collection has been widely challenged based on their apparent dissimilarity,²⁰ while modern scholarship has tended either to treat each letter separately or in conjunction with similar literature (e.g. Petrine or Johannine). My purpose here is not to provide a comprehensive history of the compilation and canonization of the Catholic corpus; others have already done so effectively.²¹ Rather, I show that they were indeed considered a collection, preceded by key antecedents, but their compilation into a collection was compromised by the widespread suspicion of pseudonymity. Their role in the formation of the New Testament is less as its crowning feature²² and more as a wrench in the gears.

In contrast to the seven undisputed letters of Paul, all written around 50–60 C.E., the dating of the Catholic Epistles – an issue with significant bearing on their authorship – is still plotted throughout a 150–year period, from the mid first to the late second century. After the mid-to-late first century, the discussion must shift toward pseudepigraphy, though even before this, straightforward authenticity is not a given. I do not make the case here for the pseudepigraphy and pseudonymous attribution of each of the Catholic Epistles as viewed by modern scholarship.²³ Indeed, one cannot be made with absolute certainty. Rather, I focus on

of James, Peter, John and Jude, 5; Lockett, *Introduction to the Catholic Epistles*, 1; Niebuhr and Wall, “The SNTS Seminar on the Catholic Epistles,” 1; Charles, “Polemic and Persuasion,” 81.

¹⁹ Nienhuis and Wall, *Reading the Epistles of James, Peter, John and Jude*, 6–8.

²⁰ E.g., by Kloppenborg, Review of Nienhuis and Wall, *Reading the Epistles of James, Peter, John and Jude*.

²¹ On the Catholic Epistles and the formation of the New Testament, see Grünstäudl, “Die Katholischen Briefe”; Nienhuis, *Not by Paul Alone*, 29–97; Nienhuis and Wall, *Reading the Epistles of James, Peter, John and Jude*, 17–39; Lockett, *Letters from the Pillar Apostles*, 59–90.

²² See Nienhuis and Wall, *Reading the Epistles of James, Peter, John and Jude*, 17 and Gamble: “Since they found inclusion in the canon not individually but precisely as a group, since that collection did not take shape until late in the third century at the earliest, and since that collection came to constitute, along with the gospels and the Pauline letters, one of the three major sub-units of the canon, it is very difficult to speak of a New Testament canon having taken any clear shape, whether in conception or in substance, prior to the appearance of this particular collection, and therefore prior to the fourth century,” “The New Testament Canon: Recent Research and the Status Quaestionis,” 288.

²³ On the likely pseudonymity of *James*, see Allison, *James*, 3–32; Ehrman, *Forgery*, 283–97; Fewster, “Ancient Book Culture and the Literacy of James,” 387–417; Nienhuis, *Not by Paul Alone*, 99–231. For arguments in favor

the *perceived* pseudonymity in an ancient context of all the Catholic Epistles but *1 Peter* and *1 John*, emphasizing how this perception affected their reception as authoritative—or not. Aside from any ongoing modern scholarly disputes over the possible (or likely) pseudepigraphical nature of all seven Catholic Epistles, this thesis takes their pseudonymity for granted while emphasizing their *ancient* reception. That is, I am more interested in Eusebius’s concern, for one, over the authorship of the Catholic Epistles than I am in proving their *actual* pseudepigraphy. Likewise, in describing author traditions surrounding James, Peter, John, and Jude, I am more interested in the accumulation of tradition surrounding these authorial figures. Regardless of the historicity of the authorship of the Catholic Epistles, they contribute to the author portraits of the apostles to whom they are attributed.

The Catholic Epistles are notably absent from the majority of discussions (especially those adjacent to New Testament studies) on the phenomenon of ancient letter collections, in part because collections are typically considered as such according to their attribution rather

of *James*’ authenticity, see Johnson, *The Letter of James*, 121 and *Brother of Jesus*, 37–38; Foster, *Exemplars*, 18–24; Niebuhr, “James in the Minds of the Recipients,” 43–54; Bauckham, *James*, 23–25. On the possibility of a two-stage process in which “real” Jacobean material was compiled into a “letter,” see Painter, “James as the first Catholic Epistle,” 161–81; Foster, *Exemplars*, 24. On the likely pseudonymity of *1 Peter*, see Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 1–2; Doering, “Apostle, Co-Elder, and Witness of Suffering,” 645–81; Ehrman, *Forgery*, 249–50; Meade, *Pseudonymity and Canon*, 161–78; For arguments in favor of *1 Peter*’s authenticity, see Spicq, “La I^{re} Petri et le témoignage évangélique de saint Pierre,” 39; For the possibility of authenticity via an intermediary scribe or secretary partly on the basis of *1 Pet* 5:12, see Selwyn, *The First Epistle of Peter*, 7–17; Davids, *First Peter*, 6 and *2 Peter and Jude*, 128. On the almost certain pseudonymity of *2 Peter*, see Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter*, 158–62; Davids, *2 Peter and Jude*, 136–43; Ehrman, *Forgery*, 260–63; Frey, *The Letter of Jude and the Second Letter of Peter*, 213–24 and “Autorfiktion,” 702–31; Meade, *Pseudonymity and Canon*, 179–86. On attribution and pseudonymity in the Johannine Epistles, of which *1 John* is anonymous but attributed to John and *2* and *3 John* are textually attributed to “the Elder,” see Brown, *The Epistles of John*, 14–35; Dodd, *The Johannine Epistles*, lxvi–lxxi; Leonhardt-Balzer, “Pseudepigraphie und Gemeinde in den Johannesbriefen,” 733–63; Lieu, *The Second and Third Epistles of John*, 52–64; Mendez, “Did the Johannine Community Exist?” 350–74. On the possible pseudonymity of *Jude*, see Ehrman, *Forgery*, 298–301; Frey, *The Letter of Jude and the Second Letter of Peter*, 21–32, “The Epistle of Jude,” 324–26, and “Autorfiktion” 683–702; Grünstäudl, “Die Katholischen Briefe,” 74. On the possibility of *Jude*’s authenticity, see Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter*, 14–16; Painter and deSilva, *James and Jude*, 179–89; Davids finds the evidence inconclusive, *2 Peter and Jude*, 8–23. While it is rare, some hold out for the full authenticity of the whole collection. Most recently, Theo Heckel unequivocally states that all the Catholic Epistles were written prior to the Bar Kochba uprising in 133–35 CE, and that this early dating is a central aspect of their importance for the New Testament canon. On the subject of pseudepigraphy, he notes that in particular *James*, *Jude*, and *1 John* were not written later and as pseudepigraphs, but rather published “as literature” beyond their original audiences later on, relying on this editorial process to explain pseudepigraphical markers. But, in the case of *1* and *2 Peter* and *2* and *3 John*, a “concern for the correct interpretation of their own tradition drove the authors to write.” Heckel therefore argues that, as broadly authentic letters, the Catholic Epistles are “testimonies that go back to the confidants of Jesus and testify to the life of the first Christians in the 1st century,” *Die Briefe des Jakobus, Petrus, Johannes und Judas*, 2–7, translations mine.

than their reception.²⁴ Recent approaches to the Catholic Epistles as a collection have tended toward a theological perspective regarding their canonical reception. That is, their apostolic association, sevenfold form, and intertextual overlap are often seen as hermeneutically valuable, if also historically founded, claims to the theologically meaningful inclusion of all seven Catholic letters in the New Testament collection.

Despite their differing views of the locus of canonical authority, the approaches of David Nienhuis, Robert Wall, and Darian Lockett share the aim to underscore the historical and theological legitimacy of the collection of these particular seven letters into an apostolic, canonical collection of Catholic Epistles.²⁵ For this reason, they largely focus on positive evidence in favor of the coherence of a Catholic collection, rather than challenges to its authority. Nienhuis and Wall have, both individually and together, made the case for the Catholic Epistles as a canonical collection, culminating most recently in their co-authored *Reading the Epistles of James, Peter, John and Jude as Scripture: The Shaping and Shape of a Canonical Collection*.²⁶ They argue, knowingly “at odds with modern criticism’s consensus, which underscores its literary diversity and theological incoherence and the original independence of each letter from the others,” that the Catholic Epistle collection’s “‘point of origin’ as the church’s Scripture” is to be found in its canonization rather than its initial composition.²⁷ This represents a “deep logic” of canonical, rather than compositional, intent,

²⁴ For example, Neil and Allen, *Collecting Early Christian Letters: From the Apostle Paul to Late Antiquity*, which includes two chapters on Pauline literature, but the only mention of a Catholic corpus defines them as “three-letter sets” that overtime “found places in the canon of the New Testament, such as 1 and 2 Peter with Jude and the Johannine epistles” alongside three-letter sets gradually combined into the Pauline corpus, 39. I do not engage with arguments over the definition of an epistle, including letters as “real” or “literary,” taking for granted that in an ancient context the Catholic Epistles were received as broadly apostolic works. On classifying and collecting ancient epistles, see Gibson, “On the Nature of Ancient Letter Collections,” 56–78; Neil and Allen, *Collecting Early Christian Letters from the Apostle Paul to Late Antiquity*; Doty, “The Classification of Epistolary Literature,” 183–99; Rosenmeyer, *Ancient Epistolary Fictions: The Letter in Greek Literature*, esp. 19–35.

²⁵ All three also rely on Childs for a sense of the final form and theological coherence of scripture. See Childs, *Biblical Theology and The New Testament as Canon*.

²⁶ See Nienhuis, *Not by Paul Alone*; Nienhuis and Wall *Reading the Epistles of James, Peter, John and Jude as Scripture*; Wall, “A Unifying Theology of the Catholic Epistle Collection.”

²⁷ Nienhuis and Wall, *Reading the Epistles of James, Peter, John and Jude as Scripture*, 9, 11.

and thus they “contend that the final literary form of the biblical canon is... a work of aesthetic excellence.”²⁸ Nienhuis also argues that *James* was written in the late second century to introduce the Catholic collection and counterbalance the Pauline corpus.²⁹ Overall, the focus on the canonization of the Catholic Epistles as the locus of ecclesially-conferred authority is a helpful shift away from a claim to some inherent textual authority imbued within the Catholic letters. However, their ultimate focus, influenced by Childs, on the “aesthetic excellence” of the final form of the Catholic Epistles and the New Testament canon neglects the reality that the Catholic Epistles in fact contribute to the continued *flexibility* of the New Testament collection, not its final closure. As we will see, despite attempts, such as Athanasius’s in the late fourth century, to draw the canonical process to a close, the questionable status especially of *2 Peter*, *2 and 3 John*, and *Jude* even past the fourth century held a wedge in the door of the canonical process, preventing a definitive conclusion.

Lockett claims to provide a more balanced approach, arguing that it is the very notion of canon which best unifies an historical and theological study of the Catholic Epistles.³⁰ He aims to avoid a singular focus on either the composition or canonization as the ultimate moment in a claim to the canonical authority of the Catholic Epistle collection, arguing that the editing, collecting, and arranging of the seven Catholic Epistles – or, their “collection consciousness” – is “neither anachronistic to their meaning nor antagonistic to their very composition.”³¹ The essence of his study, he argues, is to trace the canonical development of the Catholic Epistles into a sub-corpus, which “is not an external force imposed upon the text by institutional powers, but rather, was driven along by recognition of pressures within the texts themselves.”³² That is, the collection consciousness of the Catholic Epistles as demonstrated by compositional,

²⁸ Nienhuis and Wall, *Reading the Epistles of James, Peter, John and Jude as Scripture*, 11, 13.

²⁹ Nienhuis, *Not by Paul Alone*.

³⁰ He also helpfully summarizes a number of other approaches to the Catholic Epistles as a collection in *Letters from the Pillar Apostles*, 1–27.

³¹ Lockett, *Letters from the Pillar Apostles*, xvi, 231.

³² Lockett, *Letters from the Pillar Apostles*, 237.

paratextual, Patristic, and intertextual evidence signifies an *inherent* canonical coherence. This assertion of the inherent canonicity of the Catholic Epistles is, in the end, tied to a theological conviction that the canonical process is a linear trajectory with an inevitable goal. Lockett's approach therefore fundamentally favors a theological conception of canon over a historical one, undermining his aim of a middle way between history and theology. I contend that the canonical process is a phenomenon contingent on historical factors beyond the texts themselves, including usage and the ancient perception of and concern over the pseudonymity of at least five of the Catholic letters. The Catholic Epistles do represent a historically legitimate collection, having been received as such in an ancient context; they do not, however, present an inherently canonical collection in an inevitable New Testament canon.

Where Nienhuis, Wall, and Lockett have tended to focus on affirming the coherence of the Catholic Epistle collection, Wolfgang Grünstäudl and Peter Davids call more attention to their troubled history in the formation of the New Testament. Grünstäudl provides the most succinct overview of the historical factors contributing to the compilation of the Catholic Epistles and the collection's role in the formation of the New Testament canon.³³ These include initial connections such as James and Jude as brothers and the reputation of Peter as well as checkpoints in reception history such as the Muratorian fragment, Patristic references, and manuscripts. He summarizes the evidence contributing to the formation of the Catholic Epistles as follows: (1) the Catholic Epistles can all be classed as "literary" letters; (2) their apostolic pseudonymity is key to their compilation and their reception; (3) the smaller and later letters benefitted from their association with *1 John* and *1 Peter*, which were both received early and enthusiastically; (4) seven is an attractive number for an apostolic collection, recalling Paul's corporate letters and the seven letters to churches in the Johannine *Revelation*, as also mentioned by the Muratorian fragment; and (5) they demonstrate significant intertextual ties

³³ Grünstäudl, "Die Katholischen Briefe," 71–94.

to the Gospels, *Acts*, and the Pauline corpus as well as material ties to *Acts* in major uncial manuscripts like Codex Sinaiticus.³⁴ While Grünstäudl characterizes the logic of the Catholic Epistles' non-arbitrary collection as bearing theological relevance, he does not see this as an inherent textual design, nor does he consider the collection's compilation or canonization to be an inevitable outcome, instead emphasizing, as I will also argue, the continuing variability of the New Testament collection, in part exemplified by the Catholic Epistles.

Peter Davids also summarizes much of the ancient evidence surrounding the Catholic Epistles, providing another consideration of the Catholic Epistles and their troubled canonicity.³⁵ He structures his argument to note ways that the Catholic corpus “looks back” to the development of the Old Testament and “looks forward” to the formation of the New Testament, summarizing the evidence as affirming that “[t]he Catholic Epistles are indeed a canonical Janus. They are windows into the state of the OT ‘canon’ in the first 50 to 100 years of church history (though some might stretch that to 150 years). They are also windows into the process of canonization of the NT, both in their references to the traditions and works that would eventually form the NT and in the reception that they themselves received. As such, they are a useful place to test any theories that one might have about the canon and canon formation, although they tend to leave one with more questions than answers.”³⁶ Regarding the notion of canon, Davids concludes that the Catholic Epistles “teach that the development of the canon was a messy process at best.”³⁷ This is certainly the case. However, while Davids is undoubtedly correct that the Catholic Epistles provide an excellent test case for studying the formation of the New Testament, I contend that the questions raised by the Catholic Epistles are crucial for understanding the New Testament's formation and its continuing permeability.

³⁴ Grünstäudl, “Die Katholischen Briefe,” 85–86, 93–94.

³⁵ Davids, “Canonical Janus,” 403–416.

³⁶ Davids, “Canonical Janus,” 403–16, 416.

³⁷ Davids, “Canonical Janus,” 416.

3. RECENT APPROACHES TO EXEMPLA IN THE CATHOLIC EPISTLES

Aside from the contextual treatment of individual characters, such as Rahab in *James* or Noah in *2 Peter*, I am aware of only two works on the use of exempla in the Catholic Epistle collection: an essay by Peter Davids on the use of the Old Testament Pseudepigrapha in the Catholic Epistles and Robert Foster's monograph, *The Significance of Exemplars for the Interpretation of the Letter of James*. Davids summarizes the content throughout *James*, *1–2 Peter*, and *Jude* related to the Old Testament Pseudepigrapha, which notably demonstrates the overlap between the Pseudepigrapha and the use of scriptural exempla in the Catholic Epistles.³⁸ He calls particular attention to the issue that neither the Jewish nor the Christian canons were formed when the Catholic Epistles were written, but that *Jude* is representative of the use of pseudepigraphal material "in a manner indistinguishable from their use of the OT." And furthermore, *James* and *1 Peter* "move in an apocalyptic world" heavily influenced by the pseudepigraphal material, but *2 Peter* shows discomfort with this material, as direct references are removed from content shared with *Jude*.³⁹ Foster, analyzing the roles of Abraham, Rahab, Job, and Elijah (he excludes the prophets, who appear in *Jas* 5:10) in *James* as well as in the Hebrew Bible, the New Testament more widely, and other Greco-Roman literature, concludes that all four figures serve for *James* as exemplars of wholehearted commitment to God in the midst of severe testing.⁴⁰

As Davids' essay excludes exempla from the Johannine epistles and Foster's monograph focuses on *James* and excludes the prophets, no comprehensive treatment of

³⁸ Davids, "The Pseudepigrapha in the Catholic Epistles," 228–45. He also mentions in his essay on the Catholic Epistles as a canonical Janus that the "narratives cited" tend to favor pseudepigraphic material, Davids, "Canonical Janus," 406–408.

³⁹ Davids, "The Pseudepigrapha in the Catholic Epistles," 243–44.

⁴⁰ Foster, *Exemplars*, see his summary chapter, "A Unity of Purpose?" 192–204. In an essay that focuses on the conflict between Michael the archangel and the devil, as mentioned in *Jude* 8–9, Jan Dochhorn also refers to other exempla found throughout *Jude*, but the essay is not a comprehensive look at scriptural exempla in *Jude*. Dochhorn, "Eine starkes Stück Schrift" 178–203, esp. 186–87, 190–91. For more on pseudonymity, scriptural exempla in the Catholic Epistles, and a further critique of Foster, see Rodenbiker, "Pseudonymity, Exemplarity, and the Dating of James."

scriptural exempla in the Catholic Epistle collection exists. This study fills that gap by systematically analyzing the use of scriptural exempla in the Catholic Epistle collection as one facet of its exemplarity. The methodology of reading the Catholic Epistles in parallel highlights their distinctive overlap in the use of tradition via scriptural exempla and reveals tethers to a broad range of Jewish and Christian scriptures both within and beyond the Old and New Testaments.

4. SUMMARY OF CHAPTERS

In part one I examine the role played by the Catholic Epistle collection in the shaping of the New Testament collection, especially the external evidence surrounding the compilation of a sevenfold Catholic collection. Chapter one analyzes evidence antecedent to a sevenfold Catholic Epistle collection, the preceding circumstances that prepare the ground for the Catholic Epistles, a collection that is not the result of a linear or inevitable canonical process. The collection derives from a number of key factors. First, the Muratorian fragment shows no investment in a collection of Catholic Epistles; here we find only the anomalous clustering of *1* and *2 John* and *Jude*. The second type of evidence that precedes the Catholic Epistle collection are the third and fourth century papyri of any of the Catholic Epistles. While *James* and *1 Peter* have the highest quantity of early extant manuscripts (three each), indicating some level of popularity by the time they were produced, most individual manuscripts are unfortunately fragmentary. The major exception is the Bodmer Miscellaneous Codex, which holds the complete texts of *Jude* (*P. Bodmer VII*) and *1* and *2 Peter* (*P. Bodmer VIII*), together often identified as \mathfrak{P}^{72} . As we will see, the designation of \mathfrak{P}^{72} perpetuates an overestimate of the importance of the clustering of texts that came to be included in the New Testament. Furthermore, the term καθολικὴ ἐπιστολή was not applied only to the seven letters now included in the New Testament. The rather miscellaneous function of the Catholic Epistles

prior to the fourth century is indicative of the unclear shape of the New Testament collection at this time.

Chapter two analyzes developments throughout the fourth century and into the fifth regarding the concern over the pseudepigraphy of at least *James*, *2 Peter*, *2* and *3 John*, and *Jude*, maintaining the liminal status of the Catholic collection and tethering its (para)canonicity to its perceived pseudepigraphy. Eusebius is the first to use the designation of καθολική ἐπιστολή to refer unambiguously to *James*, *1* and *2 Peter*, *1*, *2*, and *3 John*, and *Jude*, but he finds only *1 Peter* and *1 John*'s authorship to be unimpeachable, relegating the rest to a fringe ἀντιλεγόμενα grouping due to their questionable authenticity. Athanasius's 39th Easter Letter, written in 367, includes all seven Catholic Epistles but explicitly rejects pseudepigraphal literature as a tool of heretics. Other Christian scholars such as Origen, and Clement and Dionysius of Alexandria also demonstrated an investment in *Echtheitskritik*, or authenticity criticism, which aided these writers in expressing their concern over the genuine apostolic authorship of early Christian texts such as the Catholic Epistles. Codices Sinaiticus and Alexandrinus then provide material evidence concurrent with and beyond the time considered by many that the New Testament canon was closed that other texts continued to be included alongside the 27-book New Testament collection, while the fifth-century Syrian Church accepted only *James*, *1 Peter* and *1 John*, and a stichometry inserted into the 6th-century Codex Claromontanus presents a possible 33-book New Testament. It is clear that there is not a unanimous perspective on the status of the New Testament collection in the fourth century, and the perceived pseudonymity of at least five of the Catholic Epistles emerges as a key issue in its continuing flexibility.

In part two, pseudepigraphy is understood as one facet of the rhetorical strategy of exemplarity, along with the use of illustrative positive and negative scriptural exempla. In chapter three I

define exemplarity and describe how the apostolic and quasi-apostolic figures of James, Peter, John, and Jude serve as authorial figures contributing to the ancient reception and continued production of a stream of texts associated with them. Pseudepigraphy and pseudonymous attribution are the most concentrated forms of exemplarity—a ‘real’ author takes on the name and persona of some figure of prestigious status in order to present a message strategically; narrated exemplarity, slightly less firm than pseudonymity, can be seen in testamentary literature in which a thin narrative voice is all that separates the story from being outright pseudepigraphy; and illustrative exemplarity is the reference to strategic *exempla* in order to demonstrate, for example, particular virtues or vices, and is reflected in terminology such as δειγμα, υπόδειγμα, υπογραμμών, and αντίτυπον.

What emerges from a collective reading of the Catholic Epistles, particularly in light of the rhetorical strategy of exemplarity? The answer is the substantive and distinct usage of illustrative scriptural *exempla* throughout the collection—remarkably more than textual citation. Chapters four and five survey the use of positive and negative scriptural exempla throughout the Catholic Epistles which witness to the constructive and intertraditional nature of exemplarity. The intertraditional web resulting from pseudonymous and illustrative exemplarity reveals ties to both now-canonical and noncanonical material, situating the Catholic Epistles in a liminal canonical space, tethered to both now-canonical and noncanonical tradition. The dual facets of exemplarity as found in the Catholic Epistle collection – pseudepigraphy and the use of illustrative exempla – collectively demonstrate the dynamism that helped to form and that remains present even in a “closed” New Testament collection, and exemplarity serves as a tether between a “closed” intracanonical situation and a more permeable paracanonical one. The paracanonicity of the Catholic Epistle collection is therefore inherently tied to its layers of exemplarity, both in the ancient perception of its pseudepigraphy and as illustrated by an intertraditional web of scriptural exempla.

PART I

CHAPTER ONE: ANTECEDENTS TO THE CATHOLIC EPISTLE COLLECTION

Prior to their collection, either virtually or materially, as a seven-letter collection, the Catholic Epistles serve a rather miscellaneous function in early Christian history. Antecedent to their sevenfold form are the Muratorian fragment, a possible second-century commentary noting only the use of *Jude* and *1* and *2 John*; the earliest, and mostly fragmentary, papyri of the Catholic Epistles, with the intriguing exception of the Bodmer Miscellaneous codex, in which *Jude* and *1* and *2 Peter* are included among a collection of now non-canonical material; and the use of the term “catholic epistle” prior to Eusebius’ labelling of just the seven Catholic Epistles attributed to James, Peter, John, and Jude. Such antecedents do not anticipate an inevitable Catholic Epistle collection, but rather provide evidence of the liminal and “miscellaneous” situation of the Catholic Epistles which, as we will see, is indicative of the unclear shape of the New Testament canon, even into the fifth century.

1. THE MURATORIAN FRAGMENT

In the mid-eighteenth century, Ludovico Antonio Muratori, an Italian archivist, published in an edited collection an untitled, anonymous, fragmentary canon list, known now as the Muratorian fragment (or Canon) which he intended to illustrate the careless manuscript copies produced by scribes in the Middle Ages.¹ It is an early example among lists of early Christian literature given the manner in which the Fragmentist listed received and rejected writings and is arguably one of the earliest and most important documents for the history of the biblical canon.²

¹ Hahneman, *The Muratorian Fragment*, 5, 18.

² Metzger, *The Canon of the New Testament*, 192.

The Muratorian fragment makes sense in a post-Irenaeus, pre-Eusebian situation in which the Catholic Epistles were yet to emerge as a collection. Because the fragment shows no awareness of other Catholic Epistles besides *Jude* and *1* and *2 John*, the shape of the Catholic collection remains uncertain until all but *1 Peter* and *1 John* are rejected by Eusebius in the fourth century. Ironically, it is Eusebius' note of the doubt over five of the seven "catholic epistles" that appears to confirm their collective, and, at least for some, authoritative status (*Hist. eccl.* 2.23.25).³ In contrast to the miscellaneous grouping in which *Jude* and *1* and *2 John* are named, the fragment accepts two other well-established collections: Gospels (with *Acts*) and the Pauline corpus (including the pseudo-Pauline letters). Coupled with Eusebius's awareness of the collection in the fourth century, this is an indication that the Catholic Epistle collection emerged in a post-Muratorian fragment, pre-Eusebian context.

Muratorius found the fragment in a seventh- or eighth-century codex, the so-called Codex Muratorianus, which contained miscellaneous Latin texts and five early Christian creeds.⁴ The fragment is situated after three texts by Eucherius of Lyon, and followed by Ambrose's *De Abraam*, a series of excerpts from Eucherius's *De expositione diversarum rerum*, four Latin texts that may share an author (possibly Hippolytus or Ambrosiaster), Chrysostom's *De reparatione lapsi*; another *De Abraam*; and five creeds.⁵ The 85-line fragment is given no title in the codex and begins in the middle of a nearly incomprehensible sentence⁶, likely meaning that pages are missing between the end of a text by Eucherius, which itself ends in the middle of a sentence, and the first extant line of the fragment, which is probably about *Mark*.⁷ Regarding its composition, as Verheyden puts it, "the scribe who in the eighth (or perhaps the

³ Eusebius is discussed more fully in chapter 2, section 1.

⁴ Hahneman, *The Muratorian Fragment*, 17–18.

⁵ Hahneman, *The Muratorian Fragment*, 17–22.

⁶ Scholars often comment on the text's poor Latin: in Metzger's words, its "barbarous Latin with erratic orthography," Metzger, *The Canon of the New Testament*, 191; the fragment is titled "A Mutilated Roman Second-Century Canon" in Souter, *The Text and Canon of the New Testament*, 208–11.

⁷ Hahneman, *The Muratorian Fragment*, 18–19.

late-seventh) century did such a miserable job of copying the text,” would surely be “surprised to learn that the fruits of his labour would one day be cited, and thus saved from oblivion, as an example of the deplorable state of letters in early-medieval Italy.”⁸ Having carelessly copied a portion of *De Abraam* twice on opposite pages, the consistency of the scribe’s textual errors helps to confirm that the exemplar from which he copied almost certainly already showed signs of corruption.⁹

While the use of certain terms may signify a Latin original (*contrectaverunt, temptaverunt, tractaverunt*), a Greek original was proposed by Muratori in 1740, a view which received wide international support. According to Geoffrey Hahneman, Bunsen, Hilgenfeld, and Zahn all tried their hand at reconstructing this Greek original—a considerably difficult task given the corrupted Latin text. Lightfoot further proposed the original was written in Greek verse, similar to canon lists of Amphilochius and Gregory of Nazianzus.¹⁰ The possibility of a Greek original could help explain some of the more difficult passages in the fragment as poor translations into Latin. The inclusion of the Wisdom of Solomon among a list of proto-NT texts, for example, is all the more odd since the Latin description is typically translated, “written by Solomon’s friends in his honor” (ll. 69-79). Following Jerome’s preface to the Books of Solomon, Tregelles argued plausibly that it should rather be rendered “written by *Philo*,” but in the process of translation from Greek to Latin, ὑπὸ Φιλῶνος (‘by Philo’) was misread as ὑπὸ φίλων (“by his friends”).¹¹

That the provenance of the Muratorian fragment has been disputed is well known, and the conversation surrounding it has traditionally been one concerned with the closure of the canon, so there has been a significant preoccupation with its dating. The traditional view

⁸ Verheyden, “The Canon Muratori,” 487.

⁹ Verheyden, “The Canon Muratori,” 489.

¹⁰ Hahneman, *The Muratorian Fragment*, 13.

¹¹ Hahneman, *The Muratorian Fragment*, 14. See also n. 53 below.

remains that it was composed sometime in the late second or early third century in the West¹², while Hahneman and a few others (following Sundberg) continue to hold instead that it was composed in the late fourth century in the East.¹³ While a post-Irenaeus, pre-Eusebian, and therefore third-century situation is arguably likely for the fragment, complicated theories surrounding its origin continue to be postulated. Rothschild has recently proposed, for example, that the fragment is a Roman fake and “an attempt to provide a venerable second-century precedent for a later position on canon,” a compelling take on the possibility of forgery.¹⁴

Two of the leading authorities on the fragment, Verheyden and Hahneman, agree that the Fragmentist presents a closed collection of scriptural texts, but disagree that the fourth-century dating is necessary.¹⁵ Hahneman’s proposal that the fragment originated in a fourth-century, eastern context need not be accepted in order to agree with the compelling case he makes along with it for a shift in canon studies from the second to the fourth century. The Muratorian fragment is rightly discussed in the context of fourth-century material as a *contrast* to more consistent and categorical lists from the fourth century. Shifted to the fourth century, the discussion surrounding the canonical process and its later closure emphasizes the contingency of decisions made with regard to this process, rather than the relative stability of sub-collections such as the Gospels and the Pauline corpus. To put it differently, when the discussion surrounding the canonical process shifts out of the second century, the role of the Catholic Epistles in the formation of the canon is put in more stark relief.

¹² Metzger, *The Canon of the New Testament*, 191-201; Nienhuis, *Not by Paul Alone*, 46-47, 76-77; Balla, “Evidence for an Early Christian Canon,” 381-82.

¹³ Hahneman, *The Muratorian Fragment*, 11-17, 27-30; Sundberg, “The Canon Muratori,” 1-41.

¹⁴ Rothschild, “The Muratorian Fragment as Roman Fake” 1. She further asserts that “the text dates itself to the second century but can only be a product of the (earliest) fourth,” arguing that the text’s mistakes and anachronisms, as well as its preoccupation with heresy outs it as a later forgery, 59, 79-82. The ‘messiness’ of the fragment, exemplified by the miscellaneous Catholic Epistles and the unique grouping of only *1* and *2 John* and *Jude*, as opposed to a categorical and clear take on a New Testament canon, however, still leaves open the possibility of an earlier dating. Her argument is, in my opinion, ultimately unpersuasive.

¹⁵ Verheyden, “The Canon Muratori,” 556.

Studies on the fragment largely ignore the role played by the Catholic Epistle collection, focusing instead, as just mentioned, on the development and stability of the fourfold Gospel and the Pauline corpus.¹⁶ When the Catholic letters are mentioned, it is often in the context of their problematic role in the fragment; hence Verheyden's claim that, "[t]he information contained in the fragment regarding the Catholic Epistles is hopelessly confusing."¹⁷ However, the fragment as a whole, including its limited statement regarding the status of *Jude* and two Johannine epistles, does shed light on the early history of the Catholic Epistles and the New Testament by serving as an antecedent to the Catholic Epistle collection—in other words, providing evidence that the Catholic Epistle collection was formed *after* the production of the Muratorian fragment. Though the New Testament is often seen as a single whole, its tripartite form emerges from the antecedent subcollections of the fourfold Gospel, the Pauline corpus (typically inclusive of *Hebrews*), and the Catholic Epistle collection, followed by *Revelation*. A crucial document in the canonical process, the Muratorian fragment anticipates the development of a tri-partite New Testament collection, but it cannot confirm that one already existed—the miscellaneous group to which the three included Catholic Epistles are assigned makes this clear. Due to their uncertain collective status, including in the opinion of Eusebius, the Catholic Epistles demonstrate a key issue in the formation of the New Testament canon, namely, the question of addition. Already in the fragment one can detect the debate over whether material should be added to the Gospels and Paul, and, if so, *what?*

¹⁶ There are, of course, exceptions that acknowledge the crucial role of the Catholic Epistles, for example, Nienhuis, *Not by Paul Alone*, Gamble, "The New Testament Canon," 267–94.

¹⁷ Verheyden, "The Canon Muratori," 528.

1.1 Contents

1.1.1 *Gospels*

The fragment accepts the four canonical gospels, if its fragmentary beginning is taken to include both Matthew and Mark and does not name others or even mention that others exist, despite its later concern to distinguish between texts suitable for public reading, those only for private reading, and heretical texts that should be altogether ignored. This “exclusive validity”¹⁸ of the four canonical gospels is understood by Hahneman as evidence for the later dating of the fragment, given the stability of the fourfold Gospel by the fourth century after ongoing “oral tradition and ‘non-canonical’ tradition and writings, or experiments in gospel harmonization, retained much of their influence throughout the second century and into the first decades of the third.”¹⁹ That is, the fragment shows no concern over ongoing debate regarding the canonicity of the fourfold Gospel, and Hahneman takes this to mean definitively that these debates are, at the time of the fragment’s composition, over.

Irenaeus is the first clear advocate of the fourfold Gospel sub-collection, with Tertullian possibly not long after. While Clement and Origen knew of the *notion* of the fourfold Gospel, their “rather liberal use of ‘non-canonical’ material” shows ambivalence toward a closed canon.²⁰ In Irenaeus’ account of the fourfold gospel, his focus is on the texts themselves and the essential nature of their fourfold form, not their origin. Rather than arguing that *Matthew*, *Mark*, *Luke*, and *John* are the *earliest* gospels, he is concerned instead with establishing the fourfold Gospel on the basis of the evangelists’ essential four-ness as seen through their likeness to the four cardinal winds and the four creatures in *Revelation 4* (*Adv. haer.* 3.11.8). As we will see, the fragment and other Patristic writers show interest in the lore surrounding gospel origins.

¹⁸ Metzger, *The Canon of the New Testament*, 200.

¹⁹ Verheyden, “The Canon Muratori,” 514; Hahneman, *The Muratorian Fragment*, 93–100.

²⁰ Verheyden, “The Canon Muratori,” 516.

John is an important figure for the Fragmentist, who appears to believe that the same Johannine author wrote the gospel, the two epistles, and the apocalypse. Dionysius, via Eusebius, doubts this authorship, concerned that the language and style of *Revelation* do not match up to *John* and *1 John* and he therefore concludes that the author must be a different John altogether, rather than John the Evangelist, or a pseudonymous forger (*Hist. eccl.* 7.25.7-18).²¹ Of particular interest for the Fragmentist is a tradition about John that, according to Verheyden, is without parallel in the western tradition: that John's gospel represents a collective apostolic effort.²² John's is presented as the culminative gospel, unique among the four for its collective revelation to the disciples, not only John himself. According to the fragment, John, in response to the urgings of Andrew and his "fellow disciples and bishops" for him to write, requested that they fast with him three days, after which time he wrote down what was revealed to each of them (ll. 10-16). Even more interesting is the fragment's claim that despite the variety present in the individual books of the Gospels,

... nevertheless this makes no difference to the faith of believers, since by the one sovereign Spirit all things have been declared in all [the Gospels]... What marvel is it then, if John so consistently mentions these particular points also in his Epistles saying about himself, 'What we have seen with our eyes and heard with our ears and our hands have handled, these things we have written to you'? for in this way he professes [himself] to be not only an eye-witness and hearer, but also a writer of all the marvelous deeds of the Lord, in their order. (ll. 17-33, l. 31 quoting *1 Jn* 1:1-3)²³

The story about John having been urged by his peers to write a fourth gospel indicates a context in which there is still concern over the multiplicity and variety represented within the

²¹ On Dionysius's view of Johannine authorship, see chapter 2, section 4.2 ; on traditions surrounding John, see chapter 3, section 3.3.

²² Verheyden, "The Canon Muratori," 518. Though, see Watson on the *Epistula Apostolorum*, another early Christian text claiming collective Apostolic authorship: "A Gospel of the Eleven: The *Epistula Apostolorum* and the Johannine Tradition," 190–215; *An Apostolic Gospel: The 'Epistula Apostolorum' in Literary Context*.

²³ English translations of the fragment are from Metzger, *The Canon of the New Testament*, 305–7.

fourfold Gospel, which the Fragmentist aims to quell with this legend about John.²⁴ Reassurance is not given in his own words, but in the words of John himself, the culminative evangelist. Through this story, the Fragmentist makes two important points: first, that the multiplicity of the four gospels is not a problem, given their guidance by the Spirit and consistency of theme; second, that John, an apostolic eyewitness to the ministry of Jesus, is indeed the author of the fourth Gospel. The fragment's account of the origin of *John* is suggestive of an interest in the context and circumstances surrounding a gospel's production, not only its contents. Furthermore, as Mitchell points out, Andrew's role as a recipient of revelation helps to emphasize both the reliability of John's witness and the necessity of apostolic community:

Here a committee model of authorship is envisioned, with a second apostle, Andrew, being in receipt of an ecstatic experience that valorizes the holy hermeneutic by which an apparently single-author document is transformed into a more broadly based and universally reliable divine account. This myth of origins of the Gospel according to John as enshrined in the Muratorian Canon list is meant to provide the hermeneutical parameters of unified gospel reading for the texts that follow in the codex (the quotation continues with a plot summary offered as common material represented across the *tetraevangelion*).²⁵

While no exact parallel exists to the fragment's version of the origin of *John*, there are other examples in which Patristic writers show interest in the origin stories of gospel literature. Regarding these origin stories, Mitchell argues that there is significant evidence surrounding the early evangelists suggesting interest in the geographical setting and the local circumstance that lead to the production of certain gospels (contra Bauckham, who suggests that redaction criticism has had the unfortunate effect of shifting scholars away from reading strategies that

²⁴ Watson, *Gospel Writing*, 431–32, 490.

²⁵ Mitchell, "Patristic Counter-Evidence," 58.

emphasize the universality of the gospels).²⁶ “The idea that individual gospels arose, not just because an author had the intention to address a universal audience but because he was *asked by some local community to do so*,” Mitchell argues, “is by no means unique to this passage,” which presents the legend that a crowd who heard Peter preach urged Mark to write his gospel (*Hist. eccl.* 6.14.5–7). Mitchell further refers to another origin story from Clement (via Eusebius) on *John*: Clement said that, “last of all John, recognizing that the bodily matters had been recorded in the gospels, after being persuaded by men of note [προτραπέντα ὑπὸ τῶν γνωρίμων], divinely driven by the spirit, wrote a spiritual gospel” (*Hist. eccl.* 6.14.7).²⁷

A parallel story regarding the origin of the gospel of Mark can also be found in two preserved passages from Clement’s lost *Hypotyposes*. In Cassiodorus’s Latin translation, in a commentary by Clement on *1 Peter* 5:13, Peter refers to “my son Mark,” who composed a gospel in accordance with Peter’s teaching.²⁸ Eusebius offers two versions of the story of the origin of Mark’s gospel attributed to Clement. In both versions, Mark composed a gospel according to the teachings of Peter, having been requested to do so by those who had heard Peter preach. In the first account, which is specifically identified by Eusebius as recorded in book eight of Clement’s *Hypotyposes* and also noted by Papias, Peter learns that Mark has written a gospel and is pleased, knowing it can be used in churches (*Hist. eccl.* 2.15.1–2, 3.39.15).²⁹ In Eusebius’ second account, however, Peter is indifferent to the news: “he neither explicitly prohibited it nor endorsed it” (*Hist. eccl.* 6.14.6–7).³⁰ Mitchell argues that the Clement references, taken together, are not intended to be historically accurate accounts, but rather to emphasize that at least some readers in the early church considered the origins of the gospels. The tradition surrounding *Mark*, for example, “seems designed precisely to bridge the

²⁶ Mitchell, “Patristic Counter-Evidence”; Bauckham, *The Gospels for All Christians*.

²⁷ Mitchell, “Patristic Counter-Evidence,” 50, n. 42.

²⁸ *Ante-Nicene Fathers*, volume 2, 573.

²⁹ Watson, *Gospel Writing*, 442–43.

³⁰ Watson’s translation; Watson, *Gospel Writing*, 431.

gap between local and more widespread readership,” as Peter, at least in Eusebius’ first version, authorized the ecclesial use of Mark’s account of his preaching.³¹ Irenaeus reported, as well, that Mark recorded the preaching of Peter, Luke did likewise for Paul, and John published his own gospel afterwards (*Ad. Haer.* 3.1.1; 3.10.5).³² The John legend from the fragment fits well alongside these accounts in a post-Irenaeus, late-second or early-third-century context, given the apparently popular interest in gospel origins around this time.

1.1.2 *Acts*

In the fragment, *Acts* is supplementary to the fourfold Gospel collection rather than attached to any of the Catholic Epistles as an apostolic collection, which is a further indication of a dating in the third century or earlier. \mathfrak{P}^{45} provides third-century evidence that the four Gospels and *Acts* circulated in a single manuscript, in contrast to the later fourth-century association between *Acts* and the Catholic Epistles, for example in Codex Sinaiticus.³³ In the fragment, *Acts* is situated with the gospels for the sake of literary continuity: as the Gospels represent the “marvelous deeds of the Lord, in their order” (l. 33), *Acts* records the deeds of the apostles, continuing the Christian story. The Fragmentist goes on: “Moreover, the acts of all the apostles were written in one book” compiled by Luke (l. 34-36). *Luke* is said to have written this single book of “events that took place in his presence,” which emphasizes his credibility, as does the fact that the martyrdom of Peter and the departure of Paul from Rome are not included—presumably because Luke did not himself witness these events (ll. 36-37). That the *Acts of the Apostles* were written in one book rules out any other text claiming to report the same

³¹ Mitchell, “Patristic Counter-Evidence,” 51.

³² Tertullian continues the tradition, arguing against Marcion’s omission of *Matthew*, *Mark*, and *John*, apparently on the basis of their insufficiently early origin, that it is not problematic when gospels written in the name of an apostle are sometimes found to have been written by one of their followers. This is the case for Mark, who was said to be Peter’s interpreter, and even Luke, whose gospel was sometimes ascribed to Paul (*Ad. Marc.* 4.2–5).

³³ J. Schröter, *From Jesus to the New Testament*, 279. \mathfrak{P}^{45} can be viewed at <https://ntvmr.uni-muenster.de/manuscript-workspace?docID=10045>.

narrative—a well-known ancient genre which includes the *Acts of Paul* and the *Acts of Peter*, though no other text is named and rejected here. Because of its common author with the *Luke*, *Acts* was early on associated with the Gospels, as it is found here in the fragment. It was later detached from the gospels and attached to the seven Catholic Epistles, particularly in an Eastern context. This contributes further to the plausibility of a relative dating for the Muratorian fragment in a post-Irenaeus, pre-Eusebian context, and therefore before the emergence of a Catholic Epistle collection. While the association of *Acts* with the Gospels may be for some an indication of a later context in which the canon is more stable, again the role of the Catholic Epistles comes to the fore: without a sevenfold collection of Catholic letters representative of major figures present in the narratives of *Acts* and the Gospels, the fragment lacks the more robust apostolic collection to which later manuscripts witness.

1.1.3 *The Letters of Paul*

Thirteen epistles of Paul are then listed in what looks now to be an unconventional but clearly intentional order: Paul wrote first to the Corinthians, then the Ephesians, the Philippians, the Colossians, the Galatians, the Thessalonians, and then the Romans—nine letters to seven churches (ll. 42-57). The ordering of the Pauline corpus appears to follow a historical chronology, indicating that Paul wrote *first* to the Corinthians, *then* to others, possibly corresponding to Paul's career arc in *Acts*, in contrast to the later practice of ordering epistles on the basis of their size according to which Romans would come first. In writing letters to seven churches, twice to the Corinthians and Thessalonians, Paul follows the example of "his predecessor" John, who likewise wrote to seven churches in *Revelation*, but nevertheless, according to the Fragmentist, addressed the universal Church (ll. 58-60).³⁴ This is another

³⁴ Metzger, *The Canon of the New Testament*, 196.

important contribution of the fragment to the history of canon: seven is apparently a very good number for a collection of epistles. Paul's seven corporate letters, letters to seven churches in *Revelation*, and later the seven Ignatian letters bound by Polycarp to the end of his *Letter to the Philippians* all point to the importance of sevenfold letter collections—likely also a key factor in the compilation of a sevenfold Catholic collection.³⁵

Despite an otherwise complete Pauline letter collection, *Hebrews* is omitted, which may also shed more light on the issue of the fragment's provenance. Had *Hebrews* been included, as Verheyden notes, the pattern of writing to seven churches, following the Johannine Apocalypse, would be broken. An omission by scribal error is not possible because of the argument regarding the collections of letters to seven churches by both Paul and John.

A number of “inauthentic,” and therefore rejected, texts are listed following the Pauline collection: the epistles to the *Laodiceans* and the *Alexandrians*, both supposedly “forged in Paul's name to [further] the heresy of Marcion,” along with several other unnamed texts (ll. 64-67).³⁶ That these are mentioned among texts considered authentic and accepted, rather than at the end when the Fragmentist names heretics connected with Marcion, is indicative of an earlier dating for the fragment, as it suggests that the categorical pattern one often finds in fourth-century canon lists has not been fully developed here.

1.1.4 Uncategorized Texts

The Catholic Epistles

As we have seen, the fragment reflects multilayered evidence for its pre-Eusebian origin: the continued concern over multiple gospels, an issue long solved by the fourth century; that Acts

³⁵ Polycarp writes, “[t]hese are subjoined [ὑποτεταγμένοι] to this letter, and you will be able to benefit greatly from them” (*Phil* xiii.2 in *The Apostolic Fathers* vol 1 1970, 301). Letters are written to the Ephesians, Magnesians, Trallians, Romans, Philadelphians, Smyrnaeans, and to Polycarp (see *Hist. eccl.* 3.36.1-15).

³⁶ *Fincte* or *factae*, rendered in Lightfoot's Greek reconstruction as πεπλασμένα. Lightfoot's Greek version can be viewed at <http://www.earlychristianwritings.com/text/muratorian-greek.html>.

remains attached to the fourfold Gospel, rather than placed alongside an apostolic collection of letters; and interest in the number of texts in a collection, here that number being seven, similar to Irenaeus's interest in the fourfold form of the Gospel. These factors all indicate that a pre-Eusebian date is entirely plausible for the fragment, while the absence of a distinct Catholic Epistle collection also effectively substantiates a late-second or early-third-century origin of the Muratorian fragment.

The Fragmentist appears to have no knowledge of a Catholic Epistle collection. To put this positively, the Fragmentist presents the collection of authoritative Christian writings as consisting of four gospels, Paul's letters, the *Acts of the Apostles*, one or two apocalypses, three letters, and *Wisdom*. The general structure of a tripartite New Testament is already reflected in the fragment: Gospels-*Acts*, a Pauline letter collection, and a third group that, for the Fragmentist, appears to be mostly miscellaneous. With the exception of *Wisdom*, all the texts that the Fragmentist would include in the New Testament are also apostolic. Like the list of four gospels without so much as a mention that others exist, the Fragmentist names just a few of the Catholic Epistles without explicitly rejecting those not listed, despite the likelihood that other letters called "catholic," including others that came to make up the Catholic Epistle collection, had already been written.³⁷ The fragment simply states, "the epistle of Jude and two of the above-mentioned (or, bearing the name of) John are counted (or, used) in the catholic [Church]" (ll. 68-69). The pairing of *Jude* and *John* is unattested in any other ancient catalogue or collection, making the fragment a curious outlier.³⁸

The absence of *I Peter*, a curious omission on its own given its early provenance, is perhaps the most glaring indication that the Catholic Epistle collection post-dates the Muratorian fragment. Eusebius reports that *I Peter*, along with *I John*, was known as early as

³⁷ Verheyden, "The Canon Muratori," 522.

³⁸ Verheyden, "The Canon Muratori," 529; Hahneman, *The Muratorian Fragment*, 128.

Papias (*Hist. eccl.* 3.39.16).³⁹ Met with nearly universal acceptance by the earliest Patristic writers, *1 Peter* and *1 John*, the latter of which *is* included by the Fragmentist, are the only two Catholic Epistles considered sufficiently ancient to be included in Eusebius's canon list. The Fragmentist does not simply neglect *all* Petrine literature, however, given that the *Apocalypse of Peter* is present (though it is of liminal status).

Some have attempted to solve the puzzle of why only two Johannine letters and no Petrine letters have been included by the Fragmentist, concluding that the omissions may be the result of error, rather than intention. The author does not explicitly reject *1* and *2 Peter*, but rather appears to be unfamiliar with them altogether, despite the insistence of Hahneman, following Tregelles and Westcott, that the Petrine epistles, *James*, and *Hebrews* could not have been either rejected by or unknown to the Fragmentist, and references in the fragment to these texts must simply be lost.⁴⁰ "The absence of James and Hebrews (and 1 Peter)," he argues, "is inconclusive because of the probability of defects in the fragment."⁴¹ That the omissions are due to error or loss is a common assertion: Gallagher and Meade similarly comment that, "the absence of other Catholic Epistles perhaps results from scribal error."⁴² Metzger also suggests, following Zahn and others, that the list may have originally included *1 Peter*, but it was omitted accidentally due to scribal error.⁴³ In Zahn's reconstruction of a Greek original that included *1*

³⁹ Furthermore, Irenaeus quotes a singular 'epistle' of Peter (*Ad. haer.* 4.9.2; 5.7.2, both quoting *1 Pet* 1:8); Origen is aware of both *1* and *2 Peter*, stating that the first is acknowledged but the second is doubted (*Comm. Jo.* 5.3.1) and in a fragment of the *Commentary on Matthew*, he refers to *1 Peter* as if it were Peter's only epistle (*Comm. Matt.* Frag 1.11); Clement of Alexandria also refers to a singular 'epistle' of Peter (e.g., *Strom.* 3.18.110, citing *1 Pet* 1:21–22a, 14; 4.20.129, citing *1 Pet* 1:6–9). Though see Lieu, who notes that the reference to a singular letter does not absolutely indicate the writer's ignorance of more than one, Lieu, *The Second and Third Epistles of John*, 8.

⁴⁰ Hahneman, *The Muratorian Fragment*, 25.

⁴¹ Hahneman, *The Muratorian Fragment*, 26. The most likely possibility of these omissions seems to me to be that *1 Peter* may have been mentioned in the now-lost beginning of the fragment in connection with the *Gospel of Mark*, who, as we have seen, was early on and widely considered to have written down the teachings of Peter, though all proposed missing content remains speculative.

⁴² Gallagher and Meade, *The Biblical Canon Lists from Early Christianity*, 45.

⁴³ Metzger, *The Canon of the New Testament*, 200; Hahneman, *The Muratorian Fragment*, 128. Hahneman claims that the absence of *1 Peter* and *James* "is suggestive that further entries in the Fragment are missing. The Fragment may witness to a larger combination of catholic epistles, but such larger collections which included the minor catholic epistles of Jude and 2 (and 3?) John were not prominent until the early fourth century. Once again then, the Fragment, if traditionally dated, would be an anomaly."

Peter, he solves the puzzling omission by replacing the *Apocalypse of Peter* with the first Petrine epistle: the text would then have read "...and the apocalypse of John and of Peter only one epistle is accepted."⁴⁴ However, all proposals for possible missing content in the fragment remain speculative and, as it stands, the fragment mentions no such texts.⁴⁵

It is less often assumed that a third Johannine epistle is omitted due to scribal error. While there is some evidence that *1* and *2 John* may have circulated apart from *3 John* (e.g., Irenaeus' use of *1* and *2* but not *3 John*, *Adv. haer.* 3.16.5–8⁴⁶), so it is possible the fragment refers only to these, elsewhere the Fragmentist refers to the *ecclesia catholica*; the addition of "church" in line 69 is typical of modern reconstructions. This has led Katz to conclude, given that the second and third Johannine epistles are so closely connected, that "we should expect either one only, the first [...] or all three," and so *catholica* is actually a reference to the *epistola catholica*, among which *1 John* is the Catholic Epistle *par excellence*.⁴⁷ According to Katz, then, the text should read "two in addition to the catholic [epistle]," a reference to all three Johannine letters.⁴⁸ However, as mentioned, Irenaeus made use of only two Johannine epistles, and Katz' proposal requires some rearrangement to make the text agree. Another explanation is from Manson, who points out that *1* and *2 John*, having been translated into Latin separately,

⁴⁴ ...καὶ ἡ ἀποκάλυψις δὲ Ἰωάννου καὶ Πέτρου [ἐπιστολὴ μία, ἤν] μόνην ἀποδεχόμεθα. Verheyden, "The Canon Muratori," 529.

⁴⁵ Because Paul is mentioned in the context of the *Gospel of Luke*, it is a possibility that Peter could be mentioned along with *Mark*, as both gospels writers were said to record the teachings of Paul and Peter, respectively (e.g., Irenaeus and Tertullian on Mark and Luke as the students and interpreters of Peter and Paul). See Marksches, "The Canon of the New Testament," 182. However, this does not solve the problem of the apparent omission of Peter's epistles, and a complete Catholic collection remains nonexistent.

⁴⁶ Nienhuis, *Not by Paul Alone*, 35. Though, "Irenaeus fails to differentiate between his citations to the Johannine letters, including a reference to 2 John 7-8 in the midst of a series of quotations from 1 John, and cites all of them as coming from the same 'epistle of John.'" Nienhuis argues that this is suggestive of a whole Johannine collection under the title of *1 John*, but it could also mean either that *1* and *2 John* were received together or that the text available to Irenaeus did not distinguish between these two texts. If the latter is the case, it is possible that even a reference to just two Johannine epistles in the Muratorian fragment could still refer to all three, but this is impossible to confirm. See also Manson, "The Johannine Epistles and the Canon of the New Testament," 32–33.

⁴⁷ Katz, "The Johannine Epistles," 273.

⁴⁸ Katz, "The Johannine Epistles," 274.

circulated in the western church without the third letter, and the reference in the fragment is only to *1* and *2 John*.⁴⁹

Unless one assumes that error is responsible for the omission of *James*, *1–2 Peter*, and a third Johannine epistle—an unlikely possibility—a complete Catholic collection cannot be manipulated out of the fragment with any amount of interpretive gymnastics.⁵⁰ This is consistent with Nienhuis’s thesis that *James* is a second-century pseudepigraph, as well as with a late-second or early-third-century origin of the fragment. Hahneman’s conclusion that the “conspicuous absence” of *James*, *Hebrews*, and *1 Peter* is “inconclusive because of defects in the fragment” is identified by Nienhuis as a substantial problem for his argument, since “the evidence shows that the absence of these letters makes no sense whatsoever in a fourth-century Eastern list” and, “[q]uite simply, the ‘Eastern’ hypothesis that requires the accidental removal of *Hebrews*, *James*, and *1 Peter* is far harder to accept than the ‘Western’ hypothesis that only *1 Peter* was lost in transmission.”⁵¹ It is furthermore unlikely that had the Fragmentist been aware of seven Catholic Epistles, not only three, he would not have mentioned four of them. This means that the Fragmentist’s unawareness of the excluded Catholic Epistles may be more likely than their intentional omission. After all, a third collection of seven apostolic letters would have provided not only further evidence of the sevenfold form of an effectively universal collection, but an apostolic example of such a collection comprised of letters attributed to the Pillar Apostles, *James*, *Peter*, and *John*, along with *Jude*. If the Catholic collection does post-date the fragment, it is possible that the fragment’s emphasis on sevenfold collections influenced the compilation of a sevenfold Catholic Epistle collection.

⁴⁹ Metzger, *The Canon of the New Testament*, 197 n. 20.

⁵⁰ This is consistent with Nienhuis’s thesis that *James* is a second-century pseudepigraph written to introduce a collection of Catholic Epistles, *Not by Paul Alone*, see 22–28.

⁵¹ Nienhuis, *Not by Paul Alone*, 76–77. On *James* and *Hebrews*, see also Hahneman, *The Muratorian Fragment*, 25–26, 118–25.

The Wisdom of Solomon

The fragment's discussion of *Wisdom* presents yet another conundrum.⁵² *Wisdom* is often included among early Christian manuscripts of the Bible, including Codex Sinaiticus, Codex Vaticanus, and Codex Alexandrinus, but it is placed among the deuterocanonical or intertestamental books, so the fragment's inclusion of *Wisdom* among apostolic texts is puzzling and its placement here appears to be unique to the Muratorian fragment. It is possible that the hesitance to include it among a list of Jewish scriptures preceding the fragment's list of gospels, Pauline epistles, and other early Christian literature is reflective of the tradition that the number of books in the Old Testament is equal to the number of letters in the Hebrew alphabet, twenty-two.⁵³ The presence of *Wisdom* also supports the proposal of a Greek original for the fragment, since a Greek reading of ὑπὸ Φιλῶνος ('by Philo') misread as ὑπὸ φίλων ('by his friends') helps to explain the strange claim about its authorship.⁵⁴ Regardless of dating, the result of the Fragmentist's argument is the same—that Solomon did not write *Wisdom*, though this did not present a problem for its inclusion.⁵⁵ A partner to the odd exclusion of *I Peter*, *Wisdom* represents an anomalous inclusion by the Fragmentist. This unique inclusion points to a canon in flux, perhaps in the late second or third century, rather than a later, more stable canonical list.

⁵² Metzger, *The Canon of the New Testament*, 197–98.

⁵³ Harrington, "The Old Testament Apocrypha," 199.

⁵⁴ Hahneman, *The Muratorian Fragment*, 14. The point is also made in Metzger, *The Canon of the New Testament*, 198 n. 21: "An ingenious conjecture, made independently by Bishop Fitzgerald and Tregelles, attempts to account for 'the friends' by suggesting that the Latin translator of the Muratorian fragment had before him a Greek phrase that attributed the book of Wisdom to Philo as its author...but misread ὑπὸ Φιλῶνος ('by Philo') as ὑπὸ φίλων ('by his friends')." Metzger also cites Jerome's *Praef. in libros Salomonis*: "...and another book, Wisdom, attributed to Solomon, is a ψευδεπίγραφος" and "some of the older authors affirm that it is a work of Philo the Jew" [et alius ψευδεπίγραφος qui Sapientia Salomonis inscribitur... et nonnulli scriptorium veterum hunc esse Judaei Philonis affirmant.]

⁵⁵ Verheyden argues that the Fragmentist uses *Wisdom* to reinforce the fact that pseudepigraphy is not a problem in the case of *Jude* and the Johannine epistles. However, the fragment does not mention the pseudepigraphy of these Catholic Epistles, Verheyden, "The Canon Muratori," 542.

Apocalypses

Three possible apocalypses are narrowed down to one or two: “we receive only the apocalypses of John and Peter, although some of us are not willing that it (*quam*) be read in church,” while the *Shepherd of Hermas* is rejected outright for public reading on the basis of its too-recent production and exclusion from either the Prophets or the Apostles (ll. 71-80). Either the author refers to the latter (the *Apoc. Pet.*) as the one not allowed to be read in church, which would leave the *Revelation* as the sole accepted text, or he refers to both apocalypses as a singular item, indicating that *neither* is fully accepted. The *Shepherd*, which follows, remains explicitly rejected in contrast to the first two. It is noteworthy that the disagreement over what is to be done with the *Apocalypse of Peter* is internal to the Fragmentist’s community as he says “some of us” do not permit its public reading. This is the only clear instance in the Fragment of internal variation within the *ecclesia catholica*.⁵⁶ The issue of a third authoritative collection is just beginning to emerge: while the author is aware that he should be tentative about the apocalypses of John and Peter, and doubtful of Hermas, significant space is given to discussion of the apocalypses. There is doubt with regard to this third collection, unlike the Gospels, Acts, and the Pauline letters about which the Fragmentist appears to be on firm ground.

The discussion of the *Shepherd of Hermas* is the portion of the Fragment most commonly referenced with regard to its dating. According to the Fragmentist, “Hermas wrote the Shepherd very recently, in our times (*nuperrime temporibus nostris*), in the city of Rome, while bishop Pius, his brother, was occupying the [episcopal] chair of the church of the city of Rome” (ll. 73-76). The argument is made with reference to the presumed author, Hermas, whose brother’s prominent title locates the *Shepherd* in the city of Rome in the mid- to late second century. In Metzger’s view, this points to a date “certainly not later than the year 200.”⁵⁷

⁵⁶ Metzger, *The Canon of the New Testament*, 200.

⁵⁷ Metzger, *The Canon of the New Testament*, 194.

Such claims of “recent production” can also be a way for an author to oppose a text he or she does not like on the basis of its date or inauthenticity. Tertullian opposed the *Acts of Paul and Thecla* because of its production by a church leader imitating Paul, who later confessed and was convicted and removed from office (*De baptismo* 17). The Fragmentist’s claim with regard to the *Shepherd* is that while it should be read privately, the work is not sufficiently ancient to be considered among a collection of Christian scriptures because it dates from after the time of the apostles, and therefore it should not be publicly proclaimed in churches as if it were fully apostolic (ll. 77–80). As with *Wisdom*, the argument about the *Shepherd* is not only about its acceptance but also in regard to its authorship: the *Shepherd* can be counted neither among the Prophets nor the Apostles as it was written too late to be included in either.

It is also possible that the author is concerned that some did regard Hermas as being among the prophets and may have considered the *Shepherd* a prophetic text alongside *Revelation* and the *Apocalypse of Peter*. The *Shepherd* is explicitly excluded by the Fragmentist, but also considered an authentic writing, and as such it can be read privately but not preached publicly. This is an interesting precursor to the claims of both Eusebius and Athanasius regarding such liminal texts which are considered neither in nor out. Eusebius is aware that texts he has designated as disputed are nevertheless read publicly in most churches (the Catholic Epistles, *Hist. eccl.* 2.23.25; *1 Clement*; 3.16; see also 3.31.6). Athanasius names a few texts that are intended solely for private use, emphasizing their role in shaping and informing new converts (*Epist. fest.* 39.7). In the third and fourth centuries there existed a number of Christian deuterocanonical texts permitted for private use but prohibited from public proclamation, among them the *Shepherd*.

Heretical Writings

In contrast to the positive, if excluded, status of the *Shepherd*, the Fragmentist lists those texts regarded as definitively heretical writings: “But we accept nothing whatever of Arsinous or Valentinus or Miltiades, who also composed a new book of Psalms for Marcion, together with Basilides, the Asian founder of the Cataphrygians...” (ll. 81-85). Though the fragmentary ending makes this a difficult passage to navigate, it can at least be said that all of these names and titles can be connected in some way to late-second or early-third century polemic against Marcionite and/or Montanist heresy.⁵⁸ Whether they had all published works in support of these heretical teachings is “difficult to say,” according to Verheyden, but “both the Marcionite and the Montanist controversy had captured the attention of many.”⁵⁹ The popularity of Marcionism and Montanism in a late second or early third century situation offers further evidence of a similar dating for the fragment, given its polemical use of these figures. What is more, this specific discussion of heretical writings reveals one of the motivations for the Fragmentist to list those texts he considers to be among the authoritative scriptures and to explicitly *exclude* others that are revealed to be insufficient on the basis of their late dating or questionable content. This is not necessarily to suggest that canonicity is primarily a response to perceived heresy, but that heresy can indeed be one factor in the inclusion and exclusion of texts in the process of canon formation.⁶⁰

1.2 The Muratorian Fragment as an Antecedent to the Catholic Epistle Collection

The Muratorian Fragment provides a number of critical antecedents to the compilation of seven Catholic Epistles. First, the fragment witnesses to an early outline of a New Testament with a

⁵⁸ Verheyden, “The Canon Muratori,” 546–47. Also noted by Ferguson, “Canon Muratori,” 681.

⁵⁹ Verheyden, “The Canon Muratori,” 551–52.

⁶⁰ Verheyden, “The New Testament Canon,” 404–407.

few loose ends: the four Gospels and thirteen letters of Paul make up a defined core collection, to which the Fragmentist adds the less categorically defined texts of *Jude* and *1* and *2 John*. Third-century manuscripts, the earliest available of the Catholic Epistles, show the same trend: a relatively miscellaneous circulation of individual texts, with the exception of the Bodmer Miscellaneous Codex, which includes *Jude* and *1* and *2 Peter* along with other early Christian literature.⁶¹

Second, the Muratorian Fragment shows no awareness of anything like a Catholic Epistle collection. *James* and the Petrine epistles are completely absent, though the *Apocalypse of Peter* is mentioned and thus not all Petrine literature is excluded. The association between *Jude* and two Johannine epistles is unique, unattested in any other ancient manuscript or catalogue.⁶²

Third, the Fragment's emphasis on the seven-fold form of Paul's corporate letters and the letters to seven churches in *Revelation* shows early interest in the number of letters in a collection. The Fragmentist justifies the Pauline collection not by its overall number (thirteen, as the list lacks *Hebrews*), but rather by the fact that Paul, like John in *Revelation*, writes letters to seven churches. While individual letters are possible, a sevenfold collection denotes a special significance. Before the fragment, Irenaeus also emphasized a particular number of texts that make up a collection—a concept that also reinforces a collection's closed status—in his discussion of the fourfold Gospel (*Adv. haer.* 3.11.8). Furthermore, the existence of at least three known sevenfold letter collections—those of Ignatius, Paul's corporate letters, and the letters to seven churches in *Revelation*—also suggests that authors and readers consciously reflected on sevenfold collections. Had the Fragmentist been aware of a seven-letter collection of Catholic letters, it would likely have been of considerable interest given the author's

⁶¹ The Bodmer Miscellaneous Codex is discussed in detail below in chapter 2, section 2.2.

⁶² Verheyden, "The Canon Muratori," 529; Hahneman, *The Muratorian Fragment*, 128.

emphasis on seven as a collection of texts with universal range.⁶³ The weight given by the fragment to sevenfold collections of letters may serve as a precedent for later compiler(s) of the Catholic Epistle collection.

Fourth, *Acts* remains attached to the Gospels, rather than tied to the Catholic Epistles as in the later tendency to associate *Acts* with the Catholic Epistles as an apostolic collection, which sometimes included other texts. *Barnabas*, for example, is included along with *Acts* and the Catholic Epistles in the third sub-collection of New Testament texts in Codex Sinaiticus, and it follows the seven Catholic Epistles in the stichometry inserted into the sixth-century Codex Claromontanus.⁶⁴

Fifth, the fragment presents a New Testament list similar to those seen later in the work of Eusebius and Athanasius, but a less definitively categorical or ordered one than that of Athanasius: a core collection of authoritative texts (four Gospels, thirteen Pauline letters), counterfeit letters of Paul to the *Laodiceans* and *Alexandrians*, a few slightly more miscellaneous texts a step beyond the core collection which might be considered supplementary (*Jude*, at least two letters of John, *Wisdom*, the *Revelation*), and still others hovering on the fringes of the hierarchy of authoritative status (the *Apocalypse of Peter*, the *Shepherd*). Completely outside this tiered collection of texts allowed for liturgical and private reading are heretical texts that should be completely ignored, including the writings of Arsinous, Valentinus, Miltiades, and Basilides.

By the fourth century, a seven-letter collection of Catholic Epistles is known in both eastern and western circles, including in the work of Eusebius (*Hist. eccl.* 2.23.25, 3.25.3) and Athanasius (*Epist. fest.* 39.5) in the East. The fragment's reassurance about the multiplicity

⁶³ For more discussion on the seven-fold number of the Catholic Epistles in relation to the Muratorian fragment, cf., Nienhuis, *Not by Paul Alone*, 9–13, 76–77.

⁶⁴ There are two blank pages in the New Testament in Codex Sinaiticus: one between John and Romans (Q81-f.6v [BL-f.260v], demarcating a Gospels section from the Pauline section) and one between Philemon and Acts (Q86-f.6v [BL-f.298v], demarcating the Pauline section from a section of apostolic and sub-apostolic texts). For more on the Codex Claromontanus, see chapter 2, section 3.4.

present within the four gospels, its omission of *Hebrews* and four of the seven Catholic Epistles, the anti-heretical polemic, and the statement about the *Shepherd* having been written “recently, in our times” all point to a provenance after a period of collecting the fourfold Gospel and the Pauline corpus in the second century but before the middle of the third century. This is consistent with a date prior to the emergence of a collection of seven Catholic Epistles, which is also reflected in extant manuscripts and Patristic references.

Sometime after the Muratorian fragment was composed, the question remained whether a third sub-corpus should supplement the fourfold Gospel and the Pauline letters. Provided by the fragment are preconditions both for a tri-partite New Testament and the notion that collections of letters can and should take sevenfold form. The fragment serves as an antecedent for both the compilation of the Catholic Epistle collection and the New Testament as a whole. That the Fragmentist has no obvious knowledge of a collection of seven Catholic Epistles is clear not only from the unique pairing of *Jude* and *1 and 2 John*, but also in that a sevenfold collection of apostolic letters would have been of significant interest had it been known to the Fragmentist, given the emphasis on Paul’s seven corporate letters and *Revelation’s* letters to seven churches.

When composing his list of New Testament texts for the third book of *Historia ecclesiastica*, Eusebius was aware of this seven-letter collection of letters attributed to James, Peter, John, and Jude, and rejected it as a work of innovation, similar to the Fragmentist’s rejection of the *Shepherd* as a work composed too recently. He took on as part of his authoritative collection of Christian scripture just the two core letters, *1 Peter* and *1 John*, as they were used by “the ancients” and could therefore be shown to be sufficiently ancient themselves. By the time of Eusebius these particular seven letters—no more, no less—comprise the Catholic collection. However, even someone as influential as Eusebius is not obligated to accept the Catholic collection, and their status remained uncertain relative to the

more stable sub-corpora of Gospels (with *Acts*) and Pauline letters for the majority of the fourth century.

2. THE EARLIEST POPYRI OF THE CATHOLIC EPISTLES

As with the role of the Catholic Epistles in the Muratorian fragment as a miscellaneous, seemingly anomalous grouping of minor texts so it is with their early manuscript history. Because the evidence for the four canonical Gospels and the Pauline corpus is more substantial in the second century, claims are often made for an early and consistent New Testament “canon”—but such claims tend to ignore that the material history of the Catholic Epistles troubles the notion of a New Testament that took shape so early on in Christian history.⁶⁵

Fortunately it is no longer the case, as Gamble once lamented, that the materiality of early Christian manuscripts is of little interest to biblical scholars and historians of Christianity.⁶⁶ Once thought to be the terrain of paleographers and textual critics, even fragmentary manuscripts, he emphasized, are social and material artifacts, offering clues as to the literacy and literary practices of early Christian communities.⁶⁷ At the other extreme, however, is the danger of assuming too much on the basis of such manuscripts. For one thing, the terms “New Testament popyri” or “biblical popyri” are, according to Nongbri, essentially nonsense anachronisms, and the extreme emphasis on the manuscripts of the books that became “biblical,” particularly in isolation from their counterparts in the find sites, collections, and codices that also included texts now considered noncanonical, has perpetuated a perspective that “biblical” texts are inherently exceptional.⁶⁸ Additionally, some recent scholarship problematizes traditional assumptions regarding the dating of both popyri and major codices

⁶⁵ See von Campenhausen, *The Formation of the Christian Bible*; Trobisch, *The First Edition of the New Testament*; and, more recently, Dormandy, “How the Books Became the Bible.”

⁶⁶ Gamble, *Books and Readers*, 42–43.

⁶⁷ Gamble, *Books and Readers*, 43.

⁶⁸ Nongbri, *God’s Library*, 19.

like Sinaiticus, Vaticanus, and Alexandrinus. Palaeographic analysis is not necessarily a reliable method, and the pool of dateable samples is too small and contains few codices for comparison.⁶⁹

As Schmidt notes, of the sixty possible Greek minuscule codices considered “complete” New Testaments, three lack one or more of the Catholic Epistles, and four are composites and often include “nonbiblical” material.⁷⁰ In other words, these are not New Testaments. He concludes that “[t]he preoccupation with reconstructing ‘the original text,’ even if there never was one, has shifted the scholarly attention away from what these manuscripts might tell us about the actual development of the canonical tradition.”⁷¹ Statistical analyses of “New Testament manuscripts” sometimes fail to take account of the apparently minor, but crucial, exceptions—often concerning the Catholic Epistles. In doing so, such analyses make claims about the New Testament as a whole that may be relevant only to the Gospels and/or the letters of Paul, to the detriment of a better understanding of the canonical process.

The prioritizing of Greek and Latin manuscripts over Coptic, Syriac, and Ethiopic ones can also serve to flatten the material history of the texts that came to be included in the New Testament, and the Catholic Epistles in particular: only when exclusions are made can one conclude, as Elliott does, that, “from the fourth century onwards the New Testament canon was, with a few exceptions in Syriac or Ethiopic, generally agreed. That meant that one could expect... a manuscript of the Catholic Epistles would contain the same 7 letters.”⁷² No such self-contained manuscript of just the seven Catholic Epistles is extant from the fourth or fifth

⁶⁹ Nongbri, “Palaeographic Analysis,” 84–97. See also Nongbri, “The Limits of Palaeographic Dating,” 1–35. Both Nongbri and Mazza stress that a combination of evidence is a necessity in attempts at dating, including paleography, text references, philology, carbon dating, and a more consistent collection of data; Mazza, “Dating Early Christian Papyri,” 53.

⁷⁰ Schmidt, “The Greek New Testament as a Codex,” 475.

⁷¹ Schmidt, “The Greek New Testament as a Codex,” 479.

⁷² Elliott, “Manuscripts, the Codex, and the Canon,” 113; for a more recent example, see Dormandy, “How the Books Became the Bible,” 5, 21–22, where he determines on the basis of Greek manuscripts alone that the manuscript history of the New Testament texts indicates “noncollection-evident [by which he essentially means ‘proto-canonical’] artifacts are relatively rare” and “there is nothing even resembling an alternative Bible” or “alternative letter collections.”

century, and the Peshitta, containing only *James*, *1 Peter*, and *1 John* from among the Catholic Epistles, should not be considered an exception to a normative Greek collection containing 27 New Testament texts. The Syriac tradition rather demonstrates the ongoing liminality of the Catholic Epistle collection and the consequences of its limited reception for the New Testament collection.⁷³ Canons are not necessarily decided by a majority rule—as we will see in Eusebius’ acknowledgment of the disputed Catholic Epistles as “well-known to many” and “read publicly in most churches” along with his refusal to include them among his list of ὁμολογουμένα (*Hist. eccl.* 2.23.25, 3.25.3).

A brief note on *Hebrews* is necessary before analyzing the early extant manuscripts of the Catholic Epistles. Unlike the ancient material tie between *Acts* and the Catholic Epistles⁷⁴, *Hebrews* has sometimes wrongfully been associated with the Catholic Epistles. Despite some resistance to acknowledging the ‘collectedness’ of the Catholic Epistles, there remains a common impulse to refer to a second set of New Testament letters alongside Paul that has led many to lump *Hebrews* with *James*, the Petrine letters, sometimes the Johannine letters, and *Jude*, as a general or miscellaneous epistle.⁷⁵ However, *Hebrews*, did not circulate early on with the Catholic Epistles but rather with the Pauline corpus, and it is never called a “catholic epistle” in antiquity. According to all known manuscripts, until Sinaiticus the Catholic Epistles and *Hebrews* were not included together in any papyrus or codex independent of both *Acts* and

⁷³ More will be said on the Syriac reception of the Catholic Epistles in chapter 2, section 3.3. For more on the reception of the Catholic Epistles in the Syrian church in the 5th century, see chapter 2, section 3.3. On the Syriac New Testament, see Bewer, “The History of the New Testament Canon in the Syrian Church,” 345–63; Siker, “The Canonical Status of the Catholic Epistles in the Syriac New Testament,” 311–40; Williams, “The Syriac Versions of the New Testament,” 143–66.

⁷⁴ Cf. κ 01, A 02, B 03, H 014, K 018, L 020, Ψ 044, 049. This is a pairing with historical and material precedent, but it is also sometimes an unhelpfully flat label for discerning the actual contents of the manuscripts listed: “a/c” can refer to *Acts* and/or one or more of the Catholic Epistles. This produces the misleading impression that some manuscripts contain the Catholic Epistle collection that do not actually do so. The fifth-century Codex Ephraemi (C 04), for example, is listed in the Nestle-Aland manuscript appendix as containing “eap ρ ”—Evangelia, Apostolos (Acts and the Catholic Epistles), Paul, Revelation—but the majority of the text of the Catholic Epistles is missing, while the fifth-century Codex Bezae (D 05) is listed as containing “ea” but preserves just the end of *3 John*. Even if these codices *once* contained the Catholic Epistle collection, the extant manuscripts do not; their common neglect has perhaps strangely led to the Catholic Epistles being taken for granted as texts included among the New Testament collection.

⁷⁵ Nienhuis, *Not by Paul Alone*, 3–4.

the Pauline Epistles; instead, the Catholic collection was tied to *Acts* while *Hebrews* shifted around within the fluctuating order of the Pauline corpus. From an historical perspective, it makes little sense to associate *Hebrews* with the Catholic, or even “General,” Epistles and those who include *Hebrews* among a general list of non-Pauline letters in effort to dissociate it from its Pauline context and to give it a home elsewhere do so without historical footing in the manuscript tradition.

2.1 The Earliest Papyri of the Catholic Epistles

The early manuscript history of the Catholic Epistles is sparse in comparison with the Gospels and the Pauline Corpus. With few early papyri extant, most are so fragmented that they preserve just a small section of text, and in most cases it is difficult to tell the intended use of these papyri, though for manuscripts that appear to be hastily or carelessly written, liturgical usage is more easily ruled out.⁷⁶ As Knust notes, however, in a monastic setting such as that of the Dishna papers (among which are included \mathfrak{B}^{72} from the Bodmer Miscellaneous Codex, containing the Greek texts of *1* and *2 Peter* and *Jude*, and Crosby-Schøyen ms 193 of *1 Peter* in Coptic), “the divide between public spiritual practices and private spiritual edification as a scholar or monk among one’s books appears to be thin.”⁷⁷ Perhaps unexpectedly, due to the difficulty in dating *James* and its silence in Patristic writings up until Origen, *James* and *1 Peter* are the texts most attested in the early manuscript tradition, as the number of papyri, particularly relative to the rest of the Catholic Epistles, indicates some level of popularity. The extant manuscripts of the Catholic Epistles are listed below in order of their approximate

⁷⁶ Nienhuis, *Not by Paul Alone*, 71.

⁷⁷ Knust, “Miscellany Manuscripts,” 114. Though she is talking specifically here about material culture, the point perhaps also problematizes the stark line drawn by Athanasius between books that are κανονιζόμενα and those that are only “to be read,” ἀναγινώσκεσθαι (*Epist. fest.* 18–20; see Brakke, “A New Fragment,” 60–61).

dating. Following this, I examine \mathfrak{P}^{72} , the earliest and most complete evidence for a clustering of Catholic Epistles prior to their sevenfold form, in more detail.

2.1.1 *James*

There are three extant early fragments of *James*. Falling just behind *1 Peter* in number, this may indicate some level of popularity, especially given *James*' possible dating in the mid- or even latter half of the second century, and that Origen provides the earliest attestation to *James*.⁷⁸ \mathfrak{P}^{20} , a third century Oxyrhynchus papyrus (P. Oxy 1171), holds *James* 2:19–3:2 on one side and 3:3–9 on the other, though unfortunately the lines and margins are incomplete.⁷⁹ The text is in a single column and may have come from a codex originally measuring 12 by 16 cm with space for approximately 24–25 lines per page. It makes use of common *nomina sacra* such as those for Spirit (ΠΙΝΑ/ΠΙΝΣ), Lord (ΚΣ/ΚΥ), and God (ΘΣ/ΘΥ). Of special interest for this project is that an apostrophe is used to mark the end of the names Αβρααμ and Πααβ, though elsewhere no punctuation is used—a scribal marker of scriptural exempla, which we will see more of with regard to \mathfrak{P}^{72} .⁸⁰

\mathfrak{P}^{23} was found at Oxyrhynchus (P. Oxy 1229) and contains *James* 1:10-12 (verso) and 1:15-18 (recto).⁸¹ The text is in a single column, though nine or ten lines are lost at the bottom of the page, so it is estimated that it contained 27 lines per column and measured around 19cm. No *nomina sacra* are evident and corrections are visible on the side containing *Jas* 1:10-12. Grenfell and Hunt note that it was found folded at right angles to the text, which is written in “good-sized broad uncials, rather coarse and irregular in formation, though hooks and

⁷⁸ *Sel. Ps.* 30:6 / *Jas* 2:26, 118.153 / *Jas* 4:10; Nienhuis, *Not by Paul Alone*, 55.

⁷⁹ Hunt (ed.), *The Oxyrhynchus Papyri: Part IX*, 9–11 (no. 1171). Images can be viewed at <https://ntvmr.uni-muenster.de/manuscript-workspace?docID=10020>.

⁸⁰ Blumell and Wayment (eds.), *Christian Oxyrhynchus*, 85–87.

⁸¹ Grenfell and Hunt, *The Oxyrhynchus Papyri: Part X*, 16–18. Images can be viewed at <https://ntvmr.uni-muenster.de/manuscript-workspace?docID=10023>.

thickenings at the ends of strokes show an attempt at ornament,”⁸² which Blumell and Wayment take to indicate a trained hand in early development.⁸³ Pages B and Γ are preserved, and since page A and perhaps a title page would have preceded these, and the need to number the pages of such a short text is unlikely, this is a possible indication that P²³ contained more than just *James*, which is either the first text of a collection or the only text in this manuscript. P²³ is therefore a candidate for a material collection containing two or more Catholic Epistles (and/or other texts) that circulated on its own prior to inclusion in Sinaiticus and other major codices.⁸⁴ The possibility remains hypothetical, however, and cannot be confirmed based on the extant evidence.

P¹⁰⁰ is a third or fourth century fragment found at Oxyrhynchus (P. Oxy 4449) and contains the text of *James* 3:13–4:4 (verso) and 4:5–5:1 (recto) in a single column of approximately 25 lines per page.⁸⁵ On the quality of the text, Elliott notes a “confident informal hand” with a few careless errors, and the scribe makes use of common *nomina sacra*. There is a wide top margin (2 cm) with page numbers 6 and 7 extant, suggesting that this was a codex containing only *James* or *James* followed by other texts (Elliott suggest other Catholic Epistles, but this is not a given).⁸⁶ In P¹⁰⁰ and P²³, then, we might have two manuscripts in which *James* is circulating in isolation, but the pagination makes it at least possible that *James* stands at the start of a collection of other texts, as well—possibly other Catholic Epistles.

⁸² Grenfell and Hunt, *Part X*, 16.

⁸³ Blumell and Wayment, *Christian Oxyrhynchus*, 88–90.

⁸⁴ Grenfell and Hunt, *Part X*, 16–18; Dormandy, “How the Books Became the Bible,” 15.

⁸⁵ Haslam, et al. (eds.), *The Oxyrhynchus Papyri LXV*, 20–25 (no. 4449). Images can be viewed at <https://ntvmr.uni-muenster.de/manuscript-workspace?docID=10100>.

⁸⁶ Elliott, “The Early Text of the Catholic Epistles,” 220; Blumell and Wayment, *Christian Oxyrhynchus*, 134–35.

2.1.2 *1 Peter*

There are four extant manuscripts containing some or all of *1 Peter* from before the fifth century. P⁷² (*P. Bodmer VII and VIII*), which contains *1 Peter*, along with *2 Peter* and *Jude*, will be discussed in detail below. P⁸¹ is a fragmentary fourth-century papyrus containing *1 Peter* 2:20–3:1 (verso) and 3:4–12 (recto). The text is in a single column and would contain approximately 37 lines of text on a folio measuring 31cm by 17.5 cm; no other significant information can be found.⁸⁷ P¹²⁵ is a third or fourth century fragmentary papyrus found at Oxyrhynchus (*P. Oxy 4934*) containing *1 Peter* 1:23–2:5 (recto) and 2:7–12 (verso).⁸⁸ The text is in one column, with approximately 30 lines per page, and was previously contained in a codex that measured approximately 13cm by 23cm. Common *nomina sacra* are used, but notations and punctuation are not.⁸⁹ Uncial 0206 is preserved in fragmentary form in *P. Oxy XI 1353*, and contains the text of *1 Peter* 5:5–13.⁹⁰ The page size measures 13.5cm by 10.1cm. According to Elliott, the text shows “round uncial writing; no clear punctuation; [and] pagination (229, added by a later hand) indicates that the original volume was large.”⁹¹ Because the page numbers were added by a different and later hand from the initial scribe, it is possible the codex was a composite.⁹²

Found among the Dishna Papers, at the same site as the Bodmer Miscellaneous Codex, the Crosby-Schøyen Codex MS 193 contains, in order, the Book of *Jonah*, a portion of *2 Maccabees*, *1 Peter*, the *Peri Pascha* of Melito of Sardis, and an Easter homily. The codex has been dated to the middle of the third century, measures 15cm by 15cm, and the text is in Sahidic

⁸⁷ Images can be viewed at <https://ntvmr.uni-muenster.de/manuscript-workspace?docID=10081>.

⁸⁸ Obbink and Gonis (eds.), *The Oxyrhynchus Papyri: Part LXXIII*, 17–22 (no. 4934). Images can be viewed at <https://ntvmr.uni-muenster.de/manuscript-workspace?docID=10125>.

⁸⁹ Blumell and Wayment, *Christian Oxyrhynchus*, 162–66, esp. 163.

⁹⁰ Grenfell and Hunt (eds.), *The Oxyrhynchus Papyri XI*, 5–6 (no. 1353).

⁹¹ Elliott, “The Early Text of the Catholic Epistles,” 223.

⁹² Using the Bodmer Miscellaneous and Crosby-Schøyen Codices as examples of contemporary “large and bulky” codices and taking into account the added pagination, Barker argues such a codex could have contained *Romans* through *1 Peter*, or other texts, as well as for a possible late-second-century date for the fragment; Barker, “How Long and Old is the Codex of Which P.Oxy 1353 is a Leaf?” 197.

Coptic uncial lettering; it may have been compiled as an Easter lectionary.⁹³ It may derive from an exemplar older than the Bodmer Codex text of *1 Peter*, since it appears not to be an original translation from Greek but a copy of a (Coptic) copy.⁹⁴ The inscription of *1 Peter* reads “The Epistle of Peter,” suggesting the scribe knew or at least accepted only this Petrine letter, whereas the scribe(s) of the Bodmer Miscellaneous Codex knew of two letters of Peter.⁹⁵ The scribe was reliably bilingual in Coptic and Greek, as well as careful, making relatively few mistakes and even correcting many of them immediately.⁹⁶ That the earliest evidence for *1 Peter* exists in a Coptic translation suggests that *1 Peter* was widely disseminated, read, and copied, and therefore considered useful and important in the early stages of the production of Christian literature.

2.1.3 *1 John*

The early manuscript history of *1 John* is unfortunately sparse, especially considering the letter’s early and wide acceptance. \mathfrak{P}^9 , a third century Oxyrhynchus papyrus (P. Oxy 402), is a single leaf containing *1 John* 4:11-12 (recto) and 4:14-17 (verso).⁹⁷ This is the earliest and, unfortunately, the singular attestation of *1 John* prior to the major codices. It appears to be written crudely, with a few unintelligible words; Blumell and Wayment note that “[t]here are so many errors in such a small amount of text that it raises questions as to the purpose of this particular copy of the First Epistle of John.”⁹⁸ Common *nomina sacra* are used. Because of its size and fragmentary form, it is difficult to know whether this was an individual book or part

⁹³ For the complete text of *1 Peter* in the Crosby-Shøyen Codex, see Willis, “1 Peter,” 135–215. Knust, “Miscellany Manuscripts,” 109. A similar suggestion has been made by Horrell regarding a possibly unifying theme of the Bodmer Miscellaneous Codex: Horrell, “the Themes of 1 Peter,” 514. On the date, see also Lundhaug, “The Date of MS,” 219–34.

⁹⁴ Willis, “1 Peter,” 137.

⁹⁵ Horrell, “The Themes of 1 Peter,” 504.

⁹⁶ Willis, “1 Peter,” 137, 138, 140.

⁹⁷ Grenfell and Hunt (eds.), *The Oxyrhynchus Papyri III*, 2–3 (no. 402). Images can be viewed at <https://ntvmr.uni-muenster.de/manuscript-workspace?docID=10009>.

⁹⁸ Blumell and Wayment, *Christian Oxyrhynchus*, 184; see also Elliott, who calls these “nonsense readings,” Elliott, “The Early Text of the Catholic Epistles”, 212.

of a collection, though it can be estimated to have included approximately 16 lines on a page measuring roughly 11cm by 15cm.

The earliest witnesses to *2* and *3 John* are Codex Sinaiticus and Codex Vaticanus. Despite the scholarly association of Johannine literature in the modern era of biblical criticism, there is no sign of a Johannine collection (even of the three epistles) that circulated independently of the Catholic Epistles or the rest of the New Testament.⁹⁹ While Irenaeus, in the second century, cited *1* and *2 John* in a way that suggests he received the texts as one, no material witness binding the Johannine epistles prior to their inclusion, along with the Catholic Epistle collection, in the major codices is extant.¹⁰⁰

2.1.4 *Jude*

As for *Jude*, P⁷⁸ is a fragmentary papyrus dating from the third or fourth century containing *Jude* 4–5 (verso) and 7–8 (recto).¹⁰¹ The text is in a single column of approximately 4–5 lines.¹⁰² Elliott suggests that the diminutive size indicates its private use as part of a miniature codex measuring 5.3 cm wide and 2.9 cm high or as an amulet.¹⁰³ Because the extant verses are condemnatory, Elliott notes that as an amulet, it may have “served a malevolent purposes, wishing ill of non-conformers and alleged sinners by reminding them of the nature of divine punishment,” while Nienhuis notes it may have been used to protect the wearer from false teaching.¹⁰⁴ Wasserman concludes based on a meticulous palaeographic analysis that, due to the small size of the codex of which this fragment was a part, the codex would have had to contain multiple quires in order to accommodate the entirety of *Jude*—an unlikelihood, as the

⁹⁹ Hill’s argument for an ancient Johannine corpus is unconvincing; see Hill, *The Johannine Corpus in the Early Church*, 449–64.

¹⁰⁰ Nienhuis, *Not by Paul Alone*, 35; Lieu, *The Second and Third Epistles of John*, 18–19.

¹⁰¹ Ingrams, et. al. (eds.), *The Oxyrhynchus Papyri XXXIV*, 4–6 (no. 2684). Images can be viewed at <https://ntvmr.uni-muenster.de/manuscript-workspace?docID=10078>.

¹⁰² Blumell and Wayment, *Christian Oxyrhynchus*, 138–39.

¹⁰³ Elliott, “The Early Text of the Catholic Epistles,” 218.

¹⁰⁴ Elliott, “The Early Text of the Catholic Epistles,” 219; Nienhuis, *Not by Paul Alone*, 71.

scribe apparently struggled to squeeze content onto the preserved pages in such a way that would be unnecessary with multiple quires.¹⁰⁵ Against Wasserman’s argument that no additional texts should be posited than the evidence provides for, Dormandy suggests that the amulet contained an introductory prayer, but likely no other scriptural material.¹⁰⁶ As with most of the other papyri fragments of the Catholic Epistles, \mathfrak{P}^{78} provides material evidence that *Jude* was used alone before the fourth century, but remains antecedent to a Catholic Epistle collection as we have just this small fragment.

Aside from this small amulet, \mathfrak{P}^{72} is the only extant early manuscript of *Jude*. Much has been made of this manuscript, which also contains *1* and *2 Peter*, for the history of the New Testament canon, though things may not be as straightforward as they seem.

2.2 \mathfrak{P}^{72} and the “Proto-canonical” Problem

Among the earliest extant papyri witnesses to the Catholic Epistles is so-called \mathfrak{P}^{72} , containing both the Petrine epistles and *Jude* and likely dating to the third century. This is the best-preserved material witness to the association of any Catholic Epistles prior to their combination as a virtual sevenfold collection in the mid-to-late third century. \mathfrak{P}^{72} is not only the only cluster of Catholic Epistles prior to Codex Sinaiticus, but also the only manuscript comprising more than a single preserved page. The designation “ \mathfrak{P}^{72} ” would seem to imply the unambiguous collection of *only Jude* and *1* and *2 Peter*, but the apparent collection of multiple now-canonical Catholic Epistles as a single manuscript is rather misleading. \mathfrak{P}^{72} (or *P. Bodmer VII and VIII*) is part of a larger collection, the composite Bodmer Miscellaneous Codex, which contains, in order, the *Nativity of Mary* (which is the oldest extant manuscript of the *Protevangelium of James*), *3 Corinthians* (a supposed correspondence between Paul and the Corinthians), the

¹⁰⁵ Wasserman, *The Epistle of Jude*, 52–55; see also Wasserman, “ \mathfrak{P}^{78} (P.Oxy. XXIV 2684),” 137–60.

¹⁰⁶ Dormandy, “How the Books Became the Bible,” 17–18.

Eleventh *Ode of Solomon*, *Jude*, an Easter sermon of Melito of Sardis, a fragmented hymn, the *Apology of Phileas*, *Psalms* 33 and 34 (LXX), and *1–2 Peter*.¹⁰⁷ *Jude* not only precedes the Petrine epistles; they are also not consecutive and likely constitute two separate series added to the codex at different times.

Descriptions of \mathfrak{B}^{72} often misrepresent the actual situation: even Aland, for example, identifies \mathfrak{B}^{72} as a third or fourth century papyrus which “contains the letters of Peter and Jude as a single collection of writings,” and represents “one of the most important textual witnesses, if not itself the most important” for the Catholic Epistles, seeming to suggest the papyrus is made up of these texts alone.¹⁰⁸ Likewise Lockett observes, while acknowledging that the codex contains other texts besides *Jude* and the Petrine epistles, that it is “an odd collection of texts with three of the Catholic Epistles in an unusual order.”¹⁰⁹ This reference to the peculiar ordering is only possible with the later biblical canon in mind—a collection about which the Bodmer Codex shows no interest or evidence. Michael Dormandy claims, on the basis of Horrell’s argument that *1 Peter* provides the thematic center for the Bodmer Codex, that although \mathfrak{B}^{72} is not “collection-evident” (proto-canonical), “[i]t nevertheless regards a work which is in modern terms canonical as the heart of the collection.”¹¹⁰

However, while the Bodmer Codex does provide an early material witness to the general association of three Catholic Epistles, it shows no signs of the existence of a discrete Catholic—nor a New Testament—collection, instead testifying to the eclectic compilation and usage in the third century of Jewish and early Christian literature beyond the content of later conceptions of the Christian biblical canon. \mathfrak{B}^{72} , then, as a part of the greater Bodmer Codex,

¹⁰⁷ Curiously, the Crosby Schøyen Codex MS 193 also contains Melito’s *Peri Pascha*, along with *2 Macc* 5:27–7:41, the earliest known manuscript of *1 Peter*, *Jonah*, and one unidentified text. See Jones, “The Bodmer ‘Miscellaneous’ Codex and the Crosby–Schøyen Codex MS 193,” 9–20; Horrell, “The Themes of 1 Peter,” 502–22.

¹⁰⁸ Aland and Aland, *The Text of the New Testament*, 87, 93.

¹⁰⁹ Lockett, *Letters from the Pillar Apostles*, 81–2.

¹¹⁰ Dormandy, “How the Books Became the Bible,” 19; see Horrell, “The Themes of 1 Peter,” 502–22.

serves as an *antecedent* to the Catholic Epistle collection, showing, in Horrell’s words, an early “clustering” of Catholic Epistles. But the importance of P⁷² should also not be overstated.

Not only has P⁷² commonly been divorced from its context within the greater Bodmer Codex, but the codex itself has also been isolated from the whole of the Bodmer Papyri Collection which itself was found as part of the Dishna papers¹¹¹, which include the Bodmer Papyri and the equally well-known Chester Beatty Collection.¹¹² The Dishna papers were found at a bend in the Nile river overlooking a Pachomian monastery not far from the find site of the Nag Hammadi Codices.¹¹³ Lundhaug suggests that the Nag Hammadi Codices and the Dishna papers could have been collected and used by the same monastic community or network, contrary to some common objections. The claim that these two finds are too dissimilar in content, and thus could not share a common provenance, is made on the basis that canonical scripture was found among the Dishna Papers, while the Nag Hammadi Codices contain noncanonical texts. This is an invalid assertion not only because later monastic collections have been found containing both types of texts, but also because, per Lundhaug, “[a]lthough it has been suggested that the Nag Hammadi Codices should be regarded as anti-biblical books, it is quite clear that the Nag Hammadi texts are in fact *interpreting*, not contradicting, biblical

¹¹¹ Nongbri helpfully summarizes the history of the find and the title “Dishna Papers,” at first calling it into question on the basis of the personal papers of various characters involved, but finally affirming its general historical veracity, and concluding that the find took place somewhere between Tentyra (ancient Dendera) and Nag Hammadi; Nongbri, *God’s Library*, 159.

¹¹² Wasserman makes this point effectively: “Unfortunately, NT scholars have tended to focus only on the text of P⁷², disregarding the rest of the codex. Something similar has been true for the other works contained in the codex as well. In fact, when we consider the history of this codex as a whole, a consistent pattern of division and specialization is observable, a pattern that conceals the comprehensive picture of the historical context in which the codex once existed. First, the codex has been disassembled; second, today the manuscript is divided between Geneva and the Vatican; third, it took decades before the provenance of the discovery was made known; fourth, the texts of the codex were given nine different designations (*P. Bodmer V*, *P. Bodmer VII*, etc.), edited and dispersed in five different publications; and, finally, the specialization among scholars of different fields and interests has made the situation worse”; Wasserman, “Papyrus 72 and the Bodmer Miscellaneous Codex,” 137–38.

¹¹³ On hypotheses regarding the context of the Dishna papers (school, monastery, scribal training center, classical paideia...) see Lundhaug, “The Dishna Papers,” 368–74.

texts.”¹¹⁴ The fundamentally interpretive function of many (or all) of the Nag Hammadi texts demands knowledge of and sustained access to the scriptural texts on which they were based.

Lundhaug’s response to the assertion that there exists no overlap in the manuscripts found across both collections is that they were simply buried at different times and for different reasons. Athanasius’s list detailed in the bishop’s festal letter from 367, for example, was translated into Coptic by the monks led by the Pachomian abbot Theodore, endorsing it as monastic rule. Heretical texts such as those found in the Nag Hammadi Codices may have been hidden in order to avoid their confiscation “by monastic or ecclesiastical authorities,”¹¹⁵ while the texts that came to constitute the Dishna Papers “can hardly have been hidden as a result of a theologically motivated purge of heretical books. Their contents are more diverse and much less controversial, comprising biblical and classical texts and only a small number of apocryphal writings.”¹¹⁶ P⁷², part of the Bodmer Miscellaneous Codex, itself part of the Dishna Papers find, may share a monastic provenance with the Nag Hammadi Codices—a far cry from the apparently straightforward “Papyrus 72” containing *1–2 Peter* and *Jude* suggestive of an early sub-collection of New Testament literature.

Reconstructing the Bodmer Codex is not straightforward, as is obvious from the variety of conclusions surrounding the original codex and its original sub-collections. As summarized by Wasserman, Testuz, who observed the physical manuscripts of the codex, saw evidence of three distinct collections, two of which dated to the third century and one to the fourth, two sets of binding, and four scribal hands; Turner, having not seen the physical manuscripts and making use of Testuz’s reconstruction, observed six scribal hands contributing to one unified codex from roughly the early fourth century; while Grunewald, having corresponded with the holders of the codex at the Bodmer Library in Geneva (aside from *1–2 Peter*, which have been

¹¹⁴ Lundhaug, “The Dishna Papers,” 365, 375. For further argument on this issue, see Lundhaug and Jennot, *The Monastic Origins of the Nag Hammadi Codices*, esp. 78–84.

¹¹⁵ Lundhaug, “The Dishna Papers,” 351–52; Gamble, *Books and Readers*, 172.

¹¹⁶ Lundhaug, “The Dishna Papers,” 354.

held by the Vatican since the 1960s), distinguished three separate collections on the basis of the way the quires are arranged. Series I contained the *Nativity of Mary*, *3 Corinthians*, the 11th *Ode of Solomon*, *Jude*, Melito's homily, and the fragmented hymn; series II contained the *Apology of Phileas* and *Psalms* 33 and 34; and series III contained *1* and *2 Peter* and possibly another text, now lost.¹¹⁷ Nongbri lists P.Bodmer XX and IX (the *Apology of Phileas* and *Psalms* 33 and 34) as a separate entity from the rest of the codex due to the inconsistency of the binding holes in these manuscripts versus in the rest of the codex—a view that coheres with Grunewald's designation of series II.¹¹⁸

Additionally, Nongbri asserts that *1–2 Peter* appear “to have originally been part of a different codex (probably the beginning of another codex) before it was added to the block of texts composed of *P.Bodm.* V, X, XI, VII, XIII, and XII.”¹¹⁹ However, Wasserman argues, on the basis of a shared scribe for *3 Corinthians*, the 11th *Ode of Solomon*, *Jude*, and the Petrine epistles and changes to the binding of the hymn fragment and *1* and *2 Peter*, that there is an original connection between series I and III, which would place *Jude* and *1* and *2 Peter* within the same original sub-collection.¹²⁰ Even if it is the case that *1–2 Peter* was copied by the same hand as *Jude*, the binding and codicological evidence suggests a distinct unit bound first to series I and then placed after series II.¹²¹

¹¹⁷ Wasserman, “Papyrus 72 and the Bodmer Miscellaneous Codex,” 140–44.

¹¹⁸ Nongbri, *God's Library*, 170; Nongbri, “Recent Progress,” 171–172. Jones explains that codices designated “miscellaneous” share a common theme, while those designated “composite” do not, testing each designation on both the Bodmer and Crosby-Schøyen codices and concluding neither codex has a common theme on the basis of a gradual-inclusion theory and the ancient interest in collecting as many scriptural texts as possible: Jones, “The Bodmer ‘Miscellaneous’ Codex and the Crosby-Schøyen Codex MS 193,” 9–20, esp. 19–20. Horrell, on the other hand, sees coherent themes in both codices: “the Easter themes of suffering and vindication,” and that it is “striking how well these themes also reflect those central to 1 Peter.” Even if not all of the Bodmer texts reflect this theme, Horrell places significant importance in the inclusion in both codices of both *1 Peter* and Melito's *Peri Pascha*, considering *1 Peter* in particular is central to both collections; Horrell “The Themes of 1 Peter,” 508, 517–18, 522.

¹¹⁹ Nongbri, “Recent Progress,” 172.

¹²⁰ Wasserman, “Papyrus 72 and the Bodmer Miscellaneous Codex,” 146.

¹²¹ See also Nongbri, “The Construction of P.Bodmer VIII,” 394–410.

The purpose of the Bodmer codex is also difficult to determine. It was found near a monastic site, but scribal haste and its small size (5.75 by 6 cm) has led most to suggest the codex was meant for private use, since its text and size would be inconvenient for public reading.¹²² However, a liturgical function has also been suggested, as marks are evident in the text of the *11th Ode of Solomon* that may have been intended as aids for reading aloud.¹²³ A number of theological motivations for the combination of texts have been proposed, including apologetic concerns, an Easter theme, the body, and suffering, all of which seem to suggest a communal/liturgical function, rather than private use.¹²⁴ Given the multiple scribes who had a hand in the codex's production and the papyrological studies describing its composite nature, it is also possible that individual texts had different purposes prior to being bound together.

Elliott states that, while the origin and function of the codex are difficult to ascertain, “for our purposes it is sufficient to note that the New Testament writings were used here for a private individual,” which helps to explain some of the distinctive features.¹²⁵ The “New Testament writings” were, perhaps, used by a private individual, but not separately from the codex to which they were bound. Elliott's identification of the texts of *1–2 Peter* and *Jude* here perpetuates the “proto-canonical” problem we have encountered elsewhere. To explain away supposed idiosyncrasies of a single codex in this way ignores the fact that the Bodmer Codex preserves the only complete texts of any Catholic Epistles prior to the fourth century in a codex also containing a variety of other literature that did not become a part of the New Testament.¹²⁶

¹²² Wasserman, “Papyrus 72,” 138.

¹²³ Images of the *Eleventh Ode of Solomon* in the Bodmer Codex can be viewed at <https://bodmerlab.unige.ch/fr/constellations/papyri/mirador/1072205366?page=045>, pages 45–49.

¹²⁴ See Wasserman, “Papyrus 72,” 147–48; Horrell, “The Themes of 1 Peter,” 516–17; Haines-Eitzen, *Guardians of Letters*, 103–4.

¹²⁵ Elliott, “The Early Text of the Catholic Epistles,” 215; Hurtado, too, claims P⁷² (he does not differentiate between P⁷² and the Bodmer Miscellaneous Codex) was copied for private usage, *The Earliest Christian Artifacts*, 175–6, n. 71.

¹²⁶ Elliot also claims both that the scribe was “extremely careless” and that there is theological intent behind a number of textual changes, 214.

Aside from having been collected in the same codex, there are a few interesting connections between the texts designated as \mathfrak{P}^{72} . There is substantial evidence that *Jude* and *1–2 Peter* shared a scribe, along with *3 Corinthians* and the *Eleventh Ode of Solomon*. They also share an anti-adoptionist tendency, indicated by textual variants that present Jesus explicitly as God. The evidence pointing to a shared scribe for *Jude* and the Petrine letters is especially telling. All three texts show similar handwriting in a cursive style (even if it appears gradually in the Petrine letters) and ligatures connecting certain characters (λη, αι); there is a common mix-up between γ and κ indicative of a Coptic scribe experiencing sound confusing between Greek and Coptic¹²⁷; and, aside from conventional *nomina sacra*, some non-Greek names are also marked with a supralinear stroke: Ενωχ (*Jude* 14), Σαρρα, Αβρααμ (*1 Pet* 3:6), Νωε (*1Pet* 3:20, *2 Pet* 2:5), and Μιχαηλ the archangel (*Jude* 9; though the manuscript reads Μιχαης).¹²⁸ It appears that only some exempla are marked in this way, while “righteous Lot” (*2 Pet* 2:7) and Balaam and Bosor (*2 Pet* 2:15) are followed by an apostrophe.¹²⁹ *3 Corinthians* also includes a few supralinear lines over non-Greek names¹³⁰: Δαυιδ (*3 Cor* 5) and, twice, Ισρηλ (the α is omitted both times, *3 Cor* 10, 32); the first letters of Ιωνας and αμαθιου are marked by two supralinear dots (vv. 29–30), and ελειςαιου (Elisha) may be marked with an apostrophe (v. 32).

The texts of *Jude* and *1* and *2 Peter* also indicate a priority to present Jesus explicitly as God. In *Jude* 5, for example, where some manuscripts have Ἰησοῦς¹³¹, κύριος¹³², θεός¹³³,

¹²⁷ Wasserman, “Papyrus 72 and the *Bodmer Miscellaneous Codex*” 139.

¹²⁸ Images of *Jude* can be viewed at

<https://bodmerlab.unige.ch/fr/constellations/papyri/mirador/1072205366?page=049>, pages 49–55; images of *1–2 Peter* can be viewed at https://digi.vatlib.it/view/MSS_Pap.Bodmer.VIII.

¹²⁹ Wasserman notes only Enoch, Sarah, Abraham, and Noah with a supralinear line and lists *2 Pet* 2:7 (Lot) and *2 Pet* 2:15 (Balaam and Bosor), 151–52. There might also be a mark above the mu in Μουσεως (*Jude* 9; spelled this way rather than Μουσεως), but it is difficult to tell from the old photographs of P.Bodmer VII.

¹³⁰ Images of *Third Corinthians* can be viewed at

<https://bodmerlab.unige.ch/fr/constellations/papyri/mirador/1072205366?page=040>, pages 40–45.

¹³¹ A 33. 81. 2344 vg. 88 sa^{ms}? bo? 1739^{xt} Or^{1739mg}

¹³² ⲛ 1175. 1448 Byz. 307. 436. 642. Ψ 1611 latt sy^h

¹³³ C² 5 vg^{ms} 442. 1243. 2492 vg^{mss} sy^{ph}

or, for one manuscript (1735), κύριος Ἰησοῦς as the one who saved Israel from Egypt, \mathfrak{B}^{72} alone reads θεός Χριστός – God Christ. As Wasserman notes, this cannot be a conflation of other attestations, as no other manuscript reads Χριστός. In addition to this, \mathfrak{B}^{72} replaces Χριστός with θεός in *1 Peter* 5:1 so that it reads “the sufferings of God,” while *2 Peter* 1:2 omits a και such that the text reads “in the knowledge of God our Lord Jesus.”¹³⁴ Despite the many textual connections between *Jude* and *2 Peter* and other connections between the texts of series I and III, there are no traces of scribal efforts to harmonize shared citations or allusions in any direction.¹³⁵ Nonetheless, the cumulative evidence strongly suggests that *Jude* and the Petrine letters do indeed share a scribe and a concern to present Jesus as God.

While Wasserman’s substantial research on \mathfrak{B}^{72} is meticulous, he overemphasizes the importance of \mathfrak{B}^{72} over the remainder of the codex. Included in his final conclusion is the claim that “[t]he most significant connection [between series I and series III of the Bodmer miscellaneous codex] is the fact that one single scribe is responsible for the copying of \mathfrak{B}^{72} .”¹³⁶ This supposed significance is only apparent when one is working backwards from the knowledge of a later New Testament collection that includes *Jude* and *1* and *2 Peter*. In fact, while *1 Peter* was widely accepted early on, *Jude* and *2 Peter* continued to hold uncertain status until late in the fourth century.

Nienhuis and Horrell make more measured claims. Nienhuis states that \mathfrak{B}^{72} indicates the Catholic Epistle collection was not yet fixed “in every quarter of Christian Egypt” by the end of the third century, and that these three letters were “not so highly regarded at this point as to make it inappropriate for someone to bind them together with a miscellaneous assortment of canonical, apocryphal, and contemporary writings.”¹³⁷ Similarly, for Horrell the Bodmer codex displays “first, the linking of 1–2 Peter with *Jude*, a hint as to the early stages in the

¹³⁴ Wasserman, “Papyrus 72,” 152–53.

¹³⁵ Wasserman, “Papyrus 72,” 147; Wasserman, *The Epistle of Jude*, 99–102.

¹³⁶ Wasserman, “Papyrus 72,” 154.

¹³⁷ Nienhuis, *Not By Paul Alone*, 71.

clustering of ‘catholic epistles’, and second, that here we find these subsequently canonized writings grouped with other early Christian literature, with no evident distinctions of status or value.”¹³⁸ As both suggest, the miscellaneous nature of the Bodmer codex neither supports nor opposes a developing authoritative New Testament—it does not appear either to elevate the now-canonical texts above the others or to be an “alternative New Testament.”

The texts of \mathfrak{P}^{72} therefore have a much more complicated history and context than has often been suggested by their designation as “Papyrus 72.” Not only do *Jude* and the Petrine epistles inhabit the wider Bodmer codex, but that codex may share a monastic provenance with the Nag Hammadi codices, and therefore a community or network that valued a wide range of scriptural texts rather than something like a “proto-canon.” While *Jude* and *1–2 Peter* arguably share a scribe, this same hand also copied *3 Corinthians* as well as the *11th Ode of Solomon*. Even if they may have been part of the same sub-section, *Jude* and *1–2 Peter* were never situated side-by-side. Nothing connects *only* these now-canonical letters distinctly aside from their *later* compilation as part of the Catholic Epistle collection. We should therefore take care not to overstate the importance of \mathfrak{P}^{72} as a proto-canonical document, though it remains the case that \mathfrak{P}^{72} provides the earliest Greek witness to *Jude* and *1–2 Peter* and the only material witness to a cluster of the Catholic Epistles prior to Codices Sinaiticus and Vaticanus.¹³⁹

\mathfrak{P}^{72} therefore remains significant not only for its Catholic cluster but also for the eclectic collection found in the Bodmer Codex as well as the Dishna Papers more widely: both Jewish and Christian, as well as now-canonical and noncanonical texts, were bound together even into the late third or early fourth century when the Bodmer codex was compiled. This fact runs counter to a narrative of the Christian canon which suggests that canonical texts are and were considered fundamentally distinct from noncanonical literature, and that the canonical process

¹³⁸ Horrell, “The Themes of 1 Peter,” 512.

¹³⁹ Charlesworth concludes similarly that we should take care not to make anachronistic claims with regard to the New Testament “canon,” “Ruminating on the Canonical Process,” 114–15.

was a linear procedure of discerning those texts from the rest. As Jennifer Knust puts it, the Dishna collection – which, as we have seen, includes not only the Bodmer Miscellaneous Codex containing *1* and *2 Peter* and *Jude* but also the Crosby Schøyen Codex containing a Coptic version of *1 Peter* – “provides additional evidence to support the growing sense among scholars of ancient religion that a canonically driven focus on material texts obscures rather than clarifies ancient Christian reading practices” and, in its final form, “the Bodmer Miscellany provides material evidence of a ‘scriptural practice’ that could consider 3 Corinthians, the Protoevangelium Iacobi, and the 11th Ode of Solomon together with the apostolic letters of Jude and Peter and other texts.”¹⁴⁰ That is to say, P^{72} should not be considered a “proto-canonical” document. It nevertheless remains an important material witness to the texts of *Jude* and *1–2 Peter* as both Catholic Epistles and more “miscellaneous” Christian literature.

Michael Dormandy, in a recent article, surveys the contents of Greek-language manuscripts dating from before the end of the fourth century in an effort to shed light on the origins of the New Testament canon. He concludes that his overall findings favor an early “biblical” collection, as the majority of the multi-work Greek-language artifacts he studied are comprised only of what would later become canonical material, while texts circulating among collections with now-noncanonical material are relatively rare.¹⁴¹ However, while he does acknowledge the abundance of single works, like Trobisch or others who continue to emphasize the exceptional and early collection of New Testament texts, especially Gospels and Catholic Epistles, Dormandy overemphasizes the roles of the Gospel and Pauline collections as representative of the whole New Testament.¹⁴²

¹⁴⁰ Knust, “Miscellany Manuscripts,” 102 and 108.

¹⁴¹ Dormandy, “How the Books Became the Bible,” 21–22.

¹⁴² Dormandy furthermore excluded from his data any collections that included non-Greek material (even if some Greek material was present), which presents a significant problem in the form of the proliferation of Coptic and Syriac scriptural material in the East, where the Catholic Epistles were even slower to gain authority, “How the Books Became the Bible,” 5.

The only “collection-evident” (Dormandy’s term, essentially meaning “proto-canonical”) representative among the Catholic Epistles prior to the fifth century is the combination of *1* and *2 Peter*—but this unit is treated as separate from the rest of the Bodmer Codex to which it was bound, and this despite its *detachment* from *other* (unknown) material before being attached to the Bodmer Codex.¹⁴³ For Dormandy, the Bodmer Codex represents a rarity in its combination of now-canonical material with noncanonical material—but the fact remains that this codex holds the *only extant evidence* of a cluster of Catholic Epistles prior to the fifth century, and *Jude* and *1* and *2 Peter* are non-consecutive and combined with now-parabiblical material such as a portion of the *Protoevangelium of James* and *3 Corinthians*. The rarity of the Bodmer Codex’s textual combination is *equivalent* to the rarity of the evidence suggesting any sort of “proto-canonical” association of the Catholic Epistle collection; aside from the Bodmer Codex, the only extant evidence for the Catholic Epistles prior to the fifth century are individual fragments.

The majority of the extant material evidence of the Catholic Epistles prior to the fourth century is fragmentary and offers little in the way of evidence for a Catholic collection. Aside from a few fragments that may have come from larger codices, the rest of whose contents remain lost, the exception is \mathfrak{B}^{72} , or P.Bodmer VII (*Jude*) and VIII (*1* and *2 Peter*) from the Bodmer Miscellaneous Codex. While the Bodmer Codex does provide the only preserved cluster of Catholic Epistles before Codex Sinaiticus, it is neither a “New Testament manuscript” nor a “proto-canonical” document; it is simply a codex that contained three texts that later became part of the New Testament, among others that did not. In other words, it is the Catholic letters that contribute this substantial exception to the appearance of stability in the New Testament collection, especially early on. While we do have two relatively well-

¹⁴³ Dormandy, “How the Books Became the Bible,” 22, 25, 26, 29, 31–33.

defined collections in the Gospels and Pauline Corpus, the liminal situation of the Catholic Epistles is indicative of the unclear shape of the overall canon in the fourth century.

3. “CATHOLIC EPISTLES” PRIOR TO EUSEBIUS¹⁴⁴

Another crucial witness to the Catholic Epistle collection is the usage of the label “catholic epistle,” particularly prior to even a virtual collection of seven Catholic letters noted by Eusebius in the early fourth century. The term καθολική can simply mean “general,” in reference to letters addressed not to a specific individual or community, but more widely. This is in contrast to, for example, Paul’s corporate letters addressed to particular communities.¹⁴⁵ It is likely the case that the term “catholic” comes closest to a genre designation prior to its use to identify our particular collection—but not strictly, given that *James* and *1 Peter* are both broadly addressed to readers in “the diaspora,” *James* to the twelve tribes (*Jas* 1:1) and *1 Peter* to “elect exiles of the dispersion” in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia (*1 Pet* 1:1)¹⁴⁶; *1 John* has no formal address; and *2* and *3 John* are addressed to individuals. Prior to the usage of the term “catholic epistle” to refer to the seven letters of James, Peter, John, and Jude in the early fourth century, other texts were also called “catholic” by ecclesiastical writers such as Origen and Clement of Alexandria, including *Barnabas*, indicating that no discrete collection, as of the middle of the third century, could yet be identified by this label.¹⁴⁷

¹⁴⁴ I am concerned here with the specific terminology of “catholic epistle” rather than references to the texts of the Catholic Epistles. For a summary of references to the Catholic Epistles in Patristic writings, with Origen as the first witness to all seven (but not to a discrete collection of Catholic letters), see Nienhuis, *Not by Paul Alone*, 34–70.

¹⁴⁵ Lockett notes that there is historical precedent for the use of the term “catholic” to describe letters of general address: Themiso “dared” to compose a catholic letter (*Hist. eccl.* 5.18.5), Eusebius refers to “catholic epistles” written by Dionysius of Alexandria (*Hist. eccl.* 4.23.1), and Clement of Alexandria calls the letter written by the Jerusalem council in Acts 15 a “catholic epistle” (*Strom.* 4.15.97.3); Lockett, *Letters from the Pillar Apostles*, 62–63.

¹⁴⁶ See Doering, *Ancient Jewish Letters*, esp. 429–63; Doering, “First Peter as Early Christian Diaspora Letter,” 215–36; Adams, *Greek Genres and Jewish Authors*, 159.

¹⁴⁷ Nienhuis and Wall helpfully problematize the various modern usages of the term “catholic epistles,” noting that some use the term as the title of a collection, most as a genre designation (and therefore include Hebrews), and others broaden the term to mean all encyclical literature; however, even some who use “catholic” as a genre

Clement of Alexandria (d. 215) not only makes use of *1 Peter*, *1* and *2 John*, and *Jude*¹⁴⁸, but also *Barnabas* and *1 Clement*, even calling these two latter authors apostles (*Barn: Strom.* 2.6.31.2; 2.7.35.5; *1 Clem: Strom.* 4.17.105.1). He also refers to the “catholic epistle of all the apostles” (τὴν ἐπιστολὴν τὴν καθολικὴν τῶν ἀποστόλων ἀπάντων), meaning the letter in *Acts* 15 which is sent from Jerusalem to Antioch (*Strom.* 4.15.97.3; *Acts* 15:22–30). No discrete Catholic collection can be deduced from his use of individual Catholic letters or of the term “catholic.” Cyril of Jerusalem (d. 386), a century later, also refers to the letter in *Acts* as the “catholic epistle to all the Gentiles” (*Cat. lect.* 4.28).¹⁴⁹

Origen (d. 253) is the first to use the term “catholic” in reference to any of the Catholic Epistles, and he is also the first to reference the seven Catholic Epistles, though he does not identify them collectively by this term.¹⁵⁰ *1 John* and *1 Peter* are both identified as “catholic epistles,” along with citations from each in a number of different texts by Origen, and so is *Barnabas*.¹⁵¹ Though Origen’s importance to Eusebius as an influential mentor should not be understated, his role in the formation of the New Testament has perhaps been overstated. “‘The Canon of Origen,’ taken from Eusebius’ *Ecclesiastical History* 6.25.3–14,” claims Kalin, “looks like Origen’s New Testament canon list because Eusebius, a *clever compiler*, wants it to.”¹⁵² In no extant Greek version of his works does Origen refer to all seven Catholic Epistles,

designation also note that not all the “Catholic Epistles” function as encyclicals, *Reading the Epistles of James, Peter, John and Jude*, 7–8.

¹⁴⁸ For a summary of his use of individual Catholic Epistles and his accepted texts, see Nienhuis and Wall, *Reading the Letters of James, Peter, John and Jude*, 47–51.

¹⁴⁹ Nienhuis, *Not by Paul Alone*, 79. Nienhuis also notes Amphilochius’s reference to *Acts* as “the catholic Acts of the apostles,” which underscores the link between *Acts* and the Catholic Epistle collection.

¹⁵⁰ Nienhuis, *Not by Paul Alone*, 53.

¹⁵¹ *1 John* as a “catholic epistle”: *1 John* 1:5, *Sel. Psalmos* 12.1164.11; *1 John* 2:1, *Comm. Joh.* 1.22.138.1; *1 John* 2:23, *Comm. Joh.* 19.1.3.5; *1 John* 3:2, *Comm. Matt.* 17.19.60; *1 John* 3:8, *Comm. Joh.* 20.13.99.4 and *Jer. Hom.* 9.4.62. *1 Peter* as a “catholic epistle”: *1 Pet* 3:18b–20a, *Comm. Joh.* 6.35.175.4; *1 Pet* 3:19, *Sel. Ps* 12.1128.56; *1 Pet* 5:13, *Comm. Matt.* 1.13; *Barnabas* as a “catholic epistle”: *Barn* 5:9, *Cels.* 1.53.9 and *Philokalia* 18.9.9.

¹⁵² Kalin, “The Canon of Origen,” 277, emphasis original. Eusebius quotes Origen: *Comm. Matt.*, *Hist. eccl.* 6.15.3, 6.25.5–8; *Comm. Joh.*, *Hist. eccl.* 6.15.7–9.

and it is not at all clear from Origen's use of "catholic epistle" that he refers to a discrete collection of Catholic Epistles.¹⁵³

The eclectic use in the second and third centuries of *James*, *1* and *2 Peter*, *1*, *2*, and *3 John*, and *Jude* suggests that no Patristic writer was as of yet interested in a seven-letter collection of Catholic Epistles. As Nienhuis notes, Tertullian and Clement of Alexandria both "offer witness to a late second-century tendency to consolidate non-Pauline apostolic authority in the specific persons of the Jerusalem pillars"—James, Peter, and John—however, neither testifies to the establishment of a corresponding letter collection. For Nienhuis, this indicates that neither possessed *James*.¹⁵⁴ With Eusebius, who refers to virtual collection of seven Catholic Epistles, the term "catholic" shifts from generality toward a specific label for a particular collection of apostolic texts; he remains the earliest reference to a sevenfold Catholic Epistle collection.¹⁵⁵

4. CONCLUSION

Sometime after the emergence of the Muratorian fragment in the late second to early third century and likely past the time of Origen, who used the term καθολικὴ ἐπιστολή more eclectically, but before Eusebius penned his famous *Historia ecclesiastica*, the Catholic Epistles came to be understood as a seven-letter collection.¹⁵⁶ This is the case at least virtually, but it bears noting that a material collection is a possibility, though not extant in antiquity. The Muratorian fragment shows no investment in a full New Testament, let alone a collection of

¹⁵³ See Gallagher, "Origen *via* Rufinus on the New Testament Canon," 461–76, which is an attempt to soften recent claims that Rufinus made significant changes to Origen's text in his translations. Gallagher claims Origen's "canon" was "very similar" to that of Athanasius, but notes the exceptions of *2 Peter*, *2* and *3 John*, and *Revelation*—and he does not acknowledge that it is primarily Catholic letters that distinguish Origen's "New Testament" from Athanasius's, 476.

¹⁵⁴ Nienhuis, *Not by Paul Alone*, 52.

¹⁵⁵ Lockett concludes that, while Eusebius is the first to unambiguously refer to the letters attributed to James, Peter, John, and Jude as a collection of seven Catholic Epistles, the term καθολικὴ ἐπιστολή may still have served as a *terminus technicus* even in the third century. However, this is not clear from the third-century usage of "catholic epistle," Lockett, *Letters from the Pillar Apostles*, 62–80.

¹⁵⁶ Nienhuis and Wall, *Reading the Letters of James, Peter, John and Jude*, 29.

Catholic Epistles; here we find only the unique clustering of *1* and *2 John* and *Jude*. The exclusion of *1 Peter* and the other Catholic Epistles has been commonly attributed to scribal error. However, no amount of interpretive or reconstructive gymnastics can manipulate out of the fragment a complete Catholic collection—a puzzling lacuna if one dates the fragment to the fourth century, but not if it serves as an antecedent to a Catholic collection compiled sometime in the mid- to late third century.

Evidence of the Catholic Epistles' early material history is lamentably sparse. The majority of the extant manuscripts are fragmentary and offer little in the way of evidence for a Catholic Epistle collection, let alone a New Testament. Among the fragments, however, are a few standouts, which also offer clues as to the early treatment of the Catholic Epistles, namely \mathfrak{P}^{72} , or P.Bodmer VII (*Jude*) and VIII (*1* and *2 Peter*) in the Bodmer Miscellaneous Codex and the Crosby-Schøyen Codex, which contains, in Coptic, the earliest extant text of *1 Peter*. Both codices share in common a 'miscellaneous' grouping of texts, perhaps but not necessarily united by a theme, indicating that at least in the third century no discrete, consistent, sevenfold collection of Catholic Epistles had emerged.

Given the preceding and continuing textual fluidity represented by the manuscript tradition, even major, more apparently complete, codices should not be taken for granted as "canonical" objects. As Knust puts it, "[t]he production of these pandect Bibles marks an important moment in the development of the canon, one that roughly corresponds to the editing activities of Eusebius of Caesarea and the canonical pronouncements of Athanasius, but even these manuscripts call any direct, teleological story of canon formation into question."¹⁵⁷ Material evidence highlights the need for greater nuance in our understanding of early Christian textual history rather than providing a straightforward through line to some "original" New

¹⁵⁷ Knust, "Miscellany Manuscripts," 105.

Testament canon. What little early material evidence of the Catholic Epistles remains extant has sometimes been used to this end.

When the Alands noted the “startling” fact that \mathfrak{P}^{72} “contains the letters of Peter and Jude as a single collection of writings” and emphasized that it is “extraordinarily significant” for the history of the canon, they provided misleading information.¹⁵⁸ As we have seen, not only is \mathfrak{P}^{72} not a single manuscript containing the Petrine epistles and *Jude*, it is a portion of the Bodmer Miscellaneous Codex, which was found among the Dishna Papers not far from the Nag Hammadi find site. The decontextualization of “New Testament manuscripts” – from where they were found, the texts they were found with, and even the texts they were or remain bound to – is detrimental to the study of manuscripts more broadly but also to the study of early Christian textual practices. Texts like “ \mathfrak{P}^{72} ” also should not be divorced from their human counterparts—their scribes, readers, and preservers – in service of the creation of a teleological narrative of canonical versus noncanonical literature. Returning to Knust,

Texts are bound up in the lived lives of the human actors who copied them, used them, and wore them out, not so that a transcendent set of canonical books could (finally) be produced and preserved for some future Christian capable of exploiting their deep well of authority but so that specific circles of readers could amass a shared sense of having been set apart, properly educated, and identifiable as a group... [the Dishna papers] materialized the investments of a particular set of ancient religious actors, in this case late antique Egyptian Christians.¹⁵⁹

Specifically in the case of \mathfrak{P}^{72} , the history of the Catholic Epistles in the New Testament collection has been obscured by the granting of special status to the now-canonical texts of the Bodmer Miscellaneous Codex. The point is not that \mathfrak{P}^{72} is insignificant – on the contrary, the clustering of Catholic Epistles and their preservation among other now-noncanonical texts is

¹⁵⁸ Aland and Aland, *The Text of the New Testament*, 87, 93.

¹⁵⁹ Knust, “Miscellany Manuscripts,” 114.

worth examining – but rather that it is not indicative of a proto-canon, instead testifying to a third-century combination of Jewish and Christian literature that appears eclectic only in light of the later New Testament collection. The Bodmer codex provides one piece of the puzzle—as an *antecedent* to the Catholic Epistle collection, and therefore to the New Testament collection.

Prior to Eusebius, the term “catholic epistle” could refer to a number of the Catholic Epistles, but also to epistles of general address, such as *Barnabas* or the letter sent from the Jerusalem council in *Acts* 15. The rather miscellaneous usage of the Catholic Epistles (primarily *1 Peter* and *1 John*) in the early centuries of Christianity suggests that no Patristic writer was at that point interested in a seven-letter collection of Catholic Epistles. From the usage of the term “catholic epistle” in the writings of Clement of Alexandria and Origen, it is impossible to say there is a *terminus technicus* referring to the discrete, sevenfold collection of Catholic Epistles. Even prior to their association as a sevenfold collection, the Catholic Epistles are the most significant wrench in the gears for conceptions of an early New Testament collection, which tend to privilege the apparent stability of the Gospels and the Pauline collection. While Eusebius provides the first reference to a sevenfold Catholic collection, we have in the Muratorian fragment, B^{72} and other more fragmentary papyri, and the Patristic use of the term “catholic epistle” evidence antecedent to their compilation. Far from inevitable, the liminal situation of the Catholic Epistle collection prior to the fourth century is indicative of the unclear shape of the New Testament.

CHAPTER TWO: THE CATHOLIC EPISTLE COLLECTION AND THE DYNAMIC NEW TESTAMENT

In his oft-cited work on the Christian biblical canon, von Campenhausen asserts that “the efforts during the third century to fix the New Testament Canon exactly were universally approved,” but that

The limits could not yet be precisely drawn; there were differences of opinion, and between the hard core of the collection and those works which were unequivocally rejected there was still a number of pieces, the assessment of which fluctuated, and which in many areas were not recognized at all, while in others they were acknowledged only with reservations. Nevertheless, this group was no longer large either in number or in importance.¹

This diminutive group of supposedly little importance – texts von Campenhausen does not bother to specify here – appears intended to represent the Catholic Epistle collection², as these seven small letters are the New Testament remainder whose status fluctuated more than did that of the fourfold Gospel collection or the epistles of Paul. However, the body of literature sitting at the canonical fringes in the third and fourth centuries extended well beyond the Catholic Epistles to such texts as *1 Clement*, the *Shepherd*, the *Didache*, and the *Epistle of Barnabas*, and was, as we know from Patristic lists and material sources, neither small in number nor in length. To suggest otherwise is to assume too much about the formation of the New Testament to this point.

The ‘it’s as good as done’ approach, represented by von Campenhausen and numerous subsequent scholars, also severely underestimates the role of the Catholic Epistle collection in

¹ von Campenhausen, *The Formation of the Christian Bible*, 242.

² And possibly *Revelation*, as well.

the ongoing canonical process. Contrary to von Campenhausen's disparaging remark, the Catholic Epistle collection plays a more substantial role in the formation of the canon than has often been recognized. While the fourfold Gospel and the Pauline corpus are relatively stable from the second century on, it is the uncertainty surrounding the status of the Catholic collection that maintains the variability of the New Testament beyond the fourth century—and even then, without a certain conclusion.

As we saw in the first chapter, the third-century evidence regarding which texts constitute a “New Testament” collection indicated a deliberation over which texts might be used alongside the Gospels-*Acts* and at least some letters of Paul. This was perhaps most obvious in the Muratorian Fragment, in which the author was concerned to uphold the legitimacy of the fourth gospel and to emphasize the ‘seven-ness’ of Paul’s corporate letters (excluding *Hebrews*) as modelled after the seven letters to churches in *Revelation*. In addition, a miscellaneous grouping of texts was also included that make up a third sub-section in addition to the Gospels-*Acts* and Paul. As the two most substantial clusters of Catholic Epistles prior to the fourth century, the Muratorian fragment listed the unique combination of *Jude* and *1 and 2 John*, while \mathfrak{B}^{72} , or the Bodmer Miscellaneous Codex, included the complete texts of *Jude* and *1 and 2 Peter*. If the Muratorian fragment is dated sometime between the late second century and the early third century and shows no knowledge of a seven-letter collection of Catholic Epistles, then it is most likely that a collection of Catholic Epistles emerged in virtual, if not material, form sometime in the mid to late third century, prior to Eusebius. Moving into the fourth century, the issue of *whether* to add further texts appears to be settled. While it seems agreeable to all that at least two Catholic Epistles (*1 Peter* and *1 John*) make the cut, the acceptance of a seven-letter collection of Catholic Epistles remains in dispute. However, this is not to say that a new Catholic collection achieved wide authoritative reception.

Not only does material evidence show that the Catholic Epistles challenge the claim to an early conception of the whole New Testament collection, as we saw previously, the same uncertainty is reflected in the writing of ecclesiastical figures throughout the fourth century. The status of the Catholic Epistle collection is influenced by the perception of ecclesiastical writers that *James*, *2 Peter*, *2 and 3 John*, and *Jude* are pseudepigraphal. Eusebius identifies five of the seven Catholic Epistles as ἀντιλεγόμενα (disputed) due to their questionable authorship, despite their widespread usage. His interest in a minimal canon of 21 works results from his concern over ancient usage and textual authenticity. Athanasius includes all seven Catholic Epistles as κανονιζόμενα without qualification, despite his concern over authenticity being even more pronounced than Eusebius's. As we will see, his silence on the existence of New Testament pseudepigrapha does not necessarily constitute a claim to the authorial authenticity of all 27 books that he lists as canonical. Jerome does not necessarily share Eusebius's and Athanasius's priority for historical authenticity, expressing interest instead in the long tradition of the usage of texts attributed to such key apostolic figures as James, Peter, John, and Jude. This chapter sets the Catholic Epistle collection within the wider context of New Testament canon formation in the fourth and fifth centuries, emphasizing the ongoing flexibility of the New Testament collection due to the uncertainty over the authenticity of the Catholic Epistles. The status of the Catholic collection ultimately hinges more on the construction of tradition as embodied by key figures from the apostolic age and the momentum of *use* than on historical arguments for their apparent authenticity, as their perceived apostolic status increases with the distance of history.

1. EUSEBIUS: CONSTRUCTING THE ‘ENTESTAMENTED’ BOUNDARY

The first we hear of a seven-letter collection of Catholic Epistles, its legitimacy is already being called into question. Eusebius of Caesarea, the first to use the designation of καθολικὴ ἐπιστολή to refer unambiguously to just these seven texts, fully affirms the place of *1 Peter* and *1 John* in a New Testament collection. A decisive feature of his list, as is often noted, is his attention to a liminal category of ἀντιλεγόμενα, to which five of the Catholic Epistles are relegated. While he notes the widespread usage of all seven Catholic Epistles, he groups *James*, *Jude*, *2 Peter*, and *2–3 John* together as ἀντιλεγόμενα (and at least once he refers to *James* and *Jude* as νοθεύεται) on the basis of their lack of usage by “the ancients” (*Hist. eccl.* 2.23.25; νόθα in 3.25.3). Eusebius’s rejection of five of the seven Catholic Epistles confirms their association sometime before Eusebius wrote the *Historia ecclesiastica*. The analysis of the Catholic Epistle collection *after* its compilation but *before* its full acceptance as the third piece in a tri-partite New Testament sheds essential light on the development and phenomenon of the biblical canon(s). In the section that follows, I analyze the continued dispute over the Catholic Epistle collection through the role of the Catholic letters in Eusebius’s *Historia ecclesiastica*. What emerges is that the five disputed Catholic Epistles—*James*, *2 Peter*, *2–3 John*, and *Jude*—are considered as such by Eusebius on the basis of their insufficient usage by “the ancients,” so he considers them to be a recent innovation ineligible for inclusion among a genuinely apostolic New Testament collection. However, Eusebius’s historiographical presentation of the ancient attestation (and corresponding authoritative status) of early Christian texts is not entirely straightforward. He did not present a simple historical record of the canonical process; rather, he advocated for a particular New Testament collection.

In his introduction to the *Historia ecclesiastica*, Eusebius identifies as one of his primary motivations to name and reject those who “through love of innovation [νεωτεροποιίας] have run themselves into the greatest errors” and who claimed to have wisdom but “mercilessly

devastated the flock of Christ” (*Hist. eccl.* 1.1–2). If Eusebius’s conscious purpose is to counter innovation, however, his own style was not so constrained. His “bricolage” of ancient writings interspersed, often abruptly, with his own has led DeVore to conclude that the historiographical style of the *Historia ecclesiastica* represents “the most innovative history since the fifth century BC.”³

As the work progresses, it becomes clear that the concern over innovation and upholding texts cited by “the ancients” is supposedly a concern over authenticity: only those texts that have been sufficiently used by ancient church writers, which supposedly confirms their early provenance, can be fully accepted; works not cited by ancients may be works of innovation, too recently produced to be truly apostolic. “Innovation” includes but is not limited to pseudepigraphical works attributed to apostolic figures which were written too late to be considered authentic and therefore eligible for inclusion among the “encovenanted” (ἐνδιαθήκων) scriptures. Eusebius’s role in the canonical process must be carefully measured: he is not a “witness to the *canon*,” nor does he use κανόν terminology in reference to specific collections of scriptural texts. To make such claims is “to impute vocabulary which is absent from his lexicon along with concepts which are, in the fourth century, still emerging.”⁴ Furthermore, Eusebius records the Old and New Testament lists of Origen⁵, a major influence on Eusebius, but in doing so Eusebius controls the selection and presentation of these lists, which are assembled from multiple works (*Comm. Matt* and *Comm. Jo.*; cf. *Hist. eccl.* 6.25.3–10).⁶ While Eusebius’s priority for the ancient usage of scriptural works is supposedly the

³ DeVore, “Genre and Eusebius’ *Ecclesiastical History*,” 19–49, 19. DeVore notes for example that Eusebius orders *Hist. eccl.* by the successive reign of emperors and bishops’ episcopates (40), and that the Eusebian martyr narratives are juxtaposed with Greek histories of war (41). Eusebius’s canon tables of the four Gospels are also a significant innovation.

⁴ Robbins, “Eusebius’ Lexicon of Canonicity,” 140–1.

⁵ Hollerich, “Eusebius,” 629–52.

⁶ Additionally, there is no mention of *James* or *Jude* (or *Barnabas*, for that matter) in Eusebius’s account of Origen’s list of scriptures in *Hist. eccl.* 6.25. Rufinus’s translation of *Comm. Matt.* includes the now-conventional 27-book New Testament. Gallagher has recently argued that Rufinus’s role as a translator (and modifier) of Origen is more nuanced than recent research has acknowledged, though he concludes that “Origen did provide a list of New Testament books very similar to the later list of Athanasius, with the possible absence of 2 Peter, 2–3

controlling factor of his own list of “entestamented” works (ἐνδιάθηκον), some features of Origen’s scriptural usage are inconsistent with Eusebius’s. Origen is the first to unambiguously use *James* and he cites *Barnabas* as a “catholic epistle”—indicating that Eusebius is interested in something more than simply usage.

1.1 Eusebius on the Authorship of the Catholic Epistles

There are a few different contexts in which Eusebius discusses the Catholic Epistles: in book two, he discusses the historical figures of the apostles and their writings (James: 2.23.25; Peter: 2.15.2), 2.9.1–4); in 3.3.1–4 he details the writings of Peter; in 3.24 he discusses the writings of John; in 3.25 is his well-known New Testament list; and in Book six he details the scriptures of Clement and Origen of Alexandria (6.14 and 6.25, respectively). That five Catholic Epistles are known and used by many of Eusebius’s contemporary churches but not by many ancient church writers seems to suggest to him that these are works of innovation—too recently produced to be truly apostolic. His concern over ancient use reflects a deeper concern over supposed authenticity.

1.1.1 *James and Jude*

In 2.23, Eusebius recounts the martyrdom of James, the brother of the Lord and the leader of the Jerusalem church (*Hist. eccl.* 2.23.1). Citing the previous accounts of Clement and Hegesippus, both of whom are counted among “the ancients,” Eusebius explains that James was first thrown off the temple, then stoned by the Scribes and Pharisees, but was finally killed

John and Revelation”—in other words, still significantly *dissimilar* from Athanasius’s list; “Origen *via* Rufinus on the New Testament Canon,” 476.

by a blow to the head from a club (*Hist. eccl.* 2.23.16–18). Regarding the epistles of *James* and *Jude*, Eusebius writes,

And these things [are recorded] about James, whose the first of the so-called Catholic Epistles is said to be. But it is to be observed that it is considered spurious [νοθεύεται]; not many of the ancients mentioned it, nor likewise the [epistle] called Jude, which is one of the seven so-called Catholics. All the same, we know also that these, along with the remaining [epistles], have been read publicly in most churches. (*Hist. eccl.* 2.23.25)

Though later in book three, he will designate *James* and *Jude* as ἀντιλεγόμενα, here Eusebius uses more forceful language for their questionable status: despite the piety and martyrdom of the figure of James, “it should be observed” that the epistle “is considered spurious [νοθεύεται],” and Jude’s likewise. He concedes, however, that the Catholic Epistles are “read publicly in most churches,” even though for Eusebius they clearly remain in dispute. And, while *James* and *Jude* are said not to be used by many of the ancients, this presumes their use by at least some. That Eusebius is aware of a letter of *James*, “first of the so-called Catholic Epistles,”⁷ and acknowledges its public usage while ultimately rejecting it as spurious is significant. Given the weight he affords to the figure of James, he would very likely have been interested in a letter from such a central figure—had he found it to be genuine. His rejection of these two letters on the basis of their lack of usage among “the ancients” reflects his concern over authenticity, reflected in both early *usage* and early *provenance*, as the earlier a text is used, and used by significant ecclesiastical writers, the more likely it may be genuinely apostolic.

⁷ It is unclear whether Eusebius means *James* was written first or that it is typically ordered first, but it is more likely the latter, since *James* is often listed first.

1.1.2 Peter

Section 3.3 presents a description of the writings of Peter and then Paul, both those undisputed and “those that are not universally acknowledged” (3.3.7). Of the epistles of Peter, Eusebius writes,

Of Peter one epistle, the first, is accepted, and the ancient elders affirmed it as undoubted in their own writings. But we have received that the extant second [epistle] is not entestamented [ἐνδιάθηκον], yet as it has appeared useful to many, it has been used with the other scriptures... Such are the [writings] named for Peter, of which only one epistle I know to be genuine [γνησίαν] and so far acknowledged [ὁμολογουμένη] by the ancient elders. (*Hist. eccl.* 3.3.1, 4)

According to Eusebius, *1 Peter* is fully accepted (ἀνωμολόγηται) and undoubted (ἀναμφιλέκτω) by the ancients, but *2 Peter*, though “useful to many” and “used with the other scriptures” has not been received as “entestamented” (ἐνδιάθηκον) (3.3.1). There also exist other texts supposedly by Peter: the *Acts of Peter*, the *Gospel of Peter*, and the *Apocalypse of Peter*, but they “have not been universally [ἐν καθολικοῖς] transmitted, because no ecclesiastical writer, ancient [ἀρχαίων] or among us has made use of testimonies drawn from them” (3.3.2). He states again his intention to set out in an orderly and careful fashion which writings should be considered among the “encovenanted and accepted” writings and which are not. He concludes by re-stating the accepted status only of the first epistle and the disputed nature of all other writings put forth in Peter’s name. He will go on to discuss the “clear and obvious” (πρόδηλοι καὶ σαφεῖς) status of Paul’s fourteen epistles—despite the fact that some reject Hebrews, questioning whether it was indeed written by Paul.

1.1.3 John

At the end of section 3.24 Eusebius is even more specific regarding the role of the ancients, stating outright that it is through the writings of the ancients that he will endeavor to order the scriptures, and that he will “attempt to make these things clear in the proper time”. His well-known list of New Testament texts follows in 3.25, but first he makes a few comments regarding the writings of John, including the epistles:

Of the writings of John, the gospel and the first of the epistles have been acknowledged as undoubted [ἀναμφίλεκτος, ὁμολόγηται] both by those of today and by the ancients, but the remaining two [epistles] are disputed [ἀντιλέγονται]. (*Hist. eccl.* 3.24.17–18)

The opinion remains divided also regarding *Revelation* (*Hist. eccl.* 3.24.16). In a later book, Eusebius quotes Dionysius regarding the authorship of Johannine literature. Dionysius believes the gospel and the first Johannine epistle to be the work of John, the apostle and brother of James (*Hist. eccl.* 7.25.7), but the character (ἥθους) and “forms of expression” (λόγων εἶδους) of *Revelation* are inconsistent with the gospel and first epistle (*Hist. eccl.* 7.25.8). Furthermore, he takes the *anonymity* of the *Gospel of John* and *1 John* to be indicative of their authenticity, accepting as sufficiently “real” the author’s *lack* of need to identify himself along with his immediate claim as an eyewitness to divine revelation (*Hist. eccl.* 7.25.8–13; *1 John* 1:1). In the subsequent letters attributed to John, however, the anonymous title ‘the elder’ is given, which leads Dionysius to believe *2* and *3 John* do not share an author with *1 John* (*Hist. eccl.* 7.25.11). Here, *1 John* is also legitimized on the basis of its resemblance to the *Gospel of John*, as the likeness of their openings, content, style, and vocabulary point to shared authorship (*Hist. eccl.* 7.25.18–21). Common themes include light and darkness, “truth,” “grace,” and “joy,” forgiveness, God’s love and Christians’ love for one another, and the Devil and the Anti-Christ, all of which culminate in the fact that “it is plainly to be seen that one and the same character

marks the Gospel and the Epistle throughout” (*Hist. eccl.* 7.25.21). *Revelation*, however, is, according to Dionysius, “foreign to” (ξένη) the gospel and the first epistle, as it is full of “barbarous idioms” (ιδιώμασιν τε βαρβαρικοῖς) and “solecisms” (σολοικίζοντα) (*Hist. eccl.* 7.25.22, 26). Eusebius himself apparently remains torn over the status of *Revelation*. This section quoting the views of Dionysius on the authorship of *Revelation* presents an interesting example of ancient literary criticism – the comparison between “authentic” Johannine texts and those with falsified attribution to John. This sort of comparative criticism may also be possible for the Petrine epistles, but no such analysis is reported by Eusebius.

1.2 The Catholic Epistles and Eusebius’s New Testament Collection

Eusebius’s introduction to 3.25 follows from his discussion of the authorship of *Revelation* at the end of 3.24: “It is reasonable, since we have come to this point, to sum up the presented writings of the New Testament” (3.25.1). In this section he is not presenting the views of an “ancient” such as Irenaeus, Clement of Alexandria, or Origen as he does elsewhere, but rather his own. Furthermore, the concern over authenticity in 3.24 that leads into Eusebius’s own view of the acceptable New Testament scriptures is suggestive of his motivations for making such a list. For Eusebius, to delineate the texts of the New Testament collection and those not included in it is to make a statement about the perceived authenticity of such texts. Lists of authoritative scriptures are not neutral documents reporting only the historical usage and acceptance of biblical texts, but rather persuasive material intended to convince readers of the *right* collection of scriptures and to establish a boundary; such lists are *exclusive* of what has been deemed unfit as well as *inclusive* of only those items which have been chosen to constitute the most effective collection.⁸ For Eusebius, there is also a third, more uncertain category: the

⁸ “All canons serve not only to include... but also to exclude; gospels deemed noncanonical are hermeneutically relevant for the light they shed on this single process of inclusion-exclusion,” Watson, *Gospel Writing*, 8.

liminal space of the ἀντιλεγόμενα. According to Eusebius, the New Testament collection looks like this:

It is reasonable, since we have come to this point, to sum up the clear writings of the New Testament. We must set in order first the holy tetrad of the gospels, which are followed by the writing of the Acts of the Apostles. After this one must reckon the epistles of Paul, following which the first extant epistle of John and likewise of Peter ought to be acknowledged [κυρωτέον]. After these one should order the Apocalypse of John, about which the opinions will be set out in time. And these are among the acknowledged [ὁμολογουμένοις] [writings]. (*Hist. eccl.* 3.25.1–3a)

Overall, the New Testament collection of Eusebius would include either 21 or 22 books, depending on where one places *Revelation*—a minimalist canon relative to the lists that will follow Eusebius’s throughout the rest of the fourth century. Earlier in book three, Eusebius makes clear that, in his view, the Pauline corpus contains fourteen letters—including *Hebrews*, despite his knowledge of its disputed authorship (3.3.5). Though such details are left out of 3.25, a trail has been laid to explain what he has left unsaid. Of the disputed grouping, Eusebius writes:

But of those which are disputed [ἀντιλεγομένων], yet nevertheless well-known to many, James is extant [φέρεται], and that of Jude and the second epistle of Peter and the so-called second and third [epistles] of John, whether they belong to the evangelist or to one of the same name as him. Also among the spurious [νόθοις] [writings] are ordered the book of the Acts of Paul, the so-called Shepherd, and the Apocalypse of Peter, and to these still the extant Epistle of Barnabas and the so-called Teaching of the Apostles and, as I said, the Apocalypse of John, if it seems appropriate. This, as I said, is rejected [ἀθετοῦσιν] by some, but others reckon it among the acknowledged [ὁμολογουμένοις] [writings]. Now among these also some have counted the Gospel according to the Hebrews, which is especially agreeable to the Hebrews who received the Christ. These all ought to be regarded as among the disputed [ἀντιλεγομένων] [writings], but nevertheless we have been compelled to make a catalogue of these also, distinguishing those handed down by the church as true [ἀληθεῖς], unforged [ἀπλάστους], and acknowledged [ἀνωμολογημένας] writings from the others alongside them, which are not entestamented

[ἐνδιαθήκους] and which are disputed [ἀντιλεγόμενας] but nevertheless known by many church writers. (*Hist. eccl.* 3.25.3b–6a)

Aside from the texts that are fully “in” or “out” of the New Testament, in order to be as precise as possible, Eusebius groups some texts in a middle category of *neither*.⁹ Five of the Catholic Epistles are regarded as ἀντιλεγόμενα, but this designation is crucially distinct from heretical forgery. Nienhuis weighs the Catholic Epistles’ designation as ἀντιλεγόμενα against the νόθα, emphasizing their status as *so nearly* accepted, even “distinguished,” that they “function canonically” despite a few conflicting voices of opposition.¹⁰ Eusebius classifies the ἀντιλεγόμενα and the νόθα distinctively, though they make up the same liminal grouping between texts which are fully accepted and those he considers to be heretical forgeries:

This is in order that we might know both these writings and also those which have been brought forth by heretics in the name of the apostles, either containing [gospels] of Peter and Thomas and Matthias or other gospels beside these, or Acts of Andrew and John and the other apostles. None of these has been deemed worthy of any mention in writing according to any men in a succession of churchmen; but the character of the expression is also distinct from the apostolic style, and the thought and intent of their substance is absolutely discordant with the truth of orthodoxy [ἀληθοῦς ὀρθοδοξίας ἀπάδουσα], in order to establish clearly that they happen to be the forgeries [ἀναπλάσματα] of heretical men. For this reason they should not even be placed among the spurious [νόθοις] writings, but refused [παραιτητέον] as altogether detestable and ungodly. (*Hist. eccl.* 3.25.6b–7)

No texts are deemed more dangerous or worthy of exclusion than those “brought forth by heretics in the name of the apostles”: gospels of Peter, Thomas, Matthias or others, as well as Acts of Andrew, John, and other apostles. This “forgeries of heretics” grouping refers to

⁹ That Eusebius acknowledges that even the disputed Catholic Epistles were widely read in many churches indicates the use of local “canonical” collections, rather than simply a progression toward a single, closed, authoritative New Testament canon. The non-inevitability of the NT canon and the multiple uses of authoritative scriptural collections is emphasized in Brakke, “Scriptural Practices.”

¹⁰ Nienhuis, *Not by Paul Alone*, 65, 67, emphasis original. His use of “canonically” here is anachronistic.

New Testament pseudepigrapha; just as writings were generated in the names of key Old Testament figures such as Moses, Abraham, Job, and Isaiah, so does early Christian literature continue on with the practice. Such texts, according to Eusebius, are not used among the ancient writers, their character is far from the apostolic style, and their contents are, “discordant [ἀπάρδω] with the truth of orthodoxy” so they cannot even be considered illegitimate and must be “refused as altogether detestable [ἄτοπα] and ungodly [δυσσεβῆ]” (3.25.6–7).

The terminology and supposed categorization used throughout the *Historia ecclesiastica*, but particularly here in 3.25, has been widely discussed. Metzger claims Eusebius’s categories should fall into orthodox and unorthodox books, with the ὁμολογουμένα and ἀντιλεγόμενα in the first category and the νόθα and forgeries of heretics in the second.¹¹ Kalin, on the other hand, asserts that Eusebius makes no substantial distinction between his use of the terms ἀντιλεγόμενα and νόθα, citing Robbins and Baum, who agree that the terms do not denote two separate textual categories but do not agree on the fact that the terms are synonymous.¹² Where Robbins claims the terms are indeed indistinguishable, Baum’s view is that Eusebius used the separate terms to designate authentic and inauthentic disputed texts in regard to their authorship.¹³ Arguing further for the combined categorization of Eusebius’s ἀντιλεγόμενα and νόθα, Kalin offers the following considerations: (1) the category summary for the ἀντιλεγόμενα follows after the texts listed as νόθα, implying they belong together; (2) in summarizing the categories, Eusebius refers only to ὁμολογουμένα, ἀντιλεγόμενα, and the heretical works; (3) that Eusebius includes καὶ in his continued description of the spurious writings is suggestive of his continuation of the ἀντιλεγόμενα category, rather than the

¹¹ “In the absence of any official list of the canonical writings of the New Testament, Eusebius finds it simplest to count the votes of his witnesses, and by this means to classify all the apostolic or pretended apostolic writings into three categories: (1) Those on whose authority and authenticity all the churches and all the authors he had consulted were agreed; (2) those which the witnesses were equally agreed in rejecting; and (3) an intermediate class regarding which the votes were divided,” Metzger, *The Canon of the New Testament*, 205.

¹² Nienhuis agrees with Baum that the two terms describe a similar authoritative status, but that their meaning remains distinct—Eusebius’s precision is at work in dividing the two subcategories, *Not by Paul Alone*, 65, 68.

¹³ Kalin, “The New Testament Canon of Eusebius,” 394.

beginning of a new one; (4) his discussion about Revelation makes more sense if ἀντιλεγόμενα-νόθα were one category rather than two as it is placed at the end of the νόθα; (5) in a parallel summary later on, Eusebius lists only three categories (ὁμολογούμενα, ἀντιλεγόμενα, and the heretical writings that are “totally spurious,” *Hist eccl.* 3.31.6); (6) Eusebius also refers elsewhere to *James* and *Jude* as νοθεύεται; and finally, (7) according to Eusebius, even the νόθα are known to and used by people in the church; the division between ἀντιλεγόμενα and νόθα represents Eusebius’s own opinion rather than a distinct categorization.¹⁴ Just as a “pseudo” or “deutero” label represents a value judgment of a text considered subordinate to others, so νόθα is a more severe denomination than ἀντιλεγόμενα. Another reason the ἀντιλεγόμενα and νόθα groupings should be considered together is that texts are included in either grouping on the basis of their questionable authorship, not uncertainty over the orthodoxy of their content; the “forgeries of heretics” grouping is in this sense especially distinct from the three groupings that precede it—only the “forgeries” are said to be explicitly deceitful in both authorship and content. The ‘accepted’ texts fall into one group; texts in any way questionable (but not heretical) fall into another; and deceitful forgeries comprise their own, explicitly rejected class.

Even given some clarity with regard to the groupings presented in 3.25, Eusebius’s overall categorization remains unsystematic in that he does not consistently assign terminology or textual categories throughout the *Historia ecclesiastica*.¹⁵ What could be translated in English as “undisputed,” for example, is rendered by Eusebius at least three different ways:

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 395–96.

¹⁵ Robbins, “Eusebius’ Lexicon of ‘Canonicity’” n. 2. In addition to ἐνδιάθηκος and ὁμολογούμενα, Robbins lists ἀνωμολόγηται (‘admitted’ – *Hist. eccl.* 3.3.1; 3.24.2; 3.25.6; 3.38.1), ἀναντιπλήτων (‘incontrovertible’ – 3.3.7; 3.9.5; 3.24.1; 6.25.4), ἀναμφιλέκτω (‘undisputed’, ‘undoubted’ – 3.3.1; 3.3.5; 3.24.18), ἀποδέχεται (‘accepted’, ‘welcomed’ – 5.8.7; 6.12.3), παρείληφα (‘received’ – 3.3.5), ἀπλάστους (‘authentic’, ‘unapproachable’ – 3.25.6), γνησίαν (‘genuine’ – 3.3.4; 3.25.6; 6.3.6; 6.25.10) and ἀληθεῖς (‘true’ – 3.25.6). It is clear from such terminology that Eusebius is concerned not only with ecclesiastical acceptance, but also with genuine *authorship*. To Robbins’ list of positive descriptors for acceptedness I would add perhaps πρόδηλοι καὶ σαφεῖς (‘clear and obvious,’ in reference to the letters of Paul 3.3.5), as well as the negative terms ἀντιλέκται (‘questioned’, ‘opposed’ 3.6.4), ἀντιλεγόμενα/-ς/-ων (‘disputed’ 3.3.3; 3.25.3, 6; 3.31.6; 6.13.6; 6.14.1), ἀμφιβάλλεται (‘doubted’ 6.25.8), νόθα/νοθεύεται (‘spurious’, ‘illegitimate’ 2.23.25; 3.25.4, 7), and ἀναπλάσματα (‘forgeries’ 3.25.7).

ἀναμφιλέκτω, δηλωθείας, σαφεῖς. Likewise, “disputed” is both ἀντιλεγόμενον and ἀντιλέλεκται, and appears to be synonymous with “doubted,” ἀμφιβάλλεται. The terminology is varied and not so specific as to suggest the establishment of a vocabulary of “canonical” terminology or a more systematic approach. Eusebius does what any good writer might: he varies his vocabulary in an effort to avoid repetition. His language does not represent explicit or final “canonical” categorization.

While the boundary between the accepted and disputed texts is more porous, the one between the disputed and the heretical is decidedly concrete. Overall, Eusebius’s hostility is not directed against a 27-book New Testament, such as the canon of Athanasius, but rather against a maximalist 33-book New Testament including all the disputed texts, as well as possible heretical forgeries: the fourfold gospel, the *Acts of the Apostles*, and the Pauline corpus, *plus* all seven Catholic Epistles, Revelation, and additional “spurious” but popular texts: the *Acts of Paul*, the *Shepherd*, the *Apocalypse of Peter*, the *Epistle of Barnabas*, the *Didache*, and the *Gospel According to the Hebrews* (3.25.4-5).¹⁶

1.3 The Catholic Epistles and Scriptural Authority in the *Historia ecclesiastica*

The near-universal acceptance of *1 Peter* and *1 John* relies on their sufficiently ancient usage: Eusebius reports that Papias, for one, “uses testimonies from the first Epistle of John and from that of Peter likewise” (*Hist. eccl.* 3.39.16). As we have seen in some Patristic writings leading up to the fourth century, the appeal of these two Catholic Epistles in particular is connected both to the refutation of heresy and to bolstering the historicity of the apostolic witness, particularly *1 Peter* 5:13 referring to “my son Mark” and *1 John* 1:1–3, which emphasizes

¹⁶ As will be explored in the following section, the stichometry inserted into the 6th-century Codex Claromontanus (D 06), a parallel Greek/Latin manuscript of the Pauline Corpus, is representative of a remarkably similar expanded or ‘maximalist’ New Testament canon against which Eusebius advocates here. While this stichometry excludes the *Didache* and the *Gospel According to the Hebrews*, its inclusion of *Barnabas*, the *Shepherd*, the *Acts of Paul*, and the *Revelation of Peter* among the texts of the New Testament is strikingly similar to Eusebius’s list.

John's eyewitness testimony. Furthermore, the *Historia ecclesiastica* was written in Greek, but manuscripts survive in Latin, Syriac, and Armenian, indicating that the work was rather popular—and the Syriac Peshitta includes only *James*, *1 Peter*, and *1 John* from among the Catholic Epistles, a possible indication of Eusebius's influence in the East. Even the common public and ecclesiastical usage of the disputed Catholic Epistles is still not grounds for inclusion.

According to Eusebius, Clement of Alexandria commented in his *Hypotyposes* on “all the entestamented writings, not omitting the disputed books – I [Eusebius] am speaking of Jude and the other Catholic Epistles, and Barnabas and the so-called Apocalypse of Peter” (*Hist. eccl.* 6.14.1).¹⁷ Eusebius's concern with the relative lateness of a distinct collection of Catholic Epistles may reflect a scholarly reservation with the use of texts deemed late, or possibly a historical situation in which the Catholic Epistles are a relatively recent phenomenon. That is, Eusebius may be nervous about the use of all seven Catholic Epistles due to the development of their perceived collective form sometime in the late second or even third century—two generations beyond the first apostolic witnesses.

That he does not include the disputed Catholic Epistles or the *Acts of Paul*, despite the dispute over authorship, among the explicitly rejected texts may reveal what Eusebius considers to be a crucial difference between these texts and the “forgeries of heretics” (*Hist. eccl.* 3.25.7): he does not view *James*, *2 Peter*, *2–3 John*, or *Jude* as forgeries written in the names of key apostolic figures, though he rejects the inherent deceit of gospels purporting to have been written by Peter, Thomas, or Matthias or Acts of Andrew, John, or other apostles.

¹⁷ πάσης τῆς ἐνδιαθήκου γραφῆς ἐπιτετημέναις πεποιήται διηγήσεις, μηδὲ τὰς ἀντιλεγόμενας παρελθόν, τὴν Ἰούδα λέγω καὶ τὰς λοιπὰς καθολικὰς ἐπιστολὰς τὴν τε Βαρναβᾶ καὶ τὴν Πέτρου λεγομένην Ἀποκάλυψιν. Unfortunately, the *Hypotyposes* survives only in fragments, and the existence of all seven Catholic Epistles in this collection cannot be assumed. In *Hist. eccl.* 6.13.6 only *Jude* is listed with “the disputed scriptures” in Eusebius's commentary on the writings of Clement. Eusebius does use the term “entestamented” elsewhere: after summarizing the works attributed to Peter, he claims to know of only one which is considered ἐνδιάθηκον by the ancient elders, *Hist. eccl.* 3.3.4. Origen also uses the term to refer to the 22 books of the Hebrew Bible, *Phil.* 3.1.6; *Sel. Ps.* 12.1084.9.

The term disputed (ἀντιλεγόμενα) does not necessarily denote an active argument – it could signify the absence of such texts in the communities in which they go unused. Their active rejection is possible, but more likely is the fact that not all texts were known to all communities. Disputed status also does not necessarily imply a value judgment concerning the content of texts identified as such. There is nothing other than their isolated grouping to suggest that Eusebius did not consider the content of *James*, *2 Peter*, *2–3 John*, or *Jude*, or even the other νόθα, to be fully in line with the texts he designates as ὁμολογουμένα.¹⁸ In contrast, according to Eusebius, the “forgeries of heretics” are corrupt in content as well as attribution, having been written explicitly to deceive readers into believing they were composed earlier and by genuine eyewitnesses to the ministry of Jesus. Though he is concerned with ancient citation of those texts he considers fully authoritative, Eusebius does not comment on the problem of dating either the Catholic Epistles or the “forgeries of heretics” aside from this concern over authentic apostolic authorship. In contrast to the dispute over five of the Catholic Epistles are the cases of a few curious outliers, which reveal that Eusebius’s classifications are not as systematic as is sometimes assumed.

1.4 Curious Outliers: *Hebrews*, *1 Clement*, the *Shepherd*, and *Barnabas*

Hebrews, *1 Clement*, the *Shepherd*, and *Barnabas* each provide contrast to the discussion of the Catholic Epistles throughout the *Historia ecclesiastica*. Eusebius’s decision to include *Hebrews* among the Pauline corpus despite the ancient debate over its authorship while excluding other texts used by “the ancients” either explicitly (grouping *Barnabas* and the *Shepherd* among the νόθα) or implicitly (leaving *1 Clement* entirely unmentioned in 3.25) reveals that he has not simply listed the most historically well-attested apostolic literature in

¹⁸ Nienhuis argues that the νόθα are not designated as such as a “value judgment or a description of literary integrity,” *Not by Paul Alone*, 65.

his New Testament collection. He relegated certain texts to a liminal category reflecting the current debate surrounding them, but details found elsewhere in the *Historia ecclesiastica* shed light on the bias inherent in drafting lists of authoritative scriptures.¹⁹

1.4.1 *Hebrews*

In *Hebrews* we have an example of a text disputed among the ancients yet accepted by Eusebius. Following his discussion of *2 Peter*, Eusebius claims Paul's fourteen epistles, which he does not name here, are "clear and obvious" (πρόδηλοι καὶ σαφεῖς). He is even aware that *Hebrews* remains disputed [ἀντιλέγεσθαι] on the basis of its questionable Pauline authorship, as debated in the Church of Rome (*Hist. eccl.* 3.3.5). He details the opinions of Clement of Alexandria and Origen, who disagree on the issue. "What has been said concerning this epistle by those who lived before our time," he states, "I shall quote in the proper place," as he so often signposts his later intentions (*Hist. eccl.* 3.3.5; cf. 3.24.16, 18). Later, he describes in further detail the argument of Clement of Alexandria that *Hebrews* was indeed written by Paul but left anonymous so that it would be well-received (*Hist. eccl.* 6.14.1-4). Origen, on the other hand, doubts *Hebrews*' Pauline authorship due to its "purer Greek" in comparison to the rest of the apostle's "rude speech," though he concedes that, "the ancients have not handed it on [παραδεδώκασιν] as Paul's without reason" (*Hist. eccl.* 6.25.11-13; *2 Cor* 11:6). Not only are the ancients *not* in agreement regarding the authorship of *Hebrews* (and therefore its inclusion among a New Testament collection), but Eusebius is aware that a text purported to have been written by Paul and included by many among the New Testament scriptures as a part of the Pauline corpus likely was not written by the apostle. *Hebrews* is not a case of pseudepigraphy or forgery because the author never identifies himself, but its circulation and reception among

¹⁹ To put it differently, "Eusèbe présente les fruits d'une investigation scientifique et personnelle, non d'une décision ecclésiastique," Junod, "D'Eusèbe de Césarée à Athanase d'Alexandrie," 177.

the Pauline corpus²⁰ provided it with a Pauline home. Eusebius, too, includes the letter among the Pauline corpus, despite his awareness of the debate surrounding its authorship. It is unclear how *Hebrews*'s status is in any way distinct from that of the five Catholic ἀντιλεγόμενα, since the issue with *Hebrews* also regards the question of attribution and authorship. In his list in 3.25, Eusebius takes *Hebrews* for granted among the Pauline Epistles, but still marginalizes five of the Catholic Epistles.

1.4.2 *1 Clement*

1 Clement is, in Eusebius's unequivocal language, an "acknowledged [ὁμολογουμένη] epistle, great and wonderful [μεγάλη τε καὶ θαυμασία] a work "used publicly in many churches both before our time and in our own" (*Hist. eccl.* 3.16). Later, he identifies it as "acknowledged [ἀνωμολογημένη] by all" (*Hist. eccl.* 3.38.1) and further argues that *1 Clement*'s use of *Hebrews* shows that the latter was "not a recent production, and so it seems reasonable to reckon it among the other writings of the apostle," confirming that Eusebius includes *Hebrews* among the Pauline corpus (*Hist. eccl.* 3.38.1; cf. 3.25.2 where the letters of Paul are mentioned but not individually named). His statement regarding the acceptance of *1 Clement* is striking, as the terminology used is typically reserved for texts he received as ἐνδιάθηκον. Eusebius is not clear regarding the boundary of his ἐνδιαθήκα, describing *1 Clement* in authoritative language ten chapters before he lists his preferred list of the New Testament texts. Elsewhere, *1 Clement* is grouped with ἀντιλεγόμενα as presented in the writings of Clement of Alexandria, including *Jude* and *Hebrews* (*Hist. eccl.* 6.13.6), but it is conspicuously missing from Eusebius's discussion of his own New Testament list (*Hist. eccl.* 3.25). *1 Clement*'s absence in Eusebius's

²⁰ Though some pages are missing, P⁴⁶ contained *Hebrews* along with other Pauline epistles; see Nongbri, "Pauline Letter Manuscripts," 84–102. The debate over *Hebrews*' authorship also revolves around whether Paul wrote it (see *Hist. eccl.* 6.14.2–4 for Clement of Alexandria's view; *Hist. eccl.* 6.25.11–14 for Origen's view).

list, despite its positive references beforehand in 3.16 and afterward in 3.38, is bewildering if Eusebius is in fact presenting a neutral historical record of scriptural usage—but he is not. Instead, he is making the case for a particular New Testament list.

1.4.3 The *Shepherd of Hermas* and *Barnabas*

For Eusebius the *Shepherd* is a text that “has been disputed [ἀντιλέλεκται] by some” and therefore cannot be included among the acknowledged (ὁμολογουμένοις) books (3.3.6). Yet, he also acknowledges that it has been publicly read and even used among the “most ancient writers,” a characteristic in which Eusebius places substantial importance (3.3.6). Like *James*, *2 Peter*, *2–3 John*, and *Jude*, the *Shepherd* falls outside Eusebius’s list of accepted texts on the basis that it was not unanimously used by the ancients, despite its popularity for public reading. *Barnabas* is grouped among the νόθα in 3.25. Clement of Alexandria makes use of both *Barnabas* and *1 Clement*—calling each author an apostle, no less (*Strom.* 2.6.31.2, 2.7.35.5–6; 4.17–18). Origen also refers to *Barnabas* as a “catholic epistle” (*Cels.* 1.63.9), likely in reference to its general address, though Eusebius does not list *Barnabas* among Origen’s accepted scriptures (*Hist. eccl.* 6.25).

As evidenced by a few texts whose popularity appears to be clear among some of the same ancient writers to whom Eusebius appeals for support regarding the full apostolicity of other texts, Eusebius was not simply presenting a balanced effort to record ancient attestation and from these ecclesiastical sources to list the most *historically legitimate* New Testament collection; he was rather advocating for a particular collection of New Testament texts. The exceptions of *Hebrews*, *1 Clement*, the *Shepherd*, and *Barnabas* reveal inconsistencies in Eusebius’s record of ancient usage. And, the inclusion of texts other than those that have come to make up the New Testament canon is not simply a theoretical issue: *Barnabas* and the *Shepherd* follow *Acts* and the Catholic Epistles in the fourth-century Codex Sinaiticus and *I–*

2 *Clement* are included in the fifth-century Codex Alexandrinus. As we shall see in the following section, the stichometric list inserted into the sixth-century Codex Claromontanus also includes both *Barnabas* and the *Shepherd* among the New Testament texts. The New Testament collection therefore remains in flux even into the fifth and sixth centuries. Disputed texts that occupy the porous edges of the New Testament – such as the Catholic Epistles, which eventually made the cut in almost every Christian community, and *Barnabas*, the *Shepherd*, and *I Clement*, which did not – accentuate the dynamism and historical contingency of the developing canon. In marginalizing the Catholic Epistles and other widely used Christian scriptures, Eusebius is going against the grain of community usage—even by some of “the ancients.”

2. ATHANASIUS AND THE ILLUSION OF A STABLE NEW TESTAMENT

While Eusebius’s concern over authenticity leads him to sub-classify five of the seven Catholic Epistles, in his 39th *Festal Letter*, Athanasius is *principally* concerned not only with delineating the scriptural texts allowed for public preaching and private use, but also with warning against pseudepigraphal texts purporting to be ancient and authentic. The letter was written under the auspice of being an Easter address, though it is also a not-so-subtle polemic against the Melitians, who are said, in language reminiscent of *Jeremiah*, to have “walked in waterless places” and “abandoned the spring of life” (*Epist. fest.* 39.14; *Jer* 2:13). The “canonical” books are “the springs of salvation,” said to satisfy thirst, whereas the apocryphal books are useless and empty—the waters of other nations to which Israel rushed in vain (*Epist. fest.* 39.19, 22, 23; *Jer* 2:18). As Annette Reed puts it, Athanasius sorts the scriptural texts “with an essentialist and dichotomous rhetoric that puts canonicity squarely against pseudepigraphy” and this essentialism translates to a notion of the canon as entirely distinctive from all other literature.²¹

²¹ Reed, “Pseudepigraphy, Authorship, and the Reception of ‘the Bible,’” 468, 470.

In doing so, Athanasius is not engaging in a primarily *scholarly* exercise, as perhaps was Eusebius in writing his list; he is writing a letter to be circulated to announce the date of Easter²² from his seat *as Bishop*, taking on a Pauline and Lukan persona to invoke his ecclesial-apostolic authority (*Epist. fest.* 15–16, 32–33). Athanasius includes all seven Catholic Epistles as *κανονιζόμενα* without qualification, while his concern over authenticity is even more pronounced than Eusebius's. However, his silence on the existence of New Testament pseudepigrapha does not necessarily constitute a claim to the authorial authenticity of all 27 books he lists as canonical.

2.1 The Exile and Return of a Bishop-Scholar

The 39th Festal Letter of Athanasius emerges from a context of an ecclesial conflict over what constitutes orthodoxy. Written during a surge back to power following his fifth exile, the letter presents Athanasius's argument in favor of a particular New Testament that he *as Bishop* finds the most appropriate—not an objective historical record of scripture already accepted as “canonical.”

Arius served as Eusebius's main foe, especially rhetorically—Arius and those unreasonable enough to follow him were pitted against Nicene Christianity's true heirs.²³ Athanasius followed his predecessor Alexander's policy of refusal to admit Arius back into full communion, despite the Emperor Constantine's demand otherwise in an attempt “to unite warring factions of the Church.”²⁴ As Jennifer Barry argues, Athanasius used his displacement through his multiple exiles to paint himself as a victim, making exile equivalent to persecution

²² He lists dates at the end: Lent begins the 25th of Mechir (19 February), Passover week on the last day of Phamenouth (26 March), and “we will finish the holy fast” on 5th of Pharmuthi (31 March), followed by Pentecost. Modern dates are inserted by Brakke, “A New Fragment,” 66.

²³ J. Barry, *Bishops in Flight*, 36.

²⁴ Brakke, *Athanasius and the Politics of Asceticism*, 6. His introduction provides a clear summary of Athanasius's career, including his exiles and involvement in various ecclesial conflicts.

and presenting himself as a champion of orthodoxy who was driven to the desert by his heretical antagonists.²⁵ Against the Arians, “Athanasius must project his own mimicry of empire back upon his oppressors by inhabiting the rhetorical space of both a civic and an episcopal leader.”²⁶ With the fusion of Christianity and empire, Athanasius dons the dual hats of bishop and politician in an effort to combat heresy, two realities also represented in the *polis* of Alexandria and the ascetic space (and new *politeia*) of the desert.²⁷

The conflict between Athanasius and Arius is symptomatic of a broader crisis in Alexandria between the episcopate and the school and their differing approaches to the study of scriptural texts, and Athanasius reflects the distinction between an “orthodox” and ecclesial approach to the New Testament collection and a more academic one. As Brakke argues, Arius, Athanasius’s main opponent, represented the academic approach, which was characterized by tolerance, speculation and diversity, the centrality of the teacher, and the inclusion of women—and therefore (for Athanasius) one to be avoided for “orthodox” theologians and the lay people to whom Athanasius recommended reading certain books and ignoring others.²⁸ For Athanasius, the New Testament should not include texts intended for study which are not also considered necessary and useful for preaching.

Additionally, with an influx of people involved in the church in the fourth century due to the legalization of Christianity and its official sponsorship by the Emperor Constantine, there was a greater need for unambiguous clarity surrounding issues that were formerly debated in relative obscurity by minority Christians. The remaining “loose ends” of the still-developing canon could have appeared to weaken the authority of Christian scripture—hence the incentive to neaten up the edges that had remained somewhat in flux. This potential weakness was

²⁵ Barry, *Bishops in Flight*, 37, 43–45.

²⁶ Barry, *Bishops in Flight*, 49.

²⁷ Barry, *Bishops in Flight*, 54–55; Brakke, *Athanasius and the Politics of Asceticism*, 162–170. Brakke argues that this “heavenly civic life” is achieved through the imitation of exemplary saints, and that Athanasius casts his desert flight as “an imitation of the biblical saints who had fled to avoid persecution,” 165–66.

²⁸ Brakke, *Athanasius and the Politics of Asceticism*, 58–60.

exploited by opponents of Christianity: Celsus argued in the late second century that Christian scripture is, among other things, inconsistent and contradictory, the result of plagiarism, and that the concept of God is philosophically untenable²⁹; the chronology and authenticity of Christian scripture were explicitly attacked by Porphyry through textual and historical criticism intended to convince not just lay people but scholars³⁰; and the Emperor “Julian the Apostate,” the nephew of Constantine and a convert from Christianity to Neoplatonism, used Christian infighting to demonstrate the pitfalls of Christian faith.³¹

Despite these opponents of Christianity and its scriptures, contrary to conceptions of the canonical process as one primarily characterized by polemics, the fusion of Christianity to empire created a different sort of motivation: making sure that the Christianity of the empire was the most “orthodox” version possible, which necessitated further definition of what that orthodoxy did and did not constitute. To this end, Athanasius puts forward a particular New Testament canon, defined by its usefulness for preaching and catechizing in Christian communities and explicitly excluding any supposed apocrypha or pseudepigrapha.

2.2 ‘Canonical’ Authority and a Fixed Ecclesiastical Canon in *Epistula festalis* 39

Of the New Testament texts, Athanasius lists the four Gospels, then Acts, followed by “seven letters, called catholic, attributed to the apostles”: one to James, two to Peter, three to John, and one to Jude (*Epist. fest.* 39.18). After these are fourteen letters by Paul, listed in their order of

²⁹ Van der Horst, “The Pagan Opponents of Christianity on the Book of Genesis,” 321–22; G. Watson, “Celsus and the Philosophical Opposition to Christianity,” 165–79.

³⁰ Den Boer, “A Pagan Historian and His Enemies: Porphyry Against the Christians,” 200.

³¹ Van der Horst, “The Pagan Opponents,” 331–33; Teitler, *The Last Pagan Emperor*, esp. 22–23, 24, 52–53. Late in the fourth century, these same three opponents are mentioned by Jerome in his introduction to *De viris illustribus*, see section 4.3.

composition³², and then Revelation. Following this list, Athanasius makes a decisive statement with regard to its *closure*:

These are the springs of salvation, so that someone who thirsts may be satisfied by the words they contain. In these books alone the teaching of piety is proclaimed. Let no one add to or subtract from them. (*Epist. fest. 39.19*)³³

Apocryphal literature, in contrast with this “canonical” list, is the “invention of heretics, who write these books whenever they want and then generously add time to them, so that, by publishing them as if they were ancient, they might have a pretext for deceiving the simple folk” (*Epist. fest. 39.21*). He goes on to discuss Old Testament Pseudepigrapha allegedly of Enoch, Isaiah, and Moses without mentioning any such texts written in the names of New Testament figures. Other Patristic writers in the third and fourth centuries were also concerned about pseudepigrapha but use the term to describe pseudo-*apostolic* texts rather than what in modern scholarship are often labeled the “Old Testament Pseudepigrapha,” which are extended narratives about the lives of Old Testament figures. Serapion, the bishop of Antioch, writing in the late second century to a community in Rhossus, warns against pseudepigrapha written in the names of Peter and other apostles (*Hist. eccl. 6.12.3*). Likewise, Amphilochius, a fourth century bishop, identifies texts masquerading as genuine apostolic works as “pseudepigrapha in use among the heretics.”³⁴ Athanasius’s conception of the New Testament collection was an explicitly closed list, inclusive only of those texts deemed authentic and pious. Supposedly excluded were all apocryphal and pseudepigraphal works, while a few other works – the *Wisdom of Solomon*, *Sirach*, *Esther*, *Judith*, *Tobit*, and the *Teaching of the Apostles* or the

³² This is notably similar to the Muratorian Fragment, which also lists the corporate Pauline letters in their order of composition, rather than by addressee and/or length.

³³ Translation by Brakke (slightly adapted), “A New Fragment,” esp. 55–56 and 60–61. See also Junod, “D’Eusèbe de Césarée à Athanase d’Alexandrie,” 169–95.

³⁴ Adler, “The Pseudepigrapha in the Early Church,” 211; Datema, ed., *Amphilochii Iconiensis opera*, 235 frg. 10.

Didache, and the *Shepherd of Hermas* – were approved for reading by new converts (*Epist. fest.* 39.20).

Brakke observes that while Athanasius lacks the Eusebian category of ἀντιλεγόμενα, he replaces it with semi-authoritative books that are not to be publicly preached but are nonetheless “to be read.” In doing so, “Athanasius marks a transition from one kind of canon, suited to a Christian intellectual culture of study and debate, to another, suited to a Christian episcopal culture of worship and orthodoxy,” yet, “we should not take the bounded canon of episcopal orthodoxy as either the inevitable *telos* of early Christian history or the only way that Christians construed and used sacred writings.”³⁵ Junod also notes these differing categories for in-between texts. Where the scholarly categories of *disputed* or *doubted* are, in his words, “ecclesiastically troubling,” the label of “books to be read” distances this group from anything to do with apocryphal literature while still allowing space from the definitively “canonical” list.³⁶ The status of these “read” books is not tied to their reception (that is, to issues of authorship or authenticity) but rather to their usage specifically to benefit the church.³⁷ Junod confirms Brakke’s observation that Athanasius’s canonical list represents a shift from a primarily scholarly designation of scriptural texts to one explicitly intended for ecclesiastical usage, while also drawing attention to the fact that Athanasius is essentially disregarding scholarly issues of reception for the purpose of making a canonical list for church use. For Athanasius, these “read” books are in no way doubted but are rather an unambiguous group of texts intended for a particular purpose, secondary to the fully canonical books.³⁸ The Eusebian,

³⁵ Brakke, “A New Fragment,” 56.

³⁶ “La catégorie savant, et ecclésiastiquement gênante, des ἀντιλεγόμενα ou ἀμφιβαλλόμενα, qui survivait apparemment comme un résidu sans contenu chez Cyrille de Jérusalem, paraissait résolument éliminée. Et voilà qu’ apparaît ce groupe bien délimité de ‘livres à lire’ qui sont intégrés à la vie et à l’enseignement de l’Eglise, qui n’ont donc absolument rien à voir avec les ‘apocryphes’ tout en étant clairement distincts des ‘canoniques,’” Junod, “D’Eusèbe de Césarée à Athanase d’Alexandrie,” 192. Brakke himself acknowledges the link in “A New Fragment,” 55.

³⁷ Junod, “D’Eusèbe de Césarée à Athanase d’Alexandrie,” 193.

³⁸ These are the *Wisdom of Solomon*, the *Wisdom of Sirach*, *Esther*, *Judith*, *Tobit*, the *Didache* (which he calls ‘the Teaching of the Apostles’), and the *Shepherd* [of Hermas] (*Epist. fest.* 39.20).

scholarly label of “disputed” is therefore not simply replaced but entirely *extinguished*, leaving no room for uncertainty. These two ways need not be mutually exclusive as early Christian approaches, and they can even co-exist within the same community. Multiple “scriptural practices” inform these differing conceptions of the New Testament collection, and Athanasius’s closed list, though from his perspective it is in competition with a more porous list inclusive of texts of questionable provenance, can stand alongside a collection intended for academic instruction and practice.³⁹

Athanasius’s list had an effect: Theodore, the abbot of the Pachomian monastery in Egypt, had his monks translate his letter into Coptic, giving it, according to Lundhaug, “the status of monastic rule,” and such a move could be partly responsible for the purging and burial of purportedly heretical texts.⁴⁰ The 39th *Epistula festalis* survives in Syriac as well as Coptic, and a variety of Athanasian works were also translated into Syriac and used in a variety of Syriac traditions.⁴¹ Syriac churches do not appear to have been interested in Athanasius for “canonical” reasons related to scriptural authority, but rather because of doctrinal, Christological, and ascetic compositions such as the *Life of Antony*. This is also consistent with the reception of the Catholic Epistles in the Syriac church, given that *1 Peter* and *1 John* were not valued for their supposed apostolicity so much as for their ties to Jesus tradition.⁴²

Despite their interest in Athanasius, however, this continued variance in the New Testament collection also indicates that Athanasius was not entirely successful in his campaign to close the New Testament “canon.” Like Brakke, Jennifer Knust argues that ancient (and even later) reading practices were not so stark as the picture that is sometimes painted of the conflict between orthodoxy and heresy—or between the canonical and the supposedly non-canonical:

³⁹ On this, see Brakke, “Scriptural Practices,” 263–80.

⁴⁰ Junod, “D’Eusèbe de Césarée à Athanase d’Alexandrie,” 189; Lundhaug, “The Dishna Papers,” 351–52.

⁴¹ Haar Romeny, “Athanasius in Syriac,” 228, 234, 254.

⁴² Haar Romeny, “Athanasius in Syriac,” 255.

The monks, priests, and lay Christians who listed these books continued to read canonical works alongside apocryphal literature, patristic commentaries, martyr stories, and biographies, among other texts. Their New Testament books also often circulated in separate volumes, outside of a canonically configured codex. Such lists verify the continuing diversity of Christian literary taste; these readers did not limit themselves to the books prescribed by Athanasius ‘according to a rule,’ even in monasteries where the bishop was regarded as a hero of the faith... Treating canonicity and authority as aspects of Christian practice, rather than as steps toward an inevitable winnowing away of ‘heretical’ documents and interpretations, broadens our understanding of how books could function socially and materially as well as canonically.⁴³

Prior to Athanasius, for example, the miscellany codices such as the Bodmer Miscellaneous Codex and the Crosby-Schøyen Codex, both found at Dishna, represent not a unilateral move toward an “orthodox” canon but rather a continuing practice of diverse reading even after the production of many of the now-canonical New Testament texts and collections of works. And, while Athanasius does represent an attempt to fix the boundary of the canon, it is not the case that the canonical process progressed toward and came to a halt with his list in the year 367, even if his designation of canonical books appears retrospectively to have been successful. The polemical intentions of the letter are obvious, considering that Athanasius spends most of his energy denouncing apocrypha, not defending the canon. The anti-apocryphal sentiment bears witness to the ongoing popularity of texts Athanasius found inappropriate, while his silence on the existence of New Testament pseudepigrapha prevents the need to defend the validity of the Catholic Epistles, and discussion of the existence of New Testament pseudepigrapha is evaded. Athanasius’s lack of argument for the genuineness of the Catholic Epistles, along with the inclusion only of *Old Testament* pseudepigrapha under the polemical description of apocrypha, is notable—either he was unaware of the concerns of other

⁴³ Knust, “Miscellany Manuscripts,” 105.

bishop-scholars such as Serapion, Amphilochius, and Eusebius over the authorship of the Catholic Epistles and the proliferation of apostolic pseudepigrapha, which is unlikely, or his silence serves as a defense of the Catholic collection, allowing their authenticity to be taken for granted in a letter that otherwise explicitly denounces pseudepigraphy. Athanasius would not have written such a polemical defense of the texts he perceived to be “canonical” unless he thought the usage of the apocryphal texts he denounces was a problem. In doing so, he attempted to rein in the reading practices of Christians making use of such texts. While Eusebius’s awareness of the use of all seven Catholic Epistles does not lead him to include all seven among his accepted grouping on this basis, Athanasius includes them all without any comment on their perceived authenticity. These two prestigious ecclesiastical writers held differing opinions on the status of the Catholic Epistle collection, which continues to be emblematic of the ongoing flexibility of the New Testament collection in the fourth century.

3. CANONICAL PLURALISM IN THE FOURTH CENTURY AND BEYOND

Not only does second- and third-century evidence trouble notions of early canonical stability, as we saw in regard to the early material history of the Catholic Epistles, but the ongoing formation of the New Testament collection extends beyond the fourth century, dominated, at least for the Catholic Epistles, by the concern over what constitutes “authentic” apostolic authorship. While attempts were made, such as Eusebius’s and Athanasius’s, to delineate a particular canon list, these were done over and against actual reading practices. Well beyond Athanasius’s 39th festal letter, the shape of the New Testament canon remained somewhat porous: other fourth-century canon lists are not uniform and show particular trouble with the Catholic Epistles; fourth-century Codex Sinaiticus and fifth-century Codex Alexandrinus, two of the earliest manuscripts that could be considered “whole” collections of the Old and New Testaments, do not present collections consistent with Athanasius’s list; the Syrian Church in

the fifth century accepted only *James*, *1 Peter*, and *1 John*, and even then these serve more as supplementary Jesus tradition than as a discrete set of apostolic letters; and the stichometry inserted into the sixth-century Codex Claromontanus lists a New Testament inclusive of *Barnabas* (situated alongside the Catholic Epistles) and other now-extracanonial literature.

3.1 Other Fourth Century New Testament Lists

Aside from the New Testament as conceived by Eusebius, Athanasius, and Jerome, as we will see later on, there are other fourth-century lists that present a variety of perspectives on the Catholic Epistle collection. The listing of a text in a purportedly authoritative list is not necessarily equivalent to widespread usage—these lists are *prescriptive* of an ecclesiastical figure’s aspirational judgement of the state of the New Testament collection, not necessarily *descriptive* of actual popular usage—or even their own.⁴⁴

Some lists are inclusive of all seven Catholic Epistles. A stichometric list often dated to the early fourth century but which is only extant in the sixth-century Codex Claromontanus lists all seven Catholic Epistles but also includes *Barnabas*, the *Shepherd*, the *Acts of Paul*, and the *Revelation of Peter*.⁴⁵ Cyril of Jerusalem, in the middle of the fourth century, names “the seven Catholic letters of James, Peter, John, and Jude” after *Acts* and preceding the Pauline epistles in his New Testament collection (*Cat.* 4.36).⁴⁶ The Synod of Laodicea, roughly contemporaneous with Cyril, is slightly more specific, listing “one of James, first and second

⁴⁴ Didymus the Blind accepts *Jude* and *2 Peter* but may reject *2* and *3 John*, as he does not use either, but Ehrman finds the issue ultimately inconclusive. Ehrman, “The New Testament Canon of Didymus the Blind,” 7, 9–10. Ehrman also distinguishes between descriptive and prescriptive notions of the New Testament canon, arguing that Athanasius represents the latter, 1, 19. For a fuller list of witnesses to the knowledge and acceptance of the Catholic Epistles from the second through the fifth centuries, see Nienhuis, *Not by Paul Alone*, 91–97.

⁴⁵ See Metzger, who refers to Zahn and Harnack’s position that a (non-extant) Greek form of the list originated around Alexandria near the year 300, *The Canon of the New Testament*, 230. More on this stichometry can be found below in section 4.3.

⁴⁶ Nienhuis, *Not by Paul Alone*, 77; Gallagher and Meade, *The Biblical Canon Lists*, 115. While Cyril listed all seven Catholic Epistles, he may use *2 Peter*, but he does not use *2* and *3 John* or *Jude*, see 115 n. 199, 200, 201.

of Peter, first, second, and third of John, one of Jude” also preceding the Pauline epistles.⁴⁷ The *Apostolic Constitutions*, from the last quarter of the fourth century, list all seven Catholic Epistles, ordered *James-John-Jude-Peter*, but also *1* and *2 Clement*, as well as the *Constitutions* themselves among the “holy books” (*Apos. const.* 8.47.85)!⁴⁸ However, earlier instructions from the *Constitutions* regarding what books should be read omit the Catholic letters (*Apos. const.* 2.57.19–35).⁴⁹ In the later fourth century, Gregory of Nazianzus includes all seven Catholic Epistles, labeling them as such and using the word γνήσιον – genuine – to describe the books he includes in his list of scriptures.⁵⁰

Other lists call attention to the uncertain shape of the Catholic Epistle collection and therefore of the New Testament canon. The Mommsen Catalogue, a Latin stichometric list from 365 or before, lists, on four separate lines, “epistles of John, 3, one only; epistles of Peter, 2, one only,” with no mention of *James* or *Jude*.⁵¹ The stichometric numbering for the Johannine and Petrine epistles prevented the scribe from simply writing in one epistle from each, so he found another way to register uncertainty about all but *1 John* and *1 Peter*.⁵² Epiphanius of Salamis, in the late fourth century, names the authors but not the works, listing “the catholic epistles of James, Peter, John, and Jude,” without specifying the number of letters associated with each author (*Pan.* 76.22.5). This may reflect some uncertainty over the status of at least some of the Catholic letters. Amphilochius of Iconium, perhaps influenced by the Syrian Church not far away, notes at the end of the fourth century, “of the Catholic Epistles,

⁴⁷ Gallagher and Meade, *The Biblical Canon Lists*, 131, 133. The list of scriptures, canon 59, is preserved only in Greek while the Latin and Syriac canons omit it, and this has led some to question its authenticity.

⁴⁸ Batovici, “The Apostolic Fathers in Codex Sinaiticus and Codex Alexandrinus,” 598; Metzger, *Les Constitutions apostolique III*, 306, 308.

⁴⁹ Metzger, *Les Constitutions apostolique I*, 312, 314. Gallagher and Meade, *The Biblical Canon Lists*, 136–37.

⁵⁰ Gallagher and Meade, *The Biblical Canon Lists*, 146.

⁵¹ Mommsen, “Zur Lateinischen Stichometrie,” 146. Metzger notes Harnack’s suggestion that the “one only” following the Johannine line could refer to *James* while the “one only” following the Petrine epistles could refer to *Jude*, but this would be an extremely unusual way of referring to *James* and *Jude* and cannot be accounted for by manuscript damage or error. The phrase “una sola” also occurs only in the Cheltenham manuscript, but not that of St Gall; see Metzger, *The Canon of the New Testament*, 231–32; Nienhuis, *Not by Paul Alone*, 81; Gallagher and Meade, *The Biblical Canon Lists*, 191.

⁵² Metzger, *The Canon of the New Testament*, 232.

some say seven; others only three” (*Iam. ad Sel.* 310).⁵³ The agreed-upon three are *James*, *1 Peter*, and *1 John*, and though the others are listed, Amphilochius did not use *2 Peter*, *2* and *3 John*, or *Jude*, suggesting he accepted only three Catholic Epistles.⁵⁴ The reception of the Catholic Epistles in the fourth century is neither consistent nor inevitable—*1 John* and *1 Peter* remain the most unanimously accepted letters while the other five often drift, a phenomenon not restricted to either the eastern or western regions of the ancient Christian world. There is no unanimous perspective on the status of the Catholic Epistles in the fourth century.

3.2 Codex Sinaiticus and Codex Alexandrinus

Codex Sinaiticus and Codex Alexandrinus are two of the four late antique uncial manuscripts containing the Old and New Testaments.⁵⁵ They also both provide material evidence concurrent with and past the time considered by many that the New Testament canon was closed that other texts continued to be included alongside the 27-book New Testament collection: Sinaiticus includes *Barnabas* and the *Shepherd of Hermas* following *Revelation*, and Alexandrinus includes *1* and *2 Clement* and perhaps also the *Psalms of Solomon*, according to a later attached index.⁵⁶ While these texts do include the Catholic Epistles, which are situated alongside *Acts* in both manuscripts, they nonetheless provide evidence of the continuing uncertainty surrounding the New Testament collection.

The Codex Sinaiticus (GA 01) has been dated to around the latter half of the fourth century. Some speculate that it was among the fifty copies of “the divine scriptures” requested of Eusebius by the Emperor Constantine, though this hypothesis has been shown to be

⁵³ Oberg, *Amphilochii Iconiensis iambi ad Seleucum*, 29–40.

⁵⁴ Nienhuis, *Not by Paul Alone*, 76, 81; Gallagher and Meade, *The Biblical Canon Lists*, 154, n. 408.

⁵⁵ Alexandrinus is damaged such that portions of both Testaments are lost, however.

⁵⁶ Batovici, “The Apostolic Fathers in Codex Sinaiticus and Codex Alexandrinus,” 581. Batovici notes that it is speculated that Sinaiticus may also have included the *Didache*.

unlikely.⁵⁷ Its New Testament is divided into three major sections: there is one blank page between *John* and *Romans*, demarcating a Gospels section from the Pauline corpus⁵⁸, and another between *Philemon* and *Acts*, separating Paul's letters from what appears to be a broader apostolic collection.⁵⁹ Otherwise, each text begins a new column, but not necessarily a new page.⁶⁰ The third section begins with *Acts*, followed by the Catholic Epistles, *Revelation*, *Barnabas*, and the *Shepherd of Hermas*, and there are also a number of unidentified fragments that may belong to texts that followed the *Shepherd*. There is no page separating the "New Testament" texts from an appendix of "non-canonical" literature; the Codex simply continues on past *Revelation* to at least two other popular and well-known texts.⁶¹ Batovici claims that the positioning of *Barnabas* and the *Shepherd* following *Revelation* may be a sign of secondary status to the texts that precede it, but that they are treated with equal care to the rest of the codex, and they are not present simply because multiple-quires provided more pages than necessary for the "canonical" books.⁶² Despite their later placement, the equal treatment and lack of a separating page that would truly appendicize *Barnabas* and the *Shepherd* from *Revelation* suggests that they were not so set apart from the supposed "canonical" texts.⁶³ The manuscript itself does not suggest a closure of the New Testament prior to the inclusion of

⁵⁷ Böttrich, "Codex Sinaiticus and the use of manuscripts in the Early Church," 469–78; Gamble, "Codex Sinaiticus in its Fourth Century Context," 3–18, esp. 7–11. The codex can be viewed at <https://www.codexsinaiticus.org/en/manuscript.aspx>.

⁵⁸ Q81-f.6v [BL-f.260v]; the end of *John* is on Q81-f.6r.

⁵⁹ Q86-f.6v [BL-f.298v]; the end of *Philemon* is on Q86-f.

⁶⁰ See for example Q89-f.8v, which shows the endings (and titles) of both *2 John* and *3 John*.

⁶¹ On the text of the *Shepherd* in Codex Sinaiticus, see Batovici, "The Appearance of Hermas's Text in Codex Sinaiticus," 149–159. Batovici shows through textual analysis that the *Shepherd* was written by the same scribe (B) as and treated similarly to the rest of the (now-canonical) books; likewise, *Barnabas* cannot be considered an appendix. For more on the *Shepherd* and its transmission in Codex Sinaiticus, see Ceconi, "The Codex Sinaiticus and Hermas," 278–95.

⁶² Batovici, "The Apostolic Fathers in Codex Sinaiticus and Codex Alexandrinus," 588, 599, 602.

⁶³ Contra Metzger, who claims *Barnabas* and the *Shepherd* stand "after the close of the New Testament," a claim only possible with a definitively closed New Testament, Metzger, *The Canon of the New Testament*, 65. It is not at all clear from Sinaiticus, however, that the "New Testament" has come to a close—especially since both *Barnabas* and the *Shepherd* take up considerable space.

Barnabas and the *Shepherd*, nor does it claim to contain the “canon”; the state of the New Testament collection remains unclear.⁶⁴

Codex Alexandrinus (GA 02) has been dated paleographically to the first half of the fifth century.⁶⁵ All seven Catholic Epistles follow *Acts*, preceding the Pauline epistles, and an elaborate coronis after the end of *Jude* illustrates the end of the *Praxapostolos*. The accompanying superscription reads, on three lines: “the Epistle of Jude / the Acts of the Apostles / and Catholics.”⁶⁶ Following *Revelation* in Codex Alexandrinus are the texts of *1* and *2 Clement*.⁶⁷ Similar to the situation with Sinaiticus, claims have been made regarding the “appendix” of *1* and *2 Clement* “added” to the codex.⁶⁸ But, just as with Sinaiticus, no textual or material delineation is made between *Revelation* and these supposed additional texts.⁶⁹

The evidence of Codices Sinaiticus and Alexandrinus indicates that “additional” or “appendix” terminology with regard to the now-noncanonical texts included in both manuscripts following *Revelation* is misleading. Rather, these codices exhibit no anxiety or hesitation over the inclusion of *Barnabas*, the *Shepherd*, and *1* and *2 Clement* directly juxtaposed with the New Testament collection, even if their ordering suggest a secondary status. As two of the earliest “complete” manuscripts of the Old and New Testaments, Sinaiticus and Alexandrinus should not be taken for granted as *canonical* objects. The cumulative effect points to a New Testament still in flux: along with the Catholic Epistle

⁶⁴ Gamble suggests that not only did the technology of the multiple-quire codex *not* necessarily contribute to the stabilization of a scriptural canon, but it may have actually served to “blur rather than to sharpen the boundary between canonical and non-canonical writings” by broadening the possibilities for inclusiveness; Gamble, “Codex Sinaiticus in its Fourth Century Context,” 6.

⁶⁵ Batovici, “The Apostolic Fathers in Codex Sinaiticus and Codex Alexandrinus,” 582.

⁶⁶ The manuscript can be viewed at http://www.bl.uk/manuscripts/Viewer.aspx?ref=royal_ms_1_d_viii_fs001r (f.84v).

⁶⁷ Batovici, “The Less-expected Books in Codex Sinaiticus and Alexandrinus,” 39–50 and “The Apostolic Fathers in Codex Sinaiticus and Codex Alexandrinus,” 581–605.

⁶⁸ Lightfoot, *The Apostolic Fathers*, 3, as quoted by Batovici, “The Apostolic Fathers in Codex Sinaiticus and Codex Alexandrinus,” 584.

⁶⁹ Another list roughly contemporary with Alexandrinus, the *Apostolic Constitutions*, also includes *1* and *2 Clement*—though there is also the fact that the canon list (canon 85) includes itself in the *Apostolic Constitutions*, of which the list is a part; Batovici, “The Apostolic Fathers in Codex Sinaiticus and Codex Alexandrinus,” 597–98.

collection's liminal status in the fourth and fifth centuries, Sinaiticus and Alexandrinus display the ongoing fluidity of the canonical process.

3.3 The Reception of the Catholic Epistles in the Syrian Church in the Fifth Century

Centered around Edessa and Arbela and somewhat isolated from the remainder of the Christian world, the Syrian Church's canon developed in relative isolation, and Syrian tradition into the fifth century maintains a minimal – if any – acceptance of the Catholic Epistles.⁷⁰ As translations are extant of Eusebius's *Historia ecclesiastica* in Syriac, it is possible Eusebius's minimal New Testament list had an impact in a Syrian context.⁷¹ *Jude* also posed a unique problem, as this epistle shares its name with the betrayer Judas; Judas and Jude are the same name in Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek. Trompf suggests that this is the reason for *Jude*'s exclusion from the Peshitta, along with “other texts looking late and less authoritative” such as *2 Peter* and *2 and 3 John*.⁷²

A list found at St Catherine's Monastery on the Sinai Peninsula from the eighth or ninth century (MS 10) includes no Catholic Epistles at all but includes the fourteen (perhaps even a fifteenth) Pauline letters.⁷³ The reason for this may have to do with their relation to Jesus tradition. Bewer emphasizes that the Syriac fathers accepted the Gospels (either four or harmonized as one in Tatian's *Diatessaron*), the epistles of Paul, and *Acts* as “canonical” because they contain the words either of Jesus or of the apostles. The fourth-century Syriac Christian author Aphraates, or Aphrahat, also called the Persian Sage, introduces citations repeatedly with “The Lord” or “Our Savior says” or, in the case of Paul, “the blessed apostle says.” He appears to regard the gospel writers as mere vehicles for the words of Jesus, never

⁷⁰ Nienhuis and Wall, *The Shaping and Shape*, 31.

⁷¹ Translations also exist in Latin, Coptic, Armenian, Georgian, Ethiopic, and Slavonic, see Hollerich, “Eusebius,” 638; Wright and McLean, *The Ecclesiastical History of Eusebius in Syriac*.

⁷² Trompf, “The Epistle of Jude, Irenaeus, and the Gospel of Judas,” 556.

⁷³ See Gallagher and Meade, *The Biblical Canon Lists*, 236–42.

referring to the evangelists by name.⁷⁴ As the Catholic Epistles are entirely absent from Aphraates's "canon," this suggests he was either entirely unaware of the Catholic Epistle collection or that he considered none of them to be authentically apostolic. According to Bewer, for the Syrian Church, "[w]hy were [the gospels] regarded as canonical and others not? Because they were written by apostles and apostolic men. Apostolicity became the principle of canonicity."⁷⁵ He further claims that *Acts* and the epistles of Paul were considered supplementary to the words and deeds of Jesus found in the gospels, which were "on the same plane" as the law and the prophets.⁷⁶ Though the fifth-century eastern fathers John Chrysostom and Theodoret used, in line with the later Peshitta, *1 Peter*, *1 John*, and *James*, they did not use the "minor" Catholic Epistles, and Theodore of Mopsuestia may not have used any Catholic Epistles at all.⁷⁷ Brock even suggests that translations of the "minor" Catholic Epistles and *Revelation* that came to be included in later Syriac versions of the New Testament came from sixth-century manuscripts, meaning these texts may not have been translated into Syriac until then.⁷⁸

In many versions of the Syriac New Testament, there is no trace of the minor Catholic Epistles in particular. The *Doctrine of Addai* is a narrative text about the founding of Christianity traditionally dated to around the year 400 CE which includes a supposed correspondence between King Abgar and Jesus that results in Addai being sent to the king to help cure him of an illness. The narrative includes a canon list as part of the arrangements for reading scripture aloud in church:

the Law and the Prophets and the Gospel, which you read every day before the people, and the epistles of Paul, which Simon Peter sent us from the city of Rome, and the Acts of the twelve apostles, which John the son of Zebedee sent us from Ephesus: From these writings you shall read in the churches of the

⁷⁴ Bewer, "The History of the New Testament Canon in the Syrian Church," 352, 356.

⁷⁵ Bewer, "The History of the New Testament Canon in the Syrian Church," 355.

⁷⁶ Bewer, "The History of the New Testament Canon in the Syrian Church," 357.

⁷⁷ Nienhuis and Wall, *The Shaping and Shape*, 31.

⁷⁸ Brock, *The Bible in the Syriac Tradition*, 18–19, 106–107.

Messiah, and besides them nothing else you shall read, as there is not any other in which the truth that you hold is written, except these books, which keep you in the faith to which you have been called.⁷⁹

It may be the case that *I Peter* and *I John* were the first Catholic Epistles to find favor in the Syrian Church in the vein of this tradition in the *Doctrine of Addai* that Peter sent *Acts* from Rome, while John sent the epistles of Paul from Ephesus, along with the gospel-affirming content to be found in each letter. Once the gospel writers themselves came to be of interest, *I Peter* confirmed the link between Peter and Mark, offering a non-apostolic gospel writer some apparently needed credibility, while *I John's* likeness to the *Gospel of John* in combination with its emphasis on John's direct eye-witness account grounds the Johannine gospel in Jesus' fleshly body and ministry. These Catholic Epistles would have been supplements to the supplementary material of *Acts* and the Pauline epistles—two tiers down from the authority of the gospels, while the remaining five Catholic Epistles continued to be excluded by many.

The earliest manuscripts of the Peshitta, the Syriac Bible, lack all Catholic Epistles but *I Peter* and *I John*, with *James* added later on.⁸⁰ Later Syrian New Testaments published in the sixth and seventh centuries, the Philoxenian and Harclean versions, did occasionally include all seven Catholic Epistles, but even then their manuscript histories show that the Catholic letters remained a rarity, as the minor letters are excluded from the majority of the extant manuscripts.⁸¹ The fluidity of the manuscript evidence is not suggestive of certainty with regard to the status of the Catholic collection in a Syrian context, despite their eventual inclusion in

⁷⁹ Quoted in Bewer, "The History of the New Testament Canon in the Syrian Church," 345, here the adapted translation by Nienhuis, *Not by Paul Alone*, 80. See also Phillips (transl.), *The Doctrine of Addai the Apostle*. Eusebius is also aware of the *Doctrine of Addai*, as he ends Book 1 of the *Historia ecclesiastica* with a description of the Abgar/Jesus correspondence and long quotation (*Hist. eccl.* 1.13.1–20).

⁸⁰ Allison, *James*, 18. Siker has compiled citations of and allusions to the Catholic Epistles in Syriac literature from as early as the sixth century, including from the Harclean and Philoxenian versions of the Peshitta, Severus of Antioch, Cyril of Alexandria, and Jacob of Edessa, "The Canonical Status of the Catholic Epistles in the Syriac New Testament," 330–40.

⁸¹ Moore, "Is Enoch Also Among the Prophets?" 513; Siker, "The Canonical Status of the Catholic Epistles in the Syriac New Testament," 314–15. For more on the text of the minor Catholic Epistles in these older Syriac versions, see Gwynn, "The Older Syriac Version of the Four Minor Catholic Epistles," 281–314.

later versions which themselves fell out of use. As Siker puts it, with the decline of alternative versions and the dominance of the Peshitta, a sevenfold Catholic collection only ever achieved a “quasi-canonical status, neither wholly accepted nor wholly rejected by the Syriac Church” and “the Minor Catholic Epistles met with a stalemate.”⁸² The Eastern Nestorian church continues to this day to use the Peshitta, including only the “major” letters of *James*, *1 Peter*, and *1 John*.⁸³ Ironically, the “Catholic” collection, whose name is suggestive of unity or universality, is the reason that the New Testament remains a plurality: “the New Testament” is expressed in multiple forms through the local canons of differing traditions. Seven Catholic Epistles were not fully accepted in an ancient Syriac context, but three were; Sinaiticus presents a context in which *Barnabas* and the *Shepherd* were situated with the New Testament; and the stichometry inserted into the Codex Claromontanus, as we will see, was fully inclusive not only of *Barnabas* and the *Shepherd*, but also of the *Acts of Paul* and the *Apocalypse of Peter*.

3.4 The Claromontanus Stichometry: a 6th-century Alternative New Testament

In 1852, Constantin Tischendorf published his transcription of a sixth-century codex of the Pauline epistles, the Codex Claromontanus, copied from the manuscripts held at the Bibliothèque Nationale de France.⁸⁴ His transcription appears to have quickly become the authoritative edition to which to appeal.

The Codex Claromontanus (D 06) was written in parallel Greek (verso) and Latin (recto), and a Latin stichometric list was copied onto two and a half of the four pages that separate *Philemon* and *Hebrews* (467v–468v). Due to differing handwriting and ink, it has been determined that this list and the Pauline letters were not copied by the same scribe—even a

⁸² Siker, “The Catholic Epistles in the Syriac New Testament,” 329. The decline was likely due to their association with Monophysite theology. Additionally, the *Doctrine of Addai* from around the year 400 CE instructs the reading only of the Law, the Prophets, the Gospels (likely Tatian’s *Diatessaron*), the letters of Paul as received from Peter, and Acts as received from John, see Nienhuis, *Not by Paul Alone*, 80–81.

⁸³ Nienhuis, *Not by Paul Alone*, 80.

⁸⁴ Tischendorf, *Codex Claromontanus*, the stichometry is transcribed on 468-69; notes on 589.

cursory comparison confirms this, as the size, shape, spacing, and color of the lettering is visibly distinct.⁸⁵ Stichometries like this one are scribal aids that provide the approximate line length of the listed works, so that scribes know how much space to allow for each text. The list is in two columns: text titles on the left and the stichometric numbers on the right. The Claromontanus stichometry, titled ‘VERSUS SCRIBTURARUM SANCTARUM,’ presents an apparently “whole” Bible, with both Old and New Testament texts, though the only distinguishing factor between the Testaments is a heading preceding the four gospels. The Old Testament collection does not include *1* and *2 Chronicles*, the third book of *Maccabees*, *Lamentations*, or *Baruch*. Headings are consistently used to designate sub-collections or text units: “Regnorum” precedes the four books of Kingdoms and “Maccabeorum sic. [thus]” precedes the three included books of Maccabees, while “euangelia IIII” precedes the four gospels, in the order of Matthew, John, Mark, Luke⁸⁶, and “epistulas Pauli” precedes the Pauline letters (and indeed the rest of the list, as this is the final heading).

The titles of the Pauline epistles move from *Ephesians* to *1 Timothy*, omitting *Philippians*, *1* and *2 Thessalonians*, and *Hebrews*, and some suggest that this is one of a number of possible errors on the part of either the scribe or his exemplar. The codex itself, in fact, does include the works missing from the stichometry. The jump can be explained as an error in the transcription due to the similarity in the Greek titles of *Hebrews* (Ἑβραίους) and *Ephesians* (Ἐφεσίους), and the issue would also be further complicated by the translation from a Greek exemplar to the Latin of the current list.⁸⁷ Following *Philemon* are two texts labeled *ad*

⁸⁵ The stichometry (and the entire codex) can be viewed on the Bibliothèque nationale de France website: <http://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b84683111/f868.item>, from 467v–468v (868–870 BNF view).

⁸⁶ This order, very similar to the traditional western order of *Matthew, John, Luke, Mark*, may prioritize apostolicity over date. By the fourth century, the traditionally eastern order of *Matthew, Mark, Luke, John* appears to have become so ubiquitous that it becomes unnecessary to argue for their particular order (cf. Origen, who lists *Matthew, Mark, Luke, John, Comm. Matt.* 1.3–6; *Hom. Josh.* 7.1, Eusebius names only ‘the holy gospel tetrad’ in *Hist. eccl.* 3.25.1; Cyril of Jerusalem presumably assumes the fourfold gospel, *Catechesis* 4.36; and Athanasius lists them without argument in *Epist. fest.* 39.18).

⁸⁷ Hahneman, *The Muratorian Fragment*, 142; Metzger, *The Canon of the New Testament*, 230. It has also been suggested that *Barnabas* stands in for *Hebrews* in this list as Barnabas was thought by some to have written *Hebrews* (cf. Tertullian, *Pud.* 20.2). The stichometric calculation for *Barnabas* (850 lines) also resembles more

petrum—to/for rather than from/of Peter—perhaps intending *1* and *2 Peter*, given their placement after the Pauline Epistles and before the rest of the Catholic Epistles. While a Catholic Epistle collection is not explicitly designated here, *1 Peter*'s prominence among early Christian literature suggests that the transition from Paul's letters to those of Peter (rather than *James*' placement at the start of the non-Pauline epistles) is not surprising.⁸⁸ Consistent with this stichometric ordering, the codex also has the order "Peter [Πέτρος/Petrus, rather than Κηφᾶς] and James and John" in both the Greek and Latin transcriptions of *Galatians* 2:9.

The list may have originated in an eastern context sometime around the turn of the third to the fourth century, though it is crucial to note that this "original" exemplar remains a theoretical one.⁸⁹ Metzger further notes that the stichometry indicates influence "from the East making its way into the West," which reflects a situation "midway between Clement of Alexandria and Origen on the one side and Eusebius and Athanasius on the other."⁹⁰ Hahneman moves the date forward, seeing the list as an intermediary between Eusebius and Athanasius.⁹¹ Noting both sides, Gallagher and Meade observe that those who emphasize an earlier date do so on the basis of features that would be considered more unusual the later the proposed date, such as the inclusion of four now-non-canonical texts, while advocates for a later date do the opposite, emphasizing features that would appear unusual in the early fourth century.⁹² The latter position, exemplified by Hahneman, who is keen to shift the provenance of the list into

closely the length of *Hebrews*; see de Boer, "Tertullian on 'Barnabas' Letter to the Hebrews," 252; Westcott, *History of the Canon of the New Testament*, 576 n. 1). If this list originated in an eastern context, as Harnack insists, *Barnabas* must be 'rebranded' as *Hebrews*; von Harnack, *Geschichte der altchristlichen Litteratur bis Eusebius*, 88. We would, however, expect *Barnabas-as-Hebrews* to be situated either among or at the end of the Pauline epistles due to its circulation with the Pauline corpus, rather than following *Jude*. And, because *Barnabas* was sometimes identified as a 'catholic epistle' (Origen, *Cels.* 1.63.9), it is more likely that it is *Barnabas*, not *Hebrews*, that is meant in the Claromontanus stichometry. Against the insertion of *Hebrews*, see the discussion of *Barnabas* among the Catholic Epistles in Nienhuis, *Not by Paul Alone*, 75.

⁸⁸ Nienhuis, *Not by Paul Alone*, 77.

⁸⁹ Cf. Metzger, *The Canon of the New Testament*, 310; Gallagher and Meade, *The Biblical Canon Lists*, 183.

⁹⁰ Metzger *The Canon of the New Testament*, 230.

⁹¹ Gallagher and Meade, *The Biblical Canon Lists*, 183; Metzger, *The Canon of the New Testament*, 230, following Zahn and Harnack; and Hahneman, *The Muratorian Fragment*, 68, 141–43.

⁹² Gallagher and Meade, *The Biblical Canon Lists*, 183.

the fourth century, emphasizes the “absence of reservation” about the Catholic Epistle collection.⁹³ However, there is no reason why this should not just as likely suggest that such a list *predates* Eusebius, particularly considering Eusebius is aware of a seven-letter collection of Catholic Epistles, and that even the five disputed letters in this collection are “known to many” and “publicly read in most churches” (*Hist. eccl.* 3.35.3, 2.23.25).

The overlap with Eusebius also goes further: the stichometry shows remarkable correspondence to the New Testament list rejected by Eusebius in *Hist. eccl.* 3.25.4–5, where he names the now-canonical 27 books, along with the *Acts of Paul*, the *Shepherd*, the *Apocalypse of Peter*, the *Epistle of Barnabas*, the *Didache*, and the *Gospel of the Hebrews* – a possible (but, in his view, incorrect) 33-book New Testament. Eusebius is not simply listing spurious texts but is opposing a larger canon in favor of a more minimal 21- or 22- book New Testament, also excluding the five disputed Catholic Epistles (*James*, *Jude*, *2 Peter*, and *2–3 John*) and perhaps the *Apocalypse of John*. A New Testament comprised of 27 texts is not, at this stage, on the table.

The Claromontanus stichometry is a puzzling list for three main reasons: its anomalous exclusion of four Pauline texts, odd titles for *1–2 Peter*, and the insertion of an obelus alongside one Old Testament text and five New Testament texts that supposedly indicates disputed status.⁹⁴ It is likely, given the early interest in the Pauline epistles and the association by the end of the third century of the seven letters of the Catholic Epistle collection, that the omission of *Philippians*, *1–2 Thessalonians*, and *Hebrews*, as well as the mislabeling of *1–2 Peter* as *ad petrum prima* and *ad petrum II*, are genuine errors. The Claromontanus stichometry is interesting for the Catholic Epistles and the history of local canonical processes because of the presence of these obeli. Tischendorf’s edition includes just this one small footnote on the

⁹³ Hahneman, *The Muratorian Fragment*, 67, 143.

⁹⁴ For more on the obeli, see Rodenbiker, “The Claromontanus Stichometry and its Canonical Implications,” (forthcoming in *JSNT*).

existence of the obeli: “By these four line-enumerations for Ep.Barn., Shepherd, Acts of Paul, and Revelation of Peter obeli have been placed by a fairly recent hand.”⁹⁵ Tischendorf was correct to note that these obeli were inserted by a later hand, but mistaken in listing just these four texts as having been set apart. As early as 1852, Tischendorf appears to be the originator of both the identification of just four texts as the ones marked with an obelus (excluding *Judith* and *1 Peter*), as well as the suggestion that the obeli are secondary, rather than original to the Claromontanus stichometry or its exemplar.⁹⁶ The former assertion was taken on board by subsequent scholarship, whereas his brief suggestion that the dashes are secondary was ignored until Verheyden, much more recently, made an equally brief reference to “four extra-canonical books that are marked (by a second hand?) by a dash...”⁹⁷ However, even Verheyden does not mention the anomalous titles for *1* and *2 Peter* or that the same dash can also be found next to both *Judith* and *ad petrum prima (1 Peter)*.⁹⁸

Due to the inherited assumptions that only the now-apocryphal texts in the stichometry are marked with obeli and that these marks are original to the list, modern scholarship has tended to assume that the list puts forth something that looks very similar to the now-canonical New Testament—or that it *should* do so. In his 1986 dissertation on Eusebius’s role in the formation of the New Testament canon, Gregory Allen Robbins observes a connection between the stichometry inserted into the Codex Claromontanus and Eusebius’s canon list detailed in *Hist. eccl.* 3.25, noting that four of the texts Eusebius identifies as $\nu\acute{o}\theta\alpha$ are included in the stichometry, as well, and that this list, like Eusebius’s, distinguishes some supposedly

⁹⁵ “His quattuor versibus de epist. Barnabae, pastore, actibus Pauli, revelatione Petri manu satis recenti praepositi sunt obeli.” Tischendorf, *Codex Claromontanus*, 589 n. 69.6.9.10.11.

⁹⁶ Tischendorf, *Codex Claromontanus*, 468–69, 589.

⁹⁷ Verheyden, “The New Testament Canon,” 402 n. 22.

⁹⁸ Charlesworth claims that “[t]he sixth-century Codex Claromontanus (Paris Gr. 107) includes among the canonical documents the *Apocalypse of Paul*, as well as the *Acts of Paul*, and the *Shepherd of Hermas*,” which is misleading, as his comment could be taken to mean that the codex itself includes more than the Pauline corpus. He does not mention *Barnabas*, and he has substituted the *Apocalypse of Paul* for the *Apocalypse of Peter*; Charlesworth, “The Fluid Borders of the Canon and ‘Apocrypha’,” xv.

secondary texts from fully accepted ones. He claims that the Codex Claromontanus "...given its careless omissions, apparently intends to set forth a 27-book 'New Testament.'"⁹⁹

It is only possible to finagle out of this stichometry a list that closely resembles the Athanasian New Testament collection by taking for granted a number of inherited assumptions. Much of the preceding scholarship on this stichometry displays the dual misunderstandings that there are four obeli, marking only (and all of) the now-extracanonial texts, and that they are original to the list's transcription into the Codex Claromontanus—and the latter in particular continues to be reproduced in current scholarship on the New Testament canon. Contrary to the simultaneous claims that the stichometry was copied carelessly, that the obeli are original and intentional, *and* that the stichometry means to present the twenty-seven books of the now-canonial New Testament, the obeli are a later addition, meaning the Claromontanus stichometry originally (at least in its 6th century context) presented a New Testament comprised of an alternative list of twenty-seven books which included twenty-three of the now-canonial New Testament texts (omitting *Philippians*, *1* and *2 Thessalonians*, and *Hebrews*), as well as *Barnabas*, the *Shepherd*, the *Acts of Paul*, and the *Revelation of Peter*.

As far as the Catholic Epistle collection is concerned, a few things are of note with regard to the Claromontanus stichometry: the question of whether *ad petrum prima* and *ad petrum II* do refer to *1* and *2 Peter* and whether *Barnabas* is included among or simply following the Catholic Epistles. Because no other "first" and "second" letters *to/for* Peter are extant in antiquity, it seems safe to say that the Petrine letters listed in the stichometry are very likely *1* and *2 Peter*, and the scribe mistakenly labelled them as letters of Paul rather than of

⁹⁹ Robbins, "Peri Ton Endiathekon Graphon," 233. Harnack also observes this likeness between the Claromontanus stichometry and the texts rejected by Eusebius in *Hist. eccl.* 3.25; von Harnack, *Geschichte der altchristlichen Litteratur bis Eusebius*, 84–88. An article comparing the New Testament canon formation to intercultural construction likewise claims the stichometry sets forth a 27-book list, but rather than the familiar New Testament canon, this one includes *Barnabas*, the *Shepherd*, the *Acts of Paul*, and the *Revelation to Peter* instead, having omitted *Philippians*, *1–2 Thessalonians*, and *Hebrews*: Loba Mkole, "Intercultural Construction," 245.

Peter. As *Barnabas* was called a “catholic epistle” by Origen centuries prior to the penning of this stichometry, it is possible that this text has been listed with the Catholic Epistles as an intentional association, though the Catholic collection is not delineated in the same way that the Gospels and the Pauline epistles are so we cannot know for sure. The New Testament list in the Codex Claromontanus demonstrates a lasting interest in a wider collection of scriptures and the continuing elasticity of the New Testament canon. And, since the codex is from the 6th century and the stichometry was inserted into it after its initial production; only after this could a secondary hand have marked *Judith, ad petrum prima, Barnabas, the Acts of Paul, the Shepherd, and the Apocalypse of Peter*. Even into the 6th century, therefore, a material witness preserves the continued flexibility of the New Testament collection.

From a variety of fourth-century New Testament lists, Codices Sinaiticus and Alexandrinus, the reception of the Catholic Epistles in the Syrian Church, and the sixth-century Codex Claromontanus, it is clear that New Testament collections did not progress toward the inevitable shape of the Athanasian canon, nor was it stabilized by Athanasius in the late fourth century. The collections found in Sinaiticus and Alexandrinus do not indicate a unanimous perspective on the New Testament, as each manuscript includes texts outside the Athanasian list of 27 books which are in material form indistinguishable from what he deems “canonical” works. The Syrian Church, showing priority for the sayings and deeds of Jesus, may not have even held translations of the “minor” Catholic Epistles of *James, 2 Peter, 2 and 3 John, and Jude* until the sixth century, and the fifth-century Peshitta includes only *James, 1 Peter, and 1 John*. And, in contrast to the “minimal” 21- or 22-book New Testament of Eusebius in the early fourth century, the stichometry inserted into the Codex Claromontanus testifies to the enduring flexibility of the New Testament canon. Particularly in the Syrian Church and the Claromontanus stichometry, the Catholic Epistles play a decisive role in highlighting the uncertainty of the New Testament collection well beyond the late fourth century.

4. ANCIENT CHRISTIAN *ECHTHEITSKRITIK*

As we have seen, a key issue surrounding the reception of the Catholic Epistles and the shaping of the New Testament collection is the issue of pseudonymity. The Catholic Epistle collection – seven diminutive letters of shifting status and use – were the wrench in the gears of the canonical process in the fourth century. Various opinions of five of these letters – *James*, *2 Peter*, *2* and *3 John*, and *Jude* – continued on the basis of their questionable authentic apostolicity, particularly driven by important figures of ecclesiastical authority such as Eusebius and Athanasius, as we have seen. Lists of authoritative scriptures like that in the *Historia ecclesiastica* 3.25 are persuasive material intended to convince readers of the appropriate boundary between accepted and rejected texts, or, in the case of the Catholic Epistles, a middle ground: the ἀντιλεγόμενα attributed to James, Peter, John, and Jude are, for Eusebius, “disputed, yet nevertheless well known to many” (*Hist. eccl.* 3.25.3). That is, Eusebius appears to allow that the remaining Catholic Epistles are perhaps recognized as scripture in significant parts of the overall Church, in an indirect acknowledgement—but not an endorsement—of the flexibility of the New Testament collection.

While early Christian practices of authenticity criticism were limited to an educated class of ecclesial leadership, some writers were acquainted with literary criticism and capable of deploying it in their analysis of scriptural texts, though the approach likely remained less developed than in more secular spheres of Greco-Roman literary practices.¹⁰⁰ While Christian authenticity criticism was not as widespread as in a more secular Greco-Roman literary context, in the third and fourth centuries there are a few other notable examples that further underscore the concern over authenticity in “canonical” literature in addition to the views of Eusebius and

¹⁰⁰ Gamble, “Pseudonymity,” 353; Gamble lists Gaius’ rejection of *Hebrews* and *Revelation* as an employment “at least in part” of similar literary-critical criteria. Clement also, according to Gamble, considered the *Apocalypse of Peter* to be genuine, along with other anonymous or pseudonymous writings. Eusebius does not indicate anything regarding the perceived authorship of such texts, which include the Catholic Epistles, in Clement’s work, but only that Clement comments on them in his *Hypotyposes* (*Hist. eccl.* 6.14.1).

Athanasius. Additionally, Eusebius’s extensive quotations of some of “the ancients” who preceded him contribute substantially to the ancient discourse on authenticity criticism, such that a Eusebian thread runs through much of this material.

4.1 Clement of Alexandria and Origen: *Hebrews* and Apostolic Permission

Clement and Origen of Alexandria both discuss the authorship of *Hebrews*. Clement claims that Paul wrote the letter in Hebrew but did not use his name in order to appeal to the Hebrews, who were suspicious of him. Luke later translated it and published the letter in Greek, “hence the same appearance [or style, χρῶτα] is found in this epistle and in the Acts” (*Hist. eccl.* 6.14.2–3). Origen likewise speculates about the author of *Hebrews*, puzzled by the difference in style (χαρακτήρ) and expression (φράσις) between Paul’s “idioms” and the Greek of *Hebrews* (*Hist. eccl.* 6.25.11). However, because the “thoughts” (νοήματα) of the epistle are admirable, Origen proposes that someone else may have remembered Paul’s teaching and written it down later. Given his references to a Pauline *Hebrews* across many of his works, Origen would perhaps agree with those who would say *Hebrews* is by Paul, with the caveat that it is Paul’s words written by another: “who wrote the epistle, in truth, God knows” (*Hist. eccl.* 6.25.12–14).¹⁰¹

Eusebius also reports two versions of Peter’s authorization of Mark’s gospel from Clement of Alexandria. In both versions, Mark is said to have composed a gospel according to the teachings of Peter, having been requested to do so by those who had heard Peter preach. In the first account, also said to be shared by Papias, Peter learns that Mark has written a gospel and is pleased, knowing it can be used in churches (*Hist. eccl.* 2.15.1–2; 3.39.15),¹⁰² and a connection is made to *1 Peter* 5:13, in which Peter refers to “my son, Mark,” as evidence of

¹⁰¹ And see Thomas “Origen on Paul’s Authorship of Hebrews,” 598–609.

¹⁰² Watson, *Gospel Writing*, 442–43.

their relationship. In the second account, Peter is indifferent to the news: “he neither explicitly prohibited it nor endorsed it [μήτε κωλύσαι μήτε προτρέψασθαι]” (*Hist. eccl.* 6.14.6–7).¹⁰³ As we will see with *I John* for Dionysius of Alexandria, *I Peter* is here presented as an extension of Jesus tradition, not as a standalone apostolic letter in its own right. Clement was keen to ensure that the authorship of Mark’s gospel was validated by the apparently authentic first letter of Peter. Clement does not appear to be too troubled by the question of authenticity, but he accentuates the importance of apostolic authorship by rationalizing the anonymous – but supposedly Pauline – authorship of *Hebrews*. Origen is aware of the issue of authenticity with regard to *Hebrews* but he does not press it, leaving open the possibility of its Pauline ties.

4.2 Dionysius of Alexandria: The Authorship of *Revelation*

The perspective of Dionysius on the authenticity of various Johannine texts is also mediated through Eusebius. Dionysius refers to “some before us” who believe that Cerinthus, the founder of the Cerinthian sect which emphasized the earthly nature of Christ’s kingdom and “fleshly” pleasures, was the one to fix the Johannine pseudonym onto the text of *Revelation* (*Hist. eccl.* 7.25.2). Dionysius himself, though, cannot bring himself to reject the text outright, as “many hold it in high esteem” and, though it is a confusing text, he says, “I suspect that a deeper meaning lies behind the words” and “I do not reject what I cannot comprehend, but rather wonder because I do not understand it” (*Hist. eccl.* 7.25.4–5). Despite this, he likewise cannot readily acknowledge that the apostle John was in fact the author of *Revelation*, though some holy and inspired *other* John may have been (*Hist. eccl.* 7.25.7). He considers *Revelation* to be too distinct from *John* and *I John* and proposes that *John* and *I John* are both the work of the apostle, as their likeness in opening, content, style, and vocabulary points to shared authorship (*Hist. eccl.* 7.25.18–21). But the character (ἥθους), “forms of expression” (λόγων εἶδους), and

¹⁰³ Watson’s translation; *Gospel Writing*, 431.

“barbarous idioms” (ιδίωμα) of *Revelation* prove that the same John cannot have written this text as well (*Hist. eccl.* 7.25.7–8, 22–26). On the authorship of the Johannine epistles, Dionysius hints at the possibility that John and “the elder” of 2 and 3 *John* are the same, though throughout his discussion of Johannine authorship, he refers to John’s singular “catholic epistle” (*Hist. eccl.* 7.25.7, 8, 10, 18, 21, 23, 24). Curiously, he takes the *anonymity* of 1 *John* to be indicative of its authenticity, accepting as sufficiently “real” the author’s lack of need to identify himself along with his immediate claim as an eyewitness to divine revelation (*Hist. eccl.* 7.25.11). Dionysius also emphasizes Peter’s direct revelation, though without identifying him as an author: “[f]or because of such a revelation the Lord also blessed Peter, saying, ‘Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jonah, for flesh and blood have not revealed it unto you, but my heavenly father,’” which Jesus proclaims after Peter identifies him as the Messiah (*Hist. eccl.* 7.25.10; *Matt* 16:17). The Johannine author’s claim to eyewitness testimony (*Hist. eccl.* 7.25.8; 1 *John* 1:1) is seen as further evidence provided by the Gospel writer of the eyewitness testimony to Jesus’ teaching and material being. Dionysius, via Eusebius, presses further into the concern over authenticity, using the critical vocabulary of ancient *Echtheitskritik* with regard to the authorship of Johannine literature, especially *Revelation*.

4.3 From Eusebius and Athanasius to Jerome on Apostolicity

Between Dionysius and Jerome, Eusebius and Athanasius both push against those texts they consider to be inauthentic. Eusebius specifically employs the vocabulary of authenticity criticism. As Najman and Peirano argue, he uses vocabulary in line with the ancient Alexandrian grammarians and Quintilian, and his groupings of accepted, disputed, and spurious texts to delineate his list of “entestamented” ones, as well as his appeal to authorial style (χαρακτήρ), underscore his concern over textual authenticity (*Hist. eccl.* 3.25.1–7).¹⁰⁴

¹⁰⁴ Najman and Peirano, “Pseudonymity as an Interpretive Construct,” 339–42.

While he applies philological assessment to the “forgeries of heretics,” the ἀντιλεγόμενα are, intriguingly, not accused of being forgeries along with these supposedly heretical texts which are to be utterly rejected, even though the issue of authorship is at the fore (cf. *Hist. eccl.* 2.23.25; 3.3.1; 3.25.3; 3.25.7). While Eusebius does not *himself* accept all seven Catholic Epistles, his grouping of ἀντιλεγόμενα (and also the νόθα that follow) shows an acknowledgement of a wide diversity of usage distinct from heresy.

Jerome, writing decades later, does not share Eusebius’s and Athanasius’s priority for historical authenticity; he is more interested in the long tradition of the usage of texts attributed to such key apostolic figures as James, Peter, John, and Jude. Where Athanasius equates apocrypha with pseudepigrapha and avoids even the possibility that New Testament pseudepigrapha exist, Jerome is rather straightforward regarding the questions that remain surrounding the authorship of most of the Catholic Epistles. In undertaking to write out a systematic account of ecclesiastical writers from the time of Jesus until his present day, Jerome laments in his prologue to the *Lives of Illustrious Men* that unlike Greek and Latin historians he has no true predecessor, which is to say he has “the worst possible master, namely myself,” though he acknowledges that Eusebius’s *Historia ecclesiastica* served as a crucial resource (*Vir. ill.* prologue). Aware of contemporary arguments against Christianity, Jerome calls on Celsus, Porphyry, and Julian to acknowledge the long history of learned ecclesiastical writers, contrary to claims that the church has lacked great philosophers and orators, and to cease their accusations of Christianity’s “rustic simplicity” (*Vir. ill.* prologue). This introduction leads directly into a discussion of Simon Peter and the scriptures ascribed to him, including questions of *2 Peter*’s authorship and rejected apocryphal Petrine texts. That some Petrine literature is definitively rejected, while the question of the authorship of *1* and *2 Peter* remains unresolved, indicates that Jerome exercised discernment over the scriptures he included. It is perhaps in the same light of antagonism against Christianity’s detractors that Jerome presents these questions

of authorship in such an untroubled way—his willingness to echo findings of ancient authenticity criticism grants his list some secular credibility, as such criticism was commonly practiced on ancient Greek and Roman literature.

Regarding the Catholic Epistles, Jerome notes that some say *James* was published by someone else under his name, though over time it gained authority (*Vir. ill.* 2), as well as the claim of some that *2 Peter* is not by Peter on the basis of its differing style when compared to *1 Peter* (*Vir. ill.* 1). *2* and *3 John* are said to have been written by a different John – John the presbyter (*Vir. ill.* 9, 18). This suggestion coheres well with the hypotheses of Dionysius and Eusebius that multiple Johns may be represented in the New Testament writings. Lastly, in a rare statement about the *content* of a disputed text, Jerome claims regarding *Jude* that, though some are troubled by its quotation of *1 Enoch*, “[n]evertheless, by age and use it has gained authority and is reckoned among the Holy Scriptures” (*Vir. ill.* 4).

In a different text, a letter to Paulinus, the bishop of Nola, however, Jerome refers to the Catholic Epistles this way: “The apostles James, Peter, John, and Jude, have published [*ediderunt*] seven epistles at once spiritual and to the point, short and long, short that is in words but lengthy in substance so that there are few indeed who do not find themselves in the dark when they read them.”¹⁰⁵ While in his *Lives of Illustrious Men* Jerome explicitly discusses the questionable authorship of the Catholic Epistles in a polemic against opponents of Christianity, here in the letter to Paulinus, which encourages the Christian study of the Bible, their association to the historical apostles is taken for granted. In another letter written to a woman seeking wisdom on raising a newborn, Jerome lists only the Gospels, *Acts*, and unspecified “epistles,” but it is unclear which ones (*Ep.* 107.1).¹⁰⁶

¹⁰⁵ Gallagher and Meade, *The Biblical Canon Lists*, 203, 210; *ad Paulinum* 53.9.5. They note that these seven epistles “must include James, 1–2 Peter, 1–3 John, and Jude,” but this is not spelled out so clearly by Jerome.

¹⁰⁶ Gallagher and Meade, *The Biblical Canon Lists*, 210.

In any case, we know Jerome was aware of the authorship issue and despite the remaining doubt over the assured authenticity of five of the Catholic Epistles, Jerome prioritizes the accumulation of authority via generations of use over the authenticity of scriptural texts, understanding apostolicity as something beyond historicity. For Jerome, the letters attributed to James, Peter, John, and Jude are understood as scripture because they are apostolic texts that *have been understood as scripture*.

5. CONCLUSION

The intervening years between when Eusebius wrote the *Historia ecclesiastica* and when Athanasius penned his 39th *Festal Letter* hold a continued debate over the Catholic Epistles—though not one leading inevitably toward the Athanasian canon. While discussion surrounding the questionable authorship of the five disputed Catholic Epistles lessened, arguments explicitly in favor of their *genuineness* not only do not appear to contribute to their shift in status but are not to be found at all. On the contrary, Jerome is aware, at the end of the fourth century, of debates regarding the likely pseudonymous authorship of *2 Peter*, *James*, *2* and *3 John*, and the doubly questionable status of *Jude* with its use of *1 Enoch*, but he reinforces that, “[n]evertheless by age and use it has gained authority and is reckoned among the Holy Scriptures” (*Vir. ill.* 4). Still, the ancient suspicion over the pseudonymity of at least five of the Catholic Epistles – by Origen, Eusebius, and other ecclesiastical writers throughout the fourth century – relegates the collection to the fringes of the New Testament collection. The Catholic Epistles straddle a porous line between what was ubiquitously accepted (the four Gospels and *Acts* and most of the Pauline letters, along with *1 Peter* and *1 John*) and what was not.

While Eusebius is the first to note the sevenfold form of a possible Catholic collection, in his concern over authorial authenticity and ancient usage he relegated five of the letters to a group of ἀντιλεγόμενα, calling attention to their doubted status. Athanasius accepted all seven

Catholic Epistles as “canonical,” but even this assumption of their authenticity may not be straightforward. Though he was explicitly concerned about authenticity, he identified what are often now called Old Testament Pseudepigrapha as dangerous apocryphal texts, without mentioning the existence of a New Testament counterpart, despite the demonstrable awareness of and concern over such texts by other bishops and eastern writers in the third and fourth centuries. Athanasius’s priority to include the sevenfold Catholic collection may reflect his acceptance of canon-defining characteristics other than authorial authenticity (such as apostolic association and generations of use) for an ecclesiastically- rather than scholarly-defined canonical collection. Instead of an argument in favor of the genuineness of all seven Catholic Epistles, which would require acknowledging the existence of New Testament pseudepigrapha, silence takes the place of any expression of doubt and allows readers to take the authorship of the Catholic Epistles for granted.

Aside from ecclesiastical sources, a number of other factors also indicated a flexibility in the New Testament collection of which the liminal situation of the Catholic Epistles is emblematic. Codices Sinaiticus and Alexandrinus both provide material evidence concurrent with and beyond the time considered by many that the New Testament canon was closed that other texts continued to be included besides those that now make up the 27-book New Testament collection. The Syrian Church in the fifth century accepted only *James*, *1 John* and *1 Peter*, and even then these serve more as supplementary Jesus tradition than as a discrete set of Apostolic letters, and the Catholic collection may not have been fully translated into Syriac until the sixth century. The stichometry inserted into the 6th-century Codex Claromontanus lists a New Testament inclusive of *Barnabas* (situated alongside the Catholic Epistles), the *Acts of Paul*, the *Shepherd*, and the *Revelation of Peter*. The Catholic collection is a wrench in the gears of the canonical process, and pseudonymity is the overwhelming factor that prevented their unhesitating inclusion.

While in extant literature few Christian writers make explicit use of the critical tools of authenticity criticism, those that do are concerned with the genuine authorship of texts purporting to have been written by apostolic figures. Jerome, at the end of the fourth century, does not appear troubled by the possible historical inauthenticity of the Catholic epistles, instead allowing that they may *not* have been written by the apostolic authors to whom they are attributed *and* were nevertheless incorporated into authoritative scripture. Still, it is not the case that the Catholic letters finally gain broad acceptance because they had come to be viewed as genuine. The acceptance (by most) of a sevenfold Catholic collection is not accompanied by explicit arguments in favor of their *genuineness*, and, despite an ancient concern over authenticity, as demonstrated by the phenomenon of Christian authenticity criticism, the status of the Catholic Epistle collection ultimately hinges more on the construction of tradition as embodied by key figures from the apostolic age and the momentum of *use* than on historical arguments for their apparent authenticity, as their perceived apostolic status increases with the distance of history.

Even for Athanasius this appears to have been the case, given his affirmation of all seven Catholic Epistles as fully canonical despite both earlier and later Patristic discussions of their possible pseudonymous authorship. The apostolic authority that accompanies the figures of James, the brother of the Lord (*Gal* 1:19; *Hist. eccl.* 2.1.2–4), Peter, to whom Jesus gave the keys to the kingdom (*Matt* 16:16–20), John, the beloved disciple (*John* 13:23; 19:26; 20:2; 21:7, 20; *Hist. eccl.* 3.23.1), and Jude, the brother of James and Jesus (*Jud* 1:1), played a definitive role in overtaking the problem of pseudonymity. In the following chapter, this “apostolic exemplarity” will be established as one facet of the broader rhetorical strategy of exemplarity used throughout the Catholic Epistles. Here, we have seen that the Catholic Epistle collection—a small group of supposedly little importance—exemplifies the fourth-century

tension between historicity and apostolicity, pressing the canonical process beyond Athanasius's famous letter.

PART II

CHAPTER THREE: PSEUDONYMITY AND EXEMPLARITY IN THE CATHOLIC EPISTLE COLLECTION

In part one I presented the canonical development of the Catholic Epistle collection, beginning in chapter one with its antecedents in the second and third centuries, including manuscripts, the Muratorian Fragment, and Patristic engagement with the perceived authority of some or all of the Catholic letters. Chapter two traced the liminal status of the Catholic collection in the fourth century, from the first mention of a seven-letter set of Catholic letters by Eusebius, who was concerned with the dubious apostolic authorship of five of the Catholic letters, up until Jerome, in the late fourth century, who testified to the inclusion of all seven Catholic Epistles among the New Testament scriptures not on the basis of their supposed historical authenticity but instead rooted in their traditional use and apostolic association. All seven Catholic Epistles are arguably pseudepigraphic texts, and the question of the supposed genuineness of the five disputed letters, *James*, *2 Peter*, *2 and 3 John*, and *Jude* is more complex than a simple binary between authenticity and forgery. Although Jerome's statement regarding the status of the disputed Catholic Epistles, just as Athanasius's before him in the *Epistula festalis* 39, did not lead directly to the concretization of the New Testament canon, this latter point—that textual authority need not hinge on explicit historical authenticity, given the crucial association provided by exemplary apostolic pseudonyms—highlights the key strand uniting parts one and two of this thesis, namely *exemplarity*.

This chapter serves as a hinge between the historical data surrounding the antecedents and witnesses to a sevenfold collection of Catholic Epistles and the role that the rhetorical strategy of exemplarity plays in ancient conceptions of their (pseudo)authorship and the use of illustrative scriptural exempla throughout the collection. It will lead us from the ongoing discussions surrounding the authoritative (or not) status of the Catholic Epistles in the fourth

century, during which the issue of authorship was paramount, to the content of the seven letters themselves. I argue that the rhetorical strategy of exemplarity is the uniting factor between authorship and content: pseudonymity and scriptural exempla are considered here under the common category of “exemplarity,” itself part of the broader phenomenon of intertraditionality. With Eva Mroczek, who proposes that in scriptural texts there are not simply texts in search of authors but characters in search of stories, we might also add more specifically that there are *apostles in search of traditions*.¹ To put it differently, pseudepigraphy is not merely a retrospective issue of a source-critical and genealogical nature, but can be more broadly conceptualized as the intentional construction of apostolic tradition orbiting a key figure of prestige who serves as a gravitational center.² The “apostolic exemplarity” provided by the Catholic Epistles’ traditional authors as well as the usage of scriptural exempla throughout the collection—with at least eighteen scriptural figures represented—combine to suggest a unique mode of intertraditionality transmitted by the Catholic Epistles.

In a Christian context, pseudonymity was not taken for granted as an unproblematic approach to the development of Christian literature. From there I define exemplarity more fully, including key terminology, its usage in ancient rhetoric, and its distinctiveness from common notions of intertextuality, differentiating between a Pauline approach to the use of ancient figures and that found in the Catholic Epistles. Finally, I will show how all this combines to make the Catholic Epistles an ideal example of the strategy of exemplarity in the construction of apostolic tradition present throughout the collection in both authorship and content. This is not to say that the strategy is one of unified and inherent design across the collection, but rather that when the Catholic Epistles are considered as a collection – the

¹ Mroczek, *The Literary Imagination in Jewish Antiquity*, 16, and see chapter two, “The Sweetest Voice: The Poetics of Attribution,” 51–85.

² Najman, “Traditionary Processes,” 102; H. Najman, “Reading Beyond Authority,” 19.

historical precedent for which was established by the first part of this thesis – exemplarity emerges as a compelling shared trait.

On the subject of exemplarity, I am indebted to the work of Hindy Najman, whose notions of scriptural vitality and authorial ascription as “discourse tied to a founder” (influenced by Foucault) contribute significantly to my understanding of exemplarity as something strategically distinct from historical authenticity.³ Najman’s problematizing of historicism, traditional philology, and methodologies in the study of ancient textual authority and criticism provides a crucial revitalization to the study of the historical phenomenon of the biblical canon. She distinguishes between a “retrospective” approach, which champions an *Urtext* and seeks to peel back layers of error, redaction, and reception in order to recover that original, and a “prospective” approach, which traces the developments that lead to a particular textual unit; these are later referred to as Old and New Philology.⁴

Approaches that favor an *Urtext* and aim to uncover the earliest possible version of the New Testament collection also tend to view the canon as a teleological object—a collection of texts whose supposed final form is a stable reflection of this earlier exemplar.⁵ New Philology emphasizes the inherent contextual and material nature of ancient literature over and against scholarly overemphasis on reconstruction and the priority of dating (especially now-canonical) texts as early as possible. In this necessarily precise focus on “snapshots”⁶, it does not always allow for a broad view of the *simultaneity* of developments in authoritative textuality—for example, the material and virtual nature of collections of scripture, ecclesiastical usage and citation practices, and the gradual and piecemeal collection over time of the seven Catholic

³ In addition to “Traditionary Processes” and “Reading Beyond Authority,” see Najman, “The Vitality of Scripture”; “Text and Figure in Ancient Jewish *Paideia*”; and *Seconding Sinai*.

⁴ See Najman, “Reading Beyond Authority,” 19

⁵ Examples include Trobisch, *The First Edition of the New Testament*; Dormandy, “How the Books Became the Bible.”

⁶ See Lied and Lundhaug, eds., *Snapshots of Evolving Traditions*.

Epistles.⁷ Najman's work is especially useful in emphasizing this simultaneity of ancient textual phenomena: authority and canonicity cannot be separated from, for example, the literary, linguistic, cultural, and theological developments from which they arise and to which they contribute. Canonicity does not occur in a vacuum.

While Najman has focused primarily on ancient Judaism and its literature, traditionary processes and textual vitality extend to Christian authoritative textuality and its authors as well. "Vitality" accentuates the generative nature of tradition and its accumulation: "The text gains its authority through its association with the figure, while the figure's authority and reputation are enhanced through the continued generation of associated texts."⁸ Intertextuality that relies too heavily on source-critical and genealogical methodologies is subverted by intertraditionality, which allows for a more comprehensive view of ancient textual authority. This is true both for apostolic author construction and for the use of illustrative scriptural exempla—as I will argue, the two layers of exemplarity employed in the Catholic Epistles. Rather than referring to "Apostolic Discourse," following Najman's use of "Mosaic Discourse"⁹ to name tradition surrounding Moses as the author of the Pentateuch, I have aimed to go beyond her notion of discourse tied to a founder in order to encompass not only the contribution of authorial attribution and character development to apostolic tradition, but also the use of other scriptural exempla within the texts of the Catholic Epistles, as both contribute to the broader rhetorical strategy of exemplarity.

⁷ To be fair, Jenott argues that material philology, taking in the evidence provided by artifacts such as manuscripts as snapshots, allows the "sensible approach" of taking each snapshot "with all its idiosyncrasies, the accumulation of which reflects the various periods and places through which the text has passed in the course of transmission" and "the degree to which texts vary from one manuscript to another could even lead to the larger question of whether they should be considered as distinct works in their own right," "Reading Variants in *James* and the *Apocalypse of James*," 79.

⁸ Furthermore, "[t]he vitality of scripture finds new ways of expressing itself—if not in pseudepigrapha, then in midrashim; if not in midrashim, then in commentaries and kabbalistic treatises. And the possibility that one of these expressions will threaten—or be perceived to threaten—the scripture that gave birth to it can never be eliminated," Najman, "The Vitality of Scripture," 517. On the generative nature of scriptural tradition, see also Brakke, "Scriptural Practices"; Smith, "Sacred Persistence," 36–52; Petersen, "The Riverrun of Rewriting Scripture" 475–96.

⁹ See chapter one, "Mosaic Discourse" in Najman, *Seconding Sinai*, 1–40.

I have also benefitted from the work of David Brakke, particularly on the subjects of the ancient phenomenon of canonicity and the development of “scriptural practices.”¹⁰ Like Najman, Brakke emphasizes the contingent nature of ancient authoritative collections of scripture and the variety of uses to which such a collection could be put. In an earlier article, Brakke argues that Athanasius’s oft-quoted 39th *Festal Letter* was far from a teleological climax, and that “to speak of the history of the formation of the single Christian biblical canon may oversimplify the development and interaction of diverse forms of early Christian piety, which carried with them unique practices of scriptural collection and interpretation—that is, different kinds of canons.”¹¹

Brakke expands on this plurality of the products of interpretation in a more recent essay, offering an alternative approach to early Christian studies: “a turn away from a history of the single canon and toward a history of multiple scriptural practices, one of which produced the canon of the New Testament.”¹² Rather than “a story with a single plot line, leading to the seemingly inevitable τέλος of the closed canon of the New Testament,” he proposes three distinct practices leading also to distinct notions of an authoritative collection of scriptures: “Study and Contemplation,” utilizing a core of authoritative literature but also a flexible collection of other “significant and learned literature” exemplified by the likes of Clement of Alexandria, Justin Martyr, and Origen¹³; “Revelation and Continued Inspiration,” a practice by which scriptures generate other revelatory scriptures via interpretive recycling and rewriting, as used by the Melitians in fourth-century Egypt¹⁴; and “Communal Worship and Edification,” the goal of which is to produce a closed and authorized collection of scripture for use in an

¹⁰ Brakke, “Scriptural Practices”; Brakke, “A New Fragment,” 47–66; Brakke, “Canon Formation and Social Conflict in Fourth-Century Egypt,” 395–419; Brakke, “Early Christian Lies and the Lying Liars Who Wrote Them,” 378–90.

¹¹ Brakke, “Canon Formation and Social Conflict in Fourth-Century Egypt,” 419.

¹² Brakke, “Scriptural Practices,” 263.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 271–73.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 273–75.

ecclesial context—hence, says Brakke, “the rather rigid tone of texts like the Muratorian fragment and Athanasius’s 39th *Festal Letter*.”¹⁵ It was this final practice that produced the New Testament canon, though the 27-book collection did not become as ubiquitous as it is sometimes made to seem (the Syrian church, for example, accepted only *James*, *1 Peter*, and *1 John*, while the Armenians continued to use *3 Corinthians*). Without minimizing the important role that the New Testament has played, Brakke’s alternative history of scriptural practices serves to “undermine its centrality before the fourth century and its ultimate inevitability,” emphasizing the “immense creativity and diversity of the ways in which early Christians used texts to shape themselves and their communities.”¹⁶ The non-inevitability of the New Testament canon, as we saw in part one of this thesis, is exemplified particularly well by the Catholic Epistle collection, whose uncertain standing late into the fourth century in the West, and even later in the East, destabilizes the claim of an early (second-century) and consistent New Testament canon.

1. DEFINING EXEMPLARITY

Exemplarity is a rhetorical strategy in which key figures of status serve as centers of gravity for tradition tied to their name.¹⁷ It can take a number of forms, all related to the use of an exemplary character and/or historical person. Pseudepigraphy (and to some extent pseudonymous attribution, since the intention of the “real” author is not necessarily at work in this case) might be considered the most personified form of exemplarity: a “real” author takes on the name and persona of some figure of prestigious status in order to present their message

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 276–78.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 280.

¹⁷ On “traditioning” and composite character construction, see Najman, “The Vitality of Scripture,” 497–518; “Traditionary Processes,” 99–117; “How to Make Sense of Pseudonymous Attribution,” 325–30. See also Grünstäudl, “Die Katholischen Briefe,” 71–94, esp. 85–86, where he suggests that the apostolic pseudonyms of the Catholic Epistles and their association to key figures from the Gospels (who are also mentioned in Galatians 2:9) strengthened both their ties as a collection and their authoritative status.

in a strategic way. What we might call ‘narrated exemplarity’ is slightly less firm than pseudepigraphy and can be seen, for example, in testamentary literature in which a thin narrative voice is all that separates the story – which typically includes the first-hand experience of a scriptural exemplar (cf. the *Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs* or the *Testament of Job*) – from being outright pseudepigraphy. Illustrative exemplarity includes references to strategic exempla in order to demonstrate a rhetorical point; for example, one aspect of deliberative rhetoric is the use of exempla to illustrate particular virtues or vices, occasionally set in parallel associations. The most relevant forms for the study of the Catholic Epistles are the first and last, pseudepigraphy/pseudonymity and illustrative exemplarity: apostolic pseudonyms and scriptural exempla combine into a layered effect of exemplarity throughout the collection.

Taking for granted the pseudepigraphic and pseudonymous nature of the Catholic Epistles allows me to offer a broader picture of the rhetorical strategy of exemplarity via two of its facets (authorship and scriptural exempla), rather than only considering pseudepigraphy. Accordingly, I briefly survey author traditions surrounding the figures of James, Peter, John, and Jude as tied to their presumed pseudonymity below, while in the following two chapters I discuss scriptural exempla used throughout the Catholic Epistles.

1.1 Key Terminology

Aside from the names of scriptural exempla, such as Abraham, Rahab, Balaam, or Cain, the Catholic Epistles are unique within the New Testament (and even among Greco-Roman use of exempla) in their range of terms to describe both positive and negative figures. Ὑπόδειγμα, “example,” is found in *James* in reference to the prophets’ patient suffering (*Jas* 5:10). The term is also found in *2 Peter* to describe Sodom and Gomorrah’s justly-deserved destruction—the consequence of their ungodliness – that serves as an “example” to anyone who would do

as they did (*2 Pet* 2:6).¹⁸ Jude opts instead for δειγμα in this context, which is the only place this word appears in the New Testament (*Jud* 7). Only υπόδειγμα and δειγμα are used in reference to positive *and* negative exemplars. In *1 Peter* 2:21, Jesus is said to have left behind an example – ὑπολιμπάνων ὑπογραμμόν – which refers to Jesus’ exemplary legacy; ὑπογραμμόν appears elsewhere in biblical literature only in *2 Maccabees* where it refers to guidelines or an imprint (*2 Macc* 2:28).¹⁹ Aside from *1 Peter*’s use of τύποι to exhort leaders to be “examples” to their flocks (*1 Pet* 5:3), the only time τύπος language ever appears in the Catholic Epistles is when *1 Peter* refers to “the days of Noah” during which eight souls were saved, and their “salvation through water” is “typical of” or “corresponding to” baptism (ἀντίτυπον)—one of just two uses of ἀντίτυπον in the New Testament (along with *Heb* 9:24, in which it means “copies”; *1 Pet* 3:21).²⁰

1.2 Exemplarity vs. Intertextuality

Exempla in the New Testament are often generalized in two ways. First, they are commonly identified as *allusions* according to the commonly-used Haysian sliding scale of intertextuality: citation, allusion, and echo.²¹ Second, they are generalized as *typological*, that is, as representative of a theological principle or identity.²² Both of these generalizations are inappropriate when applied to the Catholic Epistles. The reference to scriptural exempla as

¹⁸ The term is also used elsewhere in now-canonical literature, but not in Paul: Enoch is an example of repentance in *Ecclesiasticus* 44:16; Ezekiel refers to a model for a future temple (42:15); the dying priest Eleazar is an example to the young in *2 Macc* 6:28, 31; and martyrs are examples of ὑπομονή in *4 Macc* 17:23; Allison, *James*, 709.

¹⁹ Mbuvi, *1 Peter*, 137 n. 43; “ὑπογραμμός,” in Liddell, Scott, and Jones, *Greek-English Lexicon*, 1877. In Plato (*Prot* 326d), it refers to the drawing of lines by a schoolteacher to help children who are learning how to write.

²⁰ In regard to these terms, the Catholic Epistles share remarkable similarity to *Maccabees* and *Ben Sira*. This may add another interesting point to the layers of intertraditional authority in the Catholic Epistles.

²¹ Similarly, Charlesworth lists the types of connection between the New Testament and the Pseudepigrapha as “quotations, partial quotations, interpretively translated quotations, blended quotations... mixed quotations... paraphrases, or allusions,” leaving no room for the citation of a figure without the explicit mention of a text, Charlesworth, *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha and the New Testament*, 70.

²² Lincicum, “Genesis in Paul,” 106; J.D. Charles, “Polemic and Persuasion,” 81–108; Lockett, *Letters from the Pillar Apostles*, 163–64; For more on contrasting figures, see Bormann, “Paul and the Patriarchs of the Hebrew Bible,” 184.

“allusions” in biblical scholarship is likely a symptom of the lack of a better category within which to situate the use of exemplary figures rather than because the classification as “allusion” is the most suitable. It is not enough for exempla merely to fall into the “allusion” unit, as Hays’ categories represent a descending scale of certainty—allusions are *less certain* references than citations.²³ The use of exempla, however, is *no less certain* than an explicit textual citation, and can in fact be more thorough (if potentially also more vague) in the efficient recall of tradition.²⁴ The use of scriptural exempla is better classified in its own category of exemplarity parallel to intertextuality, as it does not fit neatly into these Haysian categories. Both exemplarity and intertextuality fall under the broader umbrella of *intertraditionality*, but they should not be confused for the same thing.

Secondly, in contrast to the Catholic Epistles, Paul does often use scriptural exempla typologically, for example to represent covenant relationship to God (cf. the contrast between Sarah and Isaac and Hagar and Ishmael in Galatians 4) or prosopologically as speakers of scripture (cf. *Rom* 9:27–29, 10:20–21 [Isaiah], 10:19 [Moses], 11:9–10 [David]), and his vocabulary of primarily τύπος language reflects this. More varied terminology denoting a model or pattern can be found in the Catholic Epistles. I suspect that the “typological” generalization of scriptural exempla reflects an overly-Pauline portrait of the New Testament letters.²⁵

²³ For more engagement with Hays, see below regarding the Catholic Epistles and Pauline typology. It is also worth noting that it was Julia Kristeva, in the late 1960s, who coined the term “intertextuality,” but this is often forgotten: see Orr, *Intertextuality*, 20–32. See also Kristeva’s own reflection on the history of the term: J. Kristeva, “Nous Deux” or a (Hi)story of Intertextuality,” 7–13. Michelle Fletcher clarifies that “intertextuality itself is not a methodology, nor even a description of specific textual practices. Rather, it is a way of describing textual relationships,” *Reading Revelation as Pastiche*, 27; she also provides a history of the term, 17 fn. 71.

²⁴ Menken argues, for example, that the reference to Cain in *1 John* is “not a quotation nor an allusion; the category of straightforward reference probably comes closest, but we must again take into consideration that the reference here is not only to the Genesis story but also to its interpretive development.” The use of a scriptural exemplar can be *strategically vague* in order to make space for echoes of a variety of tradition and its continued interpretation. “Genesis in John’s Gospel and 1 John,” 95.

²⁵ An interesting combination of typological and exemplarity language can be found in Frey’s recent commentary on *Jude* and *2 Peter*, in which he characterizes *Jude*’s use of “biblical paradigms” as a typological strategy in the sense that it “creates a structure of ‘scriptural paradigm-application to the opponents’” marked by a temporal change in tense (from past to present) and a reference to the opponents as οὔτοι,” *Jude and the Second Letter of Peter*, 13–14.

Hays, in his well-known *Echoes of Scripture in the Letters of Paul*, defines intertextuality as “the imbedding of fragments of an earlier text within a later one,” clarifying that intertextuality and midrash also take place within the Old Testament and citing Michael Fishbane on the nature of Revelation and Tradition as “thickly interwoven and interdependent,” rendering the Hebrew Bible itself “the product of an interpretive tradition.”²⁶ Metalepsis, a device related to intertextuality, Hays defines in *Conversion of the Imagination* this way:

Metalepsis is a rhetorical and poetic device in which one text alludes to an earlier text in a way that evokes resonances *beyond those explicitly cited*. The result is that the interpretation of a metalepsis requires the reader to recover unstated or suppressed correspondences between the two texts... [thus] we must go back and examine the wider contexts in Scriptural precursors to understand the figurative effects produced by the intertextual connections.²⁷

That is to say, a citation can invoke a larger context than is explicitly mentioned in the textual citation.²⁸ Whereas textual citations *might*, or certainly *do* according to Hays, recall more content than the intertextual citation itself, the citation of a character *necessarily* recalls that exemplar’s narrative context, particularly in places where little information is given. Exemplarity is more economical than textual citation because, while often brief, the reference to a scriptural exemplar can recall a wider traditional context than a textual excerpt. Exemplarity can also be a more vivid way for a text to invoke tradition than a textual citation; it is distinct from intertextuality and metalepsis in that it relies on readers’ familiarity with and ability to recall the scriptural (though not necessarily canonical) contexts of, say, Job or Sarah, in order for their illustrative purpose to be effective.

²⁶ Hays, *Echoes of Scripture in the Letters of Paul*, 14.

²⁷ Hays, *The Conversion of the Imagination*, 2–3, italics original.

²⁸ Hays defines Metalepsis as “when a literary echo can lie in the unstated or suppressed (transumed) points of resonance between the two texts” and “places the reader within a field of whispered or unstated correspondences,” *Echoes of Scripture*, 20.

There is an inverse relationship between the specificity of a reference to a scriptural exemplar and the traditions invoked: a vague or brief reference might recall a vast array of possible tradition, as in the case of *Jude*'s use of Cain, Balaam, and Korah in quick succession in *Jude* 11. Vagueness might even be considered strategic—Menken has suggested, for example, that references to *Genesis* in *1 John* leave space for the interpretive development of the *Genesis* material as represented by *Jubilees* or other paracanonical material.²⁹ A more specific reference recalls a more limited array of traditional connections: by characterizing Abraham according to his obedience as exemplified by his willingness to offer up Isaac (*Jas* 2:21–23), *James*'s use of Abraham ties the patriarch specifically to the Akedah in *Genesis* 22 and other material making use of the same passage (e.g. *Rom* 4 and *Gal* 3) and as a “friend of God,” rather than, for example, Abraham's call narrative in *Genesis* 12.

In sum, to classify the use of scriptural exempla in the Catholic Epistles as allusion or as primarily typological is inappropriate. There is also a widespread rhetorical strategy of exemplarity in both Jewish and Greco-Roman literature to which New Testament texts' usage can be compared, rather than only to Pauline epistolary literature.

2. EXEMPLARITY AND ANCIENT RHETORIC

Exempla in Jewish scriptures tend to be found in hero lists comprised of primarily positive figures from the ancient past, while for Greco-Roman writing, exempla usually originate from the more recent past and often come in contrasting pairs corresponding to virtues and vices.³⁰ In *1 Maccabees*, Joseph, Phinehas, Joshua, Caleb, David, Elijah, Hananiah, Azariah, Mishael,

²⁹ Menken argues that the reference to Cain in *1 John* 3:12 is “not a quotation nor an allusion; the category of straightforward reference probably comes closest, but we must again take into consideration that the reference here is not only to the *Genesis* story but also to its interpretive development,” “*Genesis* in *John*'s Gospel and *1 John*,” 95.

³⁰ Eisenbaum, *Jewish Heroes*, 73–78. See also Wyrick, “Biblical Characters in Hellenistic Judaism,” 12–27, in which he argues that the use of biblical characters, specifically as a *Beispielreihe*, or list of exemplars, is evidence of Hellenistic influence on Jewish literature.

and Daniel are all listed along with their individual exemplary actions (*1 Macc* 2:61–61); in *4 Maccabees*, many of the same, including Abraham, are exemplars of endurance in suffering (*4 Macc* 16:20–22) and scriptural exempla are used to summarize “the law and the prophets” as emblematic of key moments in Israel’s history (*4 Macc* 18:11–13).³¹ *Ben Sira* 44–49 is a chronological recapitulation of Israel’s history with exempla at the center, from Enoch to a retrospective pronouncement about the ultimate honor of Adam (*Sir* 49:16).³² The *Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs* are an interesting intersection between the Jewish and Christian employment of exemplarity: figures from Israel’s past represent various Hellenistic moral ideals, both virtues and vices.³³

Hellenistic Jewish writers such as Philo and Josephus also made substantial use of scriptural exempla, re-fashioning these figures for their own purposes in much the same way as we will find to be the case with the authors of the Catholic Epistles. Josephus was particularly interested in scriptural exempla as touchstones of Jewish history, often including information distinct from their now-canonical accounts (*Ant.* 5.1.2, 5–7). Concerning Abraham, Josephus fills in emotional details the *Genesis* story lacks, such as Abraham’s happiness over Isaac’s birth and his mournful-but-obedient explanation to his son before his intended sacrifice. Isaac’s response is one of understanding—even eagerness to participate in the act God has required of Abraham (*Ant.* 1.222–232). Rahab is presented as an “innkeeper” rather than a “harlot,” and, while she does hide the spies sent from Joshua, they let themselves down the wall to their own escape (*Ant.* 5.3). Josephus’ account of Elijah is very similar to the narrative in *1 Kings* (*Ant.* 8.344). Philo, likewise, made substantial use of scriptural exempla,

³¹ deSilva, *4 Maccabees*, especially “4 Maccabees as Encomium,” 76–98.

³² Wyrick additionally notes that the list in *Ben Sira* 16:6–10 is a “fully-fledged *Beispielreihe*,” though for some unspecified reason chapters 44–50 do not qualify, “Biblical Characters in Hellenistic Judaism,” 19.

³³ The question remains whether the *Testaments* are Jewish or Christian in origin. See Johnson, *The Letter of James*, 43–46; Yet “it would be impossible to demonstrate that James made use of the *Testaments* or that they made use of James; what is clear is that they share a remarkably similar dualistic appropriation of Greco-Roman ethics within the symbolic world of Torah,” 46.

often drawing them as types.³⁴ He allegorized female figures as wisdom or virtue and even stripped them of their femaleness, as with Sarah.³⁵ As Najman notes, Philo also both Judaizes Hellenism and Hellenizes Judaism—most particularly in his deployment of scriptural exempla, by integrating the Platonic “mind” into the lives of, for example, Moses and Abraham.³⁶ While a more exhaustive comparative approach is beyond the scope of this study, the use of scriptural exempla in the work of both Philo and Josephus and the way in which they each continue the traditioning of scriptural exempla through their strategic malleability presents a fascinating parallel to the Catholic Epistles. Dorothy Sly argues, for example, that the author of *1 Peter* was pulled by many of the same tensions as Philo and Josephus in his characterization of Sarah as an idealized, obedient wife distinct from her portrayal in *Genesis*.³⁷

As for wider Greco-Roman literature, Teresa Morgan asserts that, “[t]he tradition of using the sayings and doings of famous men and women of the past as examples to be imitated or avoided goes back at least to classical Greek literature.”³⁸ The *chreia*, a concise saying attributed to some important past figure, was a widespread rhetorical witticism in antiquity.³⁹ There are different approaches to whether the use of an ancient exemplar as a *pseudonym* was an acceptable practice, but it was a widespread one nevertheless.⁴⁰ Bronwyn Neil deems forgery – even Christian forgery – to be unproblematic in an ancient context: “Forgery was considered a valid way of supporting an argument, and the use of some older authority’s name

³⁴ See Najman, “Cain and Abel as Character Traits,” 207–218.

³⁵ Sly, “1 Peter 3:6b in the Light of Philo and Josephus,” 126–29; see also Sly, *Philo’s Perception of Women*.

³⁶ Najman, “Text and Figure in Ancient Jewish *Paideia*,” 243–56; see also Reed, “The Construction and Subversion of Patriarchal Perfection,” 185–212.

³⁷ Sly, “1 Peter 3:6b in the Light of Philo and Josephus,” 129.

³⁸ Morgan, *Popular Morality*, 122.

³⁹ Parsons and Martin, *Ancient Rhetoric and the New Testament*, esp. 17–44; Stirewalt., *Studies in Ancient Greek Epistolography*, esp. 43–64; Morgan, *Popular Morality*, 123–25. Morgan argues that “[b]y the beginning of the Roman Empire, *chreiai* were endemic in both Greek and Latin, in everything from epic poetry to encomium via history, biography, oratory and educational theory. Orators as diverse as Aelius Aristides, Dio Chrysostom and Maximus of Tyre included them in speeches. Livy and Tacitus could describe themselves as educating their readers through examples of a wide range of Romans of the past, as if it were an uncontroversial element of historiography,” 123–24.

⁴⁰ Peirano, *the Rhetoric of the Roman Fake*, esp. 1–73.

on one's correspondence was considered to be the highest compliment that one could pay to a revered figure of the past."⁴¹ Patricia Rosenmeyer addresses the genre of pseudonymous letter-writing in Greco-Roman antiquity as a "novelistic" presentation of supposed historicity, and claims that

the principal impulse behind the role playing of a pseudonymous letter writer may have been precisely a glimpse into the glorious Greek past from a more personal angle, and the illumination of a particular historical figure... [t]he epistolary genre implies a focus on the inner life of the "hero" ...

And furthermore,

[b]y the Roman imperial period, the imaginative composition of letters to and from famous men had become a standard component of the rhetoric syllabus, and is clearly related to the fictitious speech put into a character's mouth and delivered on a specified mythical or historical occasion.⁴²

That is to say, Rosenmeyer sees pseudonymous letter-writing in the name of a famous person as a novelistic genre that allows for what she later calls the "pretense of reality," which is agreed upon by both pseudonymous author and readers who participate in that literary fiction. However, rather than affirm that pseudonymity was widely accepted, she acknowledges that this effort to offer a "vener of genuineness" reflects a general anxiety over the falseness of pseudonymity.⁴³

Pamela Eisenbaum, on the other hand, agrees with Cosby's conclusion that, "there is no such formal genre, 'example lists of famous men,' in antiquity [and, quoting Cosby]: 'No one type of literature dominates in the use of these lists. Indeed the different styles of composition are almost as diverse as are the documents employing the lists.'"⁴⁴ Cosby's observation regarding the diversity of documents that include exempla should be considered

⁴¹ Neil, "Continuities and Changes in the Practice of Letter-Collecting" 14.

⁴² Rosenmeyer, *Ancient Epistolary Fictions*, 197.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, 204.

⁴⁴ Eisenbaum, *The Jewish Heroes of Christian History*, 17–18.

inclusive of texts like the Catholic Epistles that incorporate numerous exempla into their overall structure and argument.⁴⁵

Aside from such generic diversity, users of exempla in Greco-Roman literature include philosophers, historians, and rhetoricians, Plutarch, Seneca, Valerius, Pliny, and Tacitus among them.⁴⁶ In addition to the lack of a unifying body of literature or corresponding interest in diachronic historiographical portraits of exempla as representatives of historical events, Eisenbaum argues that “the historical figures employed as examples by Greek and Roman writers are quite human, while the biblical figures are always examples of perfection or, in the case of negative examples, evil. They are always paradigmatic types or anti-types; there are no in-betweens. This is not at all the case with Greco-Roman lists.”⁴⁷ While she is correct to say that scriptural exempla often serve a paradigmatic function, Eisenbaum’s stark characterization here is too strict: *James*, for instance, explains that Elijah “was a man just like us” (*Jas* 5:17), and his exempla are intended as models for readers’ imitation. Notable distinctions between the Greco-Roman and scriptural employment of exempla still exist, of course: while endurance is a virtue shared with Greco-Roman writings⁴⁸, for *James* it is explicitly Christian, tied to God’s purposes and a heavenly “crown of life” (*Jas* 1:12, 5:11).⁴⁹

⁴⁵ On the relation of *James* to Greco-Roman rhetoric, Watson argues, that *James*’ structure is reflected in the letter’s use of deliberative rhetoric: contrasting examples that encourage certain actions and dissuade readers from others, “An Assessment of the Rhetoric and Rhetorical Analysis of the Letter of James,” 99–120; idem, “James 2 in Light of Greco-Roman Schemes of Argumentation,” 94–121. Van der Westhuizen argues on similar grounds that *James* can be characterized as deliberative rhetoric and specifically analyzes *Jas* 2:14–26 in light of Kennedy’s methodology for rhetorical criticism, “Stylistic Techniques and their Function in James 2:14–26,” 89–107.

⁴⁶ Dressler, ““You Must Change Your Life,”” 145–92; Landlands, “Roman Exempla and Situation Ethics,” 100–22; Morgan, “*Exempla*,” 122–59 in idem, *Popular Morality*; Turpin, “Tacitus, Stoic *exempla*, and the *praecipuum munus annalium*,” 359–404.

⁴⁷ Eisenbaum, *The Jewish Heroes of Christian History*, 77.

⁴⁸ Morgan, *Popular Morality*, 137–38; cf. *TJob* 4:10–11, 20:9, 27:7; *Jas* 5:10–11.

⁴⁹ At least one material Christian witness also indicates an emphasis on scriptural exempla: one of the scribes of the 3rd or 4th century so-called Bodmer Miscellaneous Codex places supralinear lines above or apostrophes after the non-Greek names of the scriptural exempla found in *Third Corinthians*, *Jude*, and *1* and *2 Peter*. Sarah and Abraham (*1 Pet* 3:6), Noah (*1 Pet* 3:20; *2 Pet* 2:5), Michael the archangel (*Jude* 9), Enoch (*Jude* 14), David (*3 Cor* 5), and Israel (*3 Cor* 10, 32) are all marked by a line partly or entirely covering their name, similar to that over more common *nomina sacra*. Lot (*2 Pet* 2:7), Balaam and Bosor (*2 Pet* 2:15), and possibly Elisha (*3 Cor* 32) are marked by an apostrophe following their names, while Jonas and ‘Amathiou (*3 Cor* 29–30) are marked by two supralinear dots. In all three texts, only positive exempla are marked, while negative figures such as Cain or Korah are not. Michael the archangel is the only figure with a line fully covering his name – perhaps due to his

Not only is exemplarity a specific rhetorical device distinct from citation, but there is wide interest across Jewish and Greco-Roman literature in the role of exempla. The use of exempla is a common ancient rhetorical practice, not a niche biblical strategy, and Christian exemplarity is composite and nuanced, exhibiting similarities to both Jewish and Greco-Roman tradition.

3. EXEMPLARITY AND THE CONSTRUCTION OF APOSTOLICITY

The ancient Christian concern over apostolic authenticity and the rhetorical strategy of exemplarity intersect in the phenomenon of pseudepigraphy. As the Catholic Epistles are the collection surrounded by the most significant doubt in the developing New Testament collection, owing to their questionable authorship, they prove an effective illustration of the deployment of exemplarity as a deliberate tool in the construction of tradition.

Exemplarity as pseudepigraphy is to attach an authorial voice to the past in a strategic way. I affirm along with Najman and Peirano that "...pseudepigraphy should not be understood primarily as forgery but rather as a reading practice which is fundamentally interpretive," that is, pseudepigraphy is an intentional extension and generation of tradition.⁵⁰ Finding additional

angelic status, but the reason is not made explicit by the scribe. Michael is also an important figure in apocryphal literature (cf. *the Assumption of Moses* and *The Investiture of Michael the Archangel*; Lundhaug, "Textual Fluidity and Monastic Fanfiction: The Case of the Investiture of the Archangel Michael in Coptic Egypt," 59–73). Moses (*Jude* 9) and Adam (*Jude* 14) are unmarked, despite their high status as scriptural figures. This could be due to their secondary function as helping to locate Michael and Enoch, respectively, rather than serving as exemplary figures themselves. The prevalence of the names marked, using various conventions, may indicate a scribal interest in scriptural exempla. Images of *Jude* can be viewed at <https://bodmerlab.unige.ch/fr/constellations/papyri/mirador/1072205366?page=049>, pages 49–55; images of *1–2 Peter* can be viewed at https://digi.vatlib.it/view/MSS_Pap.Bodmer.VIII; images of *3 Corinthians* can be viewed at <https://bodmerlab.unige.ch/fr/constellations/papyri/mirador/1072205366?page=040>, pages 40–45. For more on the Bodmer codex, see Nongbri, *God's Library*, esp. chapter two: "An Elusive Collection: The Bodmer Papyri," 157–215; Lundhaug, "The Dishna Papers," 329–86; Wasserman, "Papyrus 72 and the Bodmer Miscellaneous Codex," 137–54; and see chapter 1, section 2.2.

⁵⁰ Najman and Peirano, "Pseudepigraphy as an Interpretive Construct", 1; Additionally, "We are inviting a reconfiguration of narratives of canonicity and authenticity and a new shift in focus onto the growth of corpora and the pluriformity of textuality," 2. See also Brakke's work on scriptural practices, contra a view of canon formation that sees certain texts as inherently, and therefore inevitably, canonical, "Scriptural Practices." Furthermore, in his review of Ehrman's *Forgery and Counterforgery*, Brakke also comments on recent scholarship on pseudepigraphy and biblical literature, "Early Christian Lies and the Lying Liars Who Wrote Them."

inspiration in Najman’s concept of “traditionary processes” tied to key historical figures⁵¹, I also consider the Catholic authors to be examples of *apostolic exemplarity* in the sense that they each represent the generative construction of tradition with a principal apostolic figure at its center. Furthermore, in an essay on “Exemplarity and its Discontents,” Najman and Reinhardt identify *exempla* both as ideal figures characterized by a text and as sage-like figures employed as uniquely knowledgeable narrators (or pseudonyms). A sage is “an idealized human being who embodies the particular text’s values and outlook” and one “who can help the reader become an embodiment of such understanding.”⁵² The idealized pseudonym is a strategic construct who adds to the composite tradition that already orbits such a figure, so it could be said of the Catholic authors that

The claim to having been written by a prior figure, who is then extended and transformed through the application and extension of that past, is about recovering the past, but also and at the same time it is about re-invigorating a new present. This is then catapulted into a new figure which is a revised and transformed interpretive extension of that past.⁵³

Najman argues further, regarding the production of “discourse tied to a founder” that in the specific case of the Ezra figure in *Esdras*,

It should be clear that it does not make sense to speak of a discourse tied to a stable and unchanging figure of Ezra. Rather, we should speak of a complex of voices, traditions, and protagonists which make up a new ‘Ezra,’ who is at once *all of these figures and none of them in particular*, including the Ezra of the past.⁵⁴

That is, the traditioning of a scriptural exemplar for the generation of new tradition tied to their name relies on the dynamic reality of composite construction—what I refer to as the

⁵¹ Najman, “The Vitality of Scripture,” 497–518; “Traditionary Processes” 99–117; “How to Make Sense of Pseudonymous Attribution” 308–36.

⁵² Najman and Reinhardt, “Exemplarity and Its Discontents,” 14.

⁵³ Najman and Peirano, “Pseudepigraphy as an Interpretive Construct,” 351.

⁵⁴ Najman, “Traditionary Processes,” 115.

stability and malleability of both the apostolic pseudonyms of the Catholic Epistles and the scriptural exempla they employ. Gamble makes a strikingly similar statement to Najman's regarding pseudepigraphy and apostolic tradition:

Because the early church regarded the apostolic past as both the source and the norm of authoritative teaching, pseudonymous apostolic authorship was a ready means for the extension of apostolic authority into the post-apostolic period, and for the interpretive contemporization and application (*Vergegenwärtigung*) of teachings that had, or were believed to have, apostolic sanction.⁵⁵

James, Peter, John, and Jude, embodied by the “real” authors for the purposes of strategic epistolography, serve alongside the textual usage of scriptural exempla as a facet of exemplarity. Exempla are uniquely positioned, as both authorial or narrative voices *and* illustrative examples, to prompt readers to embody the same ideals a text espouses. In what follows, I briefly outline some of the accumulated tradition associated with James, Peter, John, and Jude, who all serve, like Najman and Reinhardt detail, as sage-like figures presenting their readers with useful teachings. Traditions surrounding them are not limited to now-canonical content, but stem from a broader body of Christian scriptures and ecclesiastical writings.⁵⁶ My purpose here is not to provide an exhaustive list of writings attributed to or traditions associated with them, nor to prove the historicity of these traditions, but rather I aim to give a sense of the composite portraits of James, Peter, John, and Jude as exemplary figures. While these traditions cannot necessarily be said to culminate in and entirely define the exemplary portraits of the traditional authors of the Catholic Epistles, these composite images offer a sense of the ancient

⁵⁵ Gamble, “Pseudonymity,” 360.

⁵⁶ As Schneemelcher puts it, what is now extracanonical tradition “bears witness that, alongside the theological reflection which later led the Church to the norm of the ‘apostolic’, there was also a broad tradition about the apostles, nurtured in special groups. Much of it was soon condemned as ‘heretical’ and ‘apocryphal,’ and excluded from the use of the churches. But certain elements survived in modifications and reworkings of various kinds, and contributed to the consolidation of the ‘apostolic norm’. They are also still operative in the later hagiography of the ‘catholic Apostolic Church’,” Schneemelcher (ed.), *New Testament Apocrypha, Volume II*, 4. On the subject of pseudepigraphy more broadly, Schneemelcher mostly problematizes the terms “forgery” and “pseudepigraphy” for having been used too widely and to describe texts which are *not* best described by either term, see “Apostolic Pseudepigrapha” in *idem*, 29–31.

reception of James, Peter, John, and Jude and make for an interesting comparison with their now-canonical author portraits.

3.1 James the Just, the Brother of the Lord⁵⁷

James is a recognizable early Christian leader associated with the Jerusalem church and known even within the New Testament world, along with Peter, for their conflict with Paul (*Acts* 15:1-35; *Gal* 2:11–13). In *Acts* 15, James is the one to offer judgment concerning Gentile circumcision, ruling that a few basic instructions should be observed: the abstention from food sacrificed to idols, blood, meat of strangled animals, and sexual immorality; circumcision is not deemed necessary (*Acts* 15:1–35; *Gal* 2:1–10). Paul refers to “certain men [who] came from James,” who influenced Peter to stop eating with Gentiles, subtly blaming James for the change (*Gal* 2:12).⁵⁸

According to Eusebius, James’ piety made him unbearable to his opponents, leading to his martyrdom: “the Jews” who had turned against him demanded that he renounce his faith in Jesus, and he not only refused but, “with greater boldness than they expected he spoke out before the whole multitude, confessing that our Saviour and Lord Jesus is the Son of God”⁵⁹; unable to tolerate the testimony of a man so rich in virtue and piety, they killed him (*Hist. eccl.* 2.23.2). Corresponding to the authority ascribed to James in *Acts*, Eusebius also reports various traditions regarding James as the first bishop of Jerusalem (citing Clement, *Hist. eccl.* 2.1.2–

⁵⁷ For more thorough examinations of early James traditions, see Nienhuis, *Not by Paul Alone*, esp. 121–50; Nienhuis analyzes early James traditions according to how James is named, the authority ascribed to him, the depiction of his piety, whether James is depicted as independent from or of a piece with a given textual tradition, and his martyrdom, 122; Painter, *Just James*; Painter’s study, while not confined to the New Testament, does not appear to be interested in questions of authenticity or pseudepigraphy, presenting James traditions in a straightforward manner intended to emphasize the oft-ignored central role of James in the early church. On the connection between James as a literate, scribal figure and *James* as a pseudepigraphon, see Fewster, “Ancient Book Culture and the Literacy of James,” 387–417.

⁵⁸ Aside from the epistle in his name, James is named explicitly only eight times in the New Testament: *Matt* 13:55; *Mark* 6:3; *Acts* 12:7, 15:13–29, 21:17–26; *1 Cor* 15:7; *Gal* 1–2; and *Jude* 1:1; see Nienhuis, *Not by Paul Alone*, 122.

⁵⁹ ...καὶ μᾶλλον ἢ προσεδόκησαν ἐπὶ τῆς πληθύος ἀπάσης παρρησιασαμένου καὶ ὁμολογήσαντος υἱὸν εἶναι θεοῦ τὸν σωτῆρα καὶ κύριον ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦν.

4), his ascetic piety (citing Hegesippus, *Hist. eccl.* 2.23.4–19), and his clash with the Jewish religious authorities (citing Josephus, *Hist. eccl.* 2.23.20–24; cf. *Ant.* 20.9). Common references to James as both “the brother of the Lord” and “the Just” point to an official title (*Hist. eccl.* 2.1.2–4; 23.1, 4, 7, 16, 20, 22). Eusebius also claims that the martyrdom of James, as such a celebrated and pious figure, was thought by some to have caused the siege of Jerusalem and mistreatment of the Jews (*Hist. eccl.* 2.23.19–20).⁶⁰

Various manuscripts are extant titling the letter of *James* επιστολη του αγιου ιακωβου του αδελφοθεου, and the same compound term, αδελφοθεου, is sometimes also applied to *Jude*—evidence of an intentional linking between the two letters (and therefore the two figures) via the association of both James and Jude as brothers of Jesus. Only *James*’ prescript makes the direct link between James and Jesus, while Jude’s claim is as a brother of James (*Jude* 1:1).⁶¹ While it has been suggested that this prescript indicates a provenance for an authentic *Jude* later than the letter of *James* (and, correspondingly, that *James* must be an early, first-century text)⁶², the prescript can be read simply as *Jude*’s association with an important early Christian leader who was also a brother of Jesus.⁶³ The traditional processes that run through the letters attributed to James and Jude and their respective entitling tie these two figures together as brothers of Jesus—and therefore associated authoritative figures for the spread of Christian teaching.

There is a significant amount of now-noncanonical literature associated with James. The *Protoevangelium of James* is self-ascribed to James, who is also associated with Jerusalem (*Prot. Jas.* 25:1–2). As Nienhuis points out, this text is intent on emphasizing the perpetual

⁶⁰ Eusebius clarifies the presence of two martyred Jameses: one is James the Just, who was martyred after being thrown from the temple and then beaten to death, and James the Apostle, who was beheaded; the latter is the brother of John, martyred in *Acts* 12:1–2. Eusebius also states that Paul’s mention of James in *Gal* 1:19 is James the Just (*Hist. eccl.* 2.1.4, quoting Clement of Alexandria; 2.9.1–4).

⁶¹ James is titled αδελφοθεος in GA 945 104C 1501 1739 1875; Jude is titled αδελφοθεος in GA 431 945 1739C 2243 2492L.

⁶² Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter*, 13–14.

⁶³ Frey, “The Epistle of Jude Between Judaism and Hellenism,” 324–25.

virginity of Mary (cf. *Prot. Jas.* 19:8–19; 20:1–12), so it must explicitly deny any biological relationship between James and Jesus.⁶⁴ To this end, Joseph is said to be an old widower with children from his previous marriage (cf. *Prot. Jas.* 9:2).⁶⁵ The *Gospel of Thomas*, while not a text ascribed to James, again refers to James as “the Just” and associates him with secret knowledge passed down directly from Jesus (*GThom.* Logion 12).⁶⁶

The *Apocryphon of James* is introduced in the first-person by James, who refers to a “secret book” revealed to him and Peter by Jesus, as well as another revealed to James alone. In the text, James instructs “you alone,” (there is a lacuna in place of the addressee) not to tell many about it, since Jesus did not even give this knowledge to all of the twelve disciples (cf. *Apocr. Jas.* 1,1–2,26, 13,36–14,2).⁶⁷ The *Apocryphon* also emphasizes the eyewitness account experienced by James (*Apocr. Jas.* 15,5–23).⁶⁸ The text ends with James going up to Jerusalem “that I might obtain a portion among the beloved, who will be made manifest” (*Apocr. Jas.* 16,8–11).⁶⁹

In the *First Apocalypse of James*, written as a revelation given to James directly from Jesus⁷⁰, James declares, “It is the Lord who spoke with me,” and then, in Jesus’ voice, “I have given you a sign of these things, James, my brother... although you are not my brother

⁶⁴ Nienhuis, *Not by Paul Alone*, 129.

⁶⁵ Testuz, *Papyrus Bodmer V*, 19. Testuz dates the text of the *Nativity of Mary* to the first century, noting that *Prot. Ev. Jas.* is a compilation of fragments, 23–26; Hock dates the text to the later second century: R. F. Hock, *The Infancy Gospels of James and Thomas*, 11–12; but Nienhuis notes that Clement’s knowledge of the book indicates a dating closer to the middle of the second century: Nienhuis, *Not by Paul Alone*, 129 n. 108. See also M. Goodacre, “The *Protoevangelium of James* and the Creative Rewriting of *Matthew* and *Luke*,” 57–76.

⁶⁶ *GThom.* (NHC II,2) Logion 12; in Layton (ed.), *Nag Hammadi Codex II, 2-7*, 58 (Coptic) and 59 (English). As Nienhuis notes, Jesus leaves James in charge in his absence in *GThom.*, while in *Matt*, Jesus appoints Peter as the leader, “grounded in the ongoing presence of the resurrected Jesus,” Nienhuis, *Not by Paul Alone*, 139.

⁶⁷ in Attridge (ed.), *Nag Hammadi Codex I*, 28, 30, 48 (Coptic) and 29, 31, 49 (English).

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 50 (Coptic) and 51 (English).

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 52 (Coptic) and 53 (English).

⁷⁰ The term apocalypse here “can therefore be understood as a mode of religious advertising insofar as it promises to offer the reader secret truths, now revealed, which Jesus had originally delivered to James, and which were later recorded and transmitted for posterity. Simultaneously, the title enhances the religious self-esteem of the reader as someone privileged enough to receive such revelation him- or herself,” Jenott, “Reading Variants in *James* and the *Apocalypse of James*,” 66.

materially...” (*1 Apoc. Jas.* 24,13–16).⁷¹ Throughout, James calls Jesus “Rabbi,” and Jesus instructs James to leave Jerusalem (*1 Apoc. Jas.* 25,13–18).⁷² Jesus refers to James as “the Just” (*1 Apoc. Jas.* 31,30–32,8).⁷³ James is also effectively characterized to be like Jesus⁷⁴: Jesus refers to God as “Him-who-is” and renames James “One-who-is,” (*1 Apoc. Jas.* 27,6–12); James has his own disciples; praying on a mountain after a crowd dispersed, James “wept, and he was very distressed,” (*1 Apoc. Jas.* 30,18–31,1). Jesus tells him he will suffer and be arrested, and James’ “custom” for solitary prayer is also highlighted (*1 Apoc. Jas.* 31,1; 32,13–23; cf. *Mark* 14:32–50; *Matt* 26:36–56; *Luke* 22:39–53, 23:34; *John* 16–18).

The *Second Apocalypse of James*, presented as a speech of James regarding a revelation he received from the “Pleroma of Imperishability,” is even more esoteric than the *First Apocalypse*, though there is some overlap between the two texts regarding the figure of James, who is said to be the recipient of special, hidden knowledge (cf. *2 Apoc. Jas.* 47,7–19)⁷⁵, “son of the father” (cf. *2 Apoc. Jas.* 48,22–49,15)⁷⁶, and repeatedly referred to as “brother” (cf. *2 Apoc. Jas.* 48,22; 50,5–23).⁷⁷ James is also called “the Just” (*2 Apoc. Jas.* 60,1–12; 61,13–19)⁷⁸ and his martyrdom is described as a brutal affair during which James is said to have been thrown from a height, dragged, crushed with a large rock, stamped on, and then, since he was still alive, made to dig a hole, stand in it, and then stoned again. Just before his death, he prayed a different prayer than was “his custom to say” after which he fell silent (*2 Apoc. Jas.* 61,20–63,32).⁷⁹

⁷¹ Schoedel, “The (First) Apocalypse of James,” 68 (Coptic) and 69 (English). Schoedel dates the text around the late second century.

⁷² *Ibid.*, 70 (Coptic) and 71 (English).

⁷³ *Ibid.*, 82 (Coptic) and 83 (English).

⁷⁴ Parkhouse argues that *1 Apoc. Jas.*, like *John*, is “linking the origin and destiny of Jesus with that of James (and other disciples),” Parkhouse, “Identity, Death and Ascension,” 6. The text can be found in NHC 5,3 and the Codex Tchacos 2, which are both fourth-century Coptic manuscripts; see Funk, “Die erste Apokalypse des Jakobus (NHC V,3 / CT 2),” 1156.

⁷⁵ Parrott (ed.), *Nag Hammadi*, 114, 116 (Coptic) and 115, 117 (English).

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, 118, 120 (Coptic) and 119, 121 (English).

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 118, 120, 122 (Coptic) and 119, 121, 123 (English).

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, 138, 140, 142 (Coptic) and 139, 141, 143 (English).

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, 142, 144, 146 (Coptic) and 143, 145, 147, 149 (English).

The aggregate portrait of James is as the brother of Jesus who was also a pious leader of the early church, associated with Jerusalem, known for his custom of prayer, and a martyr. The proliferation of traditions ascribed to him, particularly from the second century, indicate he was a popular pseudonymous champion for various strands of Christianity, and these texts also identify him as the brother of Jesus, name him “the Just” and make the link with Jerusalem.⁸⁰ The use of the figure of James as a scriptural pseudonym takes his authority for granted and lends itself well to a letter like *James*, in its Jewish ties (for example the address to “the twelve tribes in the dispersion” in *Jas* 1:1; cf. 2:8–13), paraenetic wisdom material (e.g. *Jas* 1:2–27; 2:1–26; 3:1–18), exhortations to submit to God and to suffer patiently (cf. *Jas* 1:2–15; 4:7–10; 5:7–11) and emphasis on prayer (cf. *Jas* 4:1–3; 5:13–20). As Nienhuis puts it, “Who else could address the eschatological Israel in this authoritative manner but the eschatological high priest of the Messiah, James the Just?”⁸¹ Through the composite tradition surrounding the figure of James, the (pseudo)author serves as an exemplar for the teaching his letter espouses. The real author has therefore used the James pseudonym for his own purposes, and in doing so contributed to the composite image of the ancient James. The juxtaposition of traditions about James makes clear that, on one hand, there are consistent references to James’ piety and martyrdom, his association with Jerusalem, and the title “brother of the Lord,” but James was also undermined by Paul as too staunchly Jewish and characterized as a recipient of Jesus’ secret teaching by various now-apocryphal texts. Pseudonymous exemplarity relies on both the *malleability* and the *stability* of these ancient figures.

⁸⁰ Nienhuis identifies James’ authority in the “broadly gnostic” James material as “colossally authoritative... appearing in all three texts as an almost supernatural Revealer and Redeemer figure,” Nienhuis, *Not by Paul Alone*, 147. Furthermore, as part of his argument that James is a second-century pseudepigraph, Nienhuis argues that none of the second-century material ascribed to James makes mention of the New Testament letter—which would be extremely odd, had the letter been written earlier and perhaps even by the historical James: “There was an explosion of hagiographical writings attached to James in the second century; yet in all of this there is no evidence of the letter we now attribute to him. The fact that the letter came into common use *after* the period when most of these non-canonical James writings were penned certainly suggests that its production was instigated by the same sort of concerns, namely, that he be claimed as an apostolic spokesperson for a later Christian tradition,” Nienhuis, *Not by Paul Alone*, 104, 149–50.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, 153.

3.2 Peter: Preacher and Exemplary Apostle⁸²

While James is shown to have significant authority among the apostles, particularly in early Jacobean apocrypha, Peter would appear to be the apostle with the most authority in the New Testament. Jesus calls him “the rock” upon whom the church will be built and gives him “the keys to the kingdom of heaven” after Peter’s declaration of Jesus’ identity as the Messiah (*Matt* 16:13-20). Three of the canonical gospels highlight Peter’s denial and reinstatement by Jesus after the resurrection (cf. *Matt* 26:31–35, 69–75; *Luke* 22:31–34, 54–62; *John* 18:15-18, 25–27; 21:15–19). Peter is also present alongside James in *Acts* 15 for the council at Jerusalem regarding whether Gentiles need to be circumcised in order to be saved, and he is the first to address the council of apostles and elders (*Acts* 15:6–11). Bockmuehl understands Peter as a key figure in the New Testament for the Gentile mission and strongly associated with Jesus tradition: “[f]or Matthew he is the church’s foundation and gatekeeper, for Luke its strengthener and pioneer evangelist, for John its shepherd, and even for Paul one of its pillars and paradigmatic apostles” (cf. *Matt* 16:18-19; *Luke* 22:32; *John* 21:15–17; *Gal* 2:9).⁸³ Peter plays a crucial role, therefore, throughout much of the New Testament.

Though the author of *2 Peter* refers to an earlier letter, presumably *1 Peter* (*2 Pet* 3:1), the author portraits of *1* and *2 Peter* differs significantly: per Frey, “whereas the Peter of *1 Pet* is primarily a witness to the suffering of Christ and a participant in the suffering of the community (*1 Pet* 5:1), the Peter of *2 Pet* is decidedly a witness to the glory or revelation of

⁸² For a more thorough examination of the figure of Peter, see Doering, “Apostle, Co-Elder, and Witness of Suffering,” 645–81; Bockmuehl, *The Remembered Peter*. Bockmuehl’s focus is on memory and the historical Peter, while acknowledging the probable lack of ‘authentic’ Petrine literature (see especially 3–29). This differs significantly from my interest in the literary characterization of textualized traditional figures from Christian antiquity, though of course the two approaches are connected. For another approach combining memory studies and biblical figures, arguing that genre impacts characterization, see Nilsen, “Memories of Moses,” 287–312.

⁸³ Bockmuehl, *Remembered Peter*, 6–7. Furthermore, “Peter’s unexpectedly high profile is in large part due to the fact that early Christian literature associates him consistently, authoritatively, and in some sense uniquely, with the Jesus tradition... Peter, by contrast [with Paul], is consistently represented in the early church as a guarantor of the Jesus tradition that *gave rise* to the gospels,” 6.

Christ (*2 Pet* 1:16–18).”⁸⁴ Doering is also interested in the constructed character of Peter in *1 Peter*, arguing that a particular, Gentile-friendly portrait of Peter emerges as an apostle and head elder in solidarity with those who are suffering.⁸⁵ This difference is substantial: the first Peter is a suffering elder apostle in solidarity with his readership; the second Peter is constructed, in more grandiose terms, as presenting an authoritative testament.

Like John, the Peter of *2 Peter* makes a claim as a direct witness of Jesus, having been one among the “eyewitnesses of his majesty” at the transfiguration (or ascension)⁸⁶, “when we were with him on the holy mountain” (*2 Pet* 1:16–18).⁸⁷ Along with the testamentary nature of *2 Peter* as the final, crucial teaching of a soon-to-die apostle, this Peter also refers to his own martyrdom, as prophesied to him by Jesus: he reminds his readers of key teaching “as long as I live in this tent [body], because I know that soon I will put my tent aside, as our Lord Jesus Christ has made clear to me” (*2 Pet* 1:14).⁸⁸ This may be a tie to *John*, which has Jesus tell Peter of his coming martyrdom after his reinstatement (*John* 21:18–19). The proliferation of Petrine tradition in the New Testament and beyond presents substantial material for considering the Petrine authorial image.

Eusebius reports that, having detected the evil teachings of Simon Magus⁸⁹, Peter was called “the strongest and greatest of the apostles, and who, because of his virtue, was the

⁸⁴ Frey, *The Letter of Jude and the Second Letter of Peter*, 193–94. Frey notes that this differentiation contributes to the overall distinction between the two letters.

⁸⁵ Doering, “Apostle, Co-Elder, and Witness of Suffering,” 681. Doering’s main opponent is Brox, who, like Ehrman, sees no reason *1 Peter* should be connected to Peter other than its quest for authority.

⁸⁶ Grünstäudl effectively counters Bauckham’s argument that *ApocPet* relies on *2 Peter*, arguing instead that *2 Pet* 1:16–18 represents a synthesis of *Matt* and the Ethiopic *ApocPet*, particularly the references to the “holy mountain” and “glory and honor” received from God, which are found in the Ascension narrative in *ApocPet*: Grünstäudl, *Petrus Alexandrinus*, 121–23; See also Frey, *The Letter of Jude and the Second Letter of Peter*, 203–206.

⁸⁷ On Jesus tradition, especially the transfiguration, and *2 Peter*, see Frey, *The Letter of Jude and the Second Letter of Peter*, 196–99; Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter*, 205–12.

⁸⁸ On *2 Peter* as a testament, see Frey, *The Letter of Jude and the Second Letter of Peter*, 210, 215; Bauckham identifies two main characteristics of a testament in *2 Peter*: ethical admonition and revelations of the future: Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter*, 131.

⁸⁹ Irenaeus, referring to Peter’s confrontation with Simon the Sorcerer in *Acts* 8, tells that all sorts of heresies find their origin in the teaching of Simon Magus (*Adv. haer.* 1.23.1–2). Simon is called a magician and the “inventor of all heresy,” identified as such by ecclesiastical writers such as Irenaeus, Hippolytus, Origen, Cyril of Jerusalem, and Epiphanius, and strongly associated with the origins of gnostic teachings. The 4th-century *Apostolic*

speaker for all the others,” who went to Rome, “proclaiming the light itself, and the word which brings salvation to souls, and preaching the kingdom of heaven” (*Hist. eccl.* 2.14.6; cf. *Acts* 8:9–25).⁹⁰ Eusebius also explains that the Gospel of Mark was written in accordance with Peter’s famed preaching, after crowds implored him to record Peter’s teaching:

And so greatly did the splendour of piety illumine the minds of Peter’s hearers that they were not satisfied with hearing once only, and were not content with the unwritten teaching of the divine Gospel, but with all sorts of entreaties they besought Mark, a follower of Peter, and the one whose Gospel is extant, that he would leave them a written monument of the doctrine which had been orally communicated to them. (*Hist. eccl.* 2.15.1)

Eusebius further refers to Clement’s *Hypotyposes*, said to be in agreement with Papias, in affirming the relationship between Peter and Mark, along with Peter’s “revelation of the Spirit” that the text had been written and his pleasure in the fact. *1 Peter* 5:13 is quoted, in which Peter refers to Mark as “my son” (*Hist. eccl.* 2.15.2; cf. Papias, *Hist. eccl.* 3.39.15; Origen, *Hist. eccl.* 6.25.5). An alternative Clementine version is also told, in which Peter’s attitude to Mark’s writing is neutral (*Hist. eccl.* 6.14.6–7). Beside this reference to Mark, Ehrman finds nothing other than the prescript and the veiled reference to Rome (“Babylon”) at the end of *1 Peter* to tie it directly to the apostle – an interesting distinction from *2 Peter*, “which goes out of its way to claim Petrine origins.”⁹¹ *2 Peter*, a self-conscious sequel, as “the second letter I have sent you” (*2 Pet* 3:1) and a letter of distinct style and concept from *1 Peter*, has been considered the most obviously pseudepigraphal text in the New Testament.⁹²

Constitutions lists Simon’s heretical successors, who were driven by the devil, as well as his attempt to fly and subsequent rebuke and grounding through prayer by Peter, given as an accounting of the event in Peter’s own words (*Apost. const.* VI.7–10; see Ferreiro, *Simon Magus*, 43–45).

⁹⁰ τὸν καρτερόν καὶ μέγαν τῶν ἀποστόλων, τὸν ἀρτίης ἕνεκα τῶν λοιπῶν πάντων προήγορον, Πέτρον... φῶς αὐτὸ καὶ λόγον ψυχῶν σωτήριον, τὸ κήρυγμα τῆς τῶν οὐρανῶν βασιλείας, εὐαγγελιζόμενος. In a forthcoming publication, Watson remarks that Eusebius may be concealing his reliance on the *Acts of Peter* here, a text he rejected as having not been handed down among catholic tradition.

⁹¹ Ehrman, *Forgery and Counterforgery*, 249–50. A superb assessment of Ehrman’s book can be found in Brakke, “Early Christian Lies and the Lying Liars Who Wrote Them.”

⁹² “No document included in the NT gives such thorough evidence of its pseudonymity as does *2 Peter*,” Meade, *Pseudonymity and Canon*, 179. Bauckham believes the pseudonymity of *2 Peter* to be straightforward: Bauckham,

As for what Bockmuehl has called “a bewildering range of apocryphal sources”⁹³ related to Peter, there is a much wider assortment than for the other traditional authors of the Catholic Epistles, which spans a remarkable range of genre and form.⁹⁴ These include the *Gospel of Peter*, the *Acts of Peter*, the *Acts of Peter and the Twelve Apostles*, two apocalypses: one in Greek and one in Coptic, the *Preaching of Peter*, the *Letter of Peter to James*, and the *Letter of Peter to Philip*. Some of these texts were discussed by ancients in the context of their possible or likely pseudepigraphy—it is the *Gospel of Peter* that Bishop Serapion, in the late second century, essentially recalls from a community in Rhossus after he reads the text and realizes the heretical nature of its supposed pseudepigraphal interpolations.⁹⁵ Given the abundance of Petrine literature, Frey argues that the figure of Peter was especially useful as an “authority within emerging Christianity”: “[h]is preaching, his deeds, and his martyrdom drew multifaceted interest, and the figure of Peter was able to serve the authorization of doctrine in various discourses...” and as a “guarantor of a Gentile Christian text,” for example in the *Kerygma*.⁹⁶

Much of the now-extracanonial Petrine material can be broadly construed as gnostic. The *Gospel of Peter* offers little in the way of a characterization of Peter, as his name is preserved only at the end of a fragmented text (*Gosp. Pet.* 60).⁹⁷ Similarly, the Akhmim fragment of the *Apocalypse of Peter* does not provide much about the person of Peter, but the Ethiopic edition preserves a declaration to Peter to “go into a city ruling over west, and drink

Jude-2 Peter, 158–62. Frey offers an extensive and compelling discussion on *2 Peter*’s pseudepigraphy in *The Letter of Jude and the Second Letter of Peter*, 217–20.

⁹³ Bockmuehl, *The Remembered Peter*, 4.

⁹⁴ Even Eusebius is aware of many such texts, naming only *1 Peter* as fully acknowledged, but citing *2 Peter*, a gospel, a kerygma, and an apocalypse all attributed to Peter but not recognized as “handed down by catholic tradition,” *Hist. eccl.* 3.3.1–2.

⁹⁵ Eusebius cuts off the account before Serapion’s list of these interpolations, see *Hist. eccl.* 6.12.3–6. See also Watson, *Gospel Writing*, 447.

⁹⁶ Frey argues that not only *1 Peter*, but also the *Apocalypse of Peter* and the *Kerygma Petri* were written prior to *2 Peter*. This plots *2 Peter* within a broad tradition of already advanced Petrine discourse, *The Letter of Jude and the Second Letter of Peter*, 207, 208.

⁹⁷ For a summary of editions and manuscripts, see Elliott, *The Apocryphal New Testament*, 151–52.

the cup which I have promised you....,” likely in reference to Peter’s martyrdom in Rome (Eth. *Apoc. Pet.* 14:4).⁹⁸ The *Acts of Peter* also emphasizes Peter’s ties to Rome, and the conflict between Peter and Simon Magus runs throughout the majority of the narrative (*Acts Pet.* 4–32). In the final defeat, when Simon attempts to fly in order to prove his divine power, Peter prays that Simon would fall and be crippled but not killed; a crippled, chastened, and miserable Simon later kills himself (*Acts Pet.* 32).⁹⁹ The *Acts* also narrates Peter’s later martyrdom: crucifixion upside down (*Acts Pet.* 37–39). The *Letter of Peter to James* is a decidedly Jewish text, given the author’s concern to prevent books of Peter’s preaching from falling into Gentile hands, lest they repurpose his words through flawed interpretation.¹⁰⁰ According to this Peter, only training in the interpretation of properly guarded doctrine can produce the right result.¹⁰¹

The traditions surrounding the figure of Peter briefly surveyed here need not and cannot be definitive, given the prolific Petrine discourse from the early centuries of Christianity: Peter emerges as a figure of influence in the developing church, lending his name to a wide range of literature. While the New Testament Petrine Epistles were not necessarily influenced by these now-apocryphal traditions – though this is more possible with *2 Peter* due to its probable later date of composition – they nevertheless contribute to the composite tradition orbiting the figure of Peter. *1* and *2 Peter* are presented as letters containing the learned teachings of a trusted elder to communities among whom he had some clout; *2 Peter* serves as the last, crucial teaching of the apostle; and the Peter known to ecclesiastical writers of the first four centuries

⁹⁸ From the Rainer Fragment of the Ethiopic *Apoc. Pet.* in D. D. Buchholz, *Your Eyes Will Be Opened*, 228. See also Elliott, *the Apocryphal New Testament*, 609, n. 40, and see 595–97 for a summary of editions and manuscripts. Frey has recently argued along with Grünstäudl that, contra Bauckham’s earlier claim that the *Apoc. Pet.* used *2 Peter* as a source, it is the other way around: Frey, *The Letter of Jude and the Second Letter of Peter*, 201–206; citing Grünstäudl, *Petrus Alexandrinus*. The plurality of Petrine literature already available to the writer of *2 Peter* in the second century could also explain, per Frey, the lack of effort to adopt the Peter image from *1 Peter*, 206.

⁹⁹ Elliott, *The Apocryphal New Testament*, 400–26.

¹⁰⁰ Crawford notes that Peter’s opponent, “the man who is the enemy” is often read as Simon Magus or Paul, though neither is a given, and that some have argued this letter is “intended to counter the positive portrayal of Paul in *2 Pet* 3:15–16,” “Καὶὼν and Scripture,” 267–8. See also Gregory, “Non-Canonical Epistles and Related Literature,” 100–101; Kasser and Wurst (eds.), *The Gospel of Judas, Critical Edition*.

¹⁰¹ Crawford, “Καὶὼν and Scripture,” 269–70.

emphasizes his role in the production of gospel literature and as a champion of orthodoxy. From the prominence of traditions relaying Peter's conflict with Simon Magus, Peter's insistence on proper training in interpreting the scriptures in the *Letter of Peter to James*, and the ending exhortation of *2 Peter* to "beware, so that you may not be led astray by one of lawless error..." (*2 Pet* 3:17), it is clear that the figure of Peter was known as a central teacher and preacher of early Christianity and an apostle *par excellence*. Once again, we see that Peter's stability as an exemplary figure is counterbalanced by his malleability: his exemplary status as the leading apostle underwrites the various uses to which the Petrine pseudonym could be put.

3.3 John: Eyewitness, Author, and Beloved Disciple¹⁰²

The Johannine Epistles are unique among the Catholic letters in their near-anonymous attribution: *1 John* has no address, while *2* and *3 John* are from "the Elder," a title later used for John the apostle and evangelist, which distinguishes this John from the son of Zebedee and the brother of James the disciple (*2 John* 1; *3 John* 1).¹⁰³ The polemical tone of the first two Johannine letters is directed against "antichrists" who "deny the father and the son" and reject that Jesus came in the flesh (*1 John* 2:18–27, 4:1–3; *2 John* 7–10), thus the letters could be plausibly directed against docetic teaching that Jesus did not have a fleshly body; the author was clearly keen to adjudicate between true members of the community and those with the false teaching that Jesus did not come in the flesh.¹⁰⁴ The author's claim of eyewitness

¹⁰² For a thorough examination of John as the Beloved Disciple and ideal author of *John*, see Bauckham, "The Beloved Disciple as Ideal Author," 21–44.

¹⁰³ James and John, the sons of Zebedee and some of the first disciples whom Jesus called (*Matt* 4:21–22; *Mark* 1:19–20), are to be distinguished from James the Just, the brother of Jesus, who presided over the apostolic council at Jerusalem in *Acts* 15, and John the Elder, the apostle who is possibly to be identified as the Beloved Disciple. Bauckham, for example, heartily denies that John the son of Zebedee is the Beloved Disciple and the writer of *John*, see Bauckham, "The Beloved Disciple as Ideal Author," 24–27. However, there is clearly some confusion about these two figures, and they are sometimes conflated, as by Dionysius, who refers to "John the son of Zebedee and the brother of James, by whom the Gospel of John and the catholic epistle were written" (*Hist. eccl.* 7.25.7). The distinction between these Johns may not be clear among ancient writers.

¹⁰⁴ For the relationship between pseudepigraphy and community, see Leonhardt-Balzer, "Pseudepigraphie und Gemeinde in den Johannesbriefen," 733–63.

testimony – that which “we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked at and our hands have touched (*1 John* 1:1) – gives emphasis to the falsity of contradictory claims regarding Jesus’ nature.¹⁰⁵

As we saw above with regard to early Christian *Echtheitskritik*, the authorship of Johannine literature in the New Testament was contested even in an ancient context, but regardless of modern conceptions of the historicity of the authorship of the Johannine New Testament texts, trends emerge of the ancient attribution to John, who is identified as the Beloved Disciple, especially in conjunction with the writing of the *Gospel of John*. In *John*, the author is subtly self-identified as the disciple whom Jesus loved (cf. *John* 13:23; 19:26; 20:2; 21:7, 20), though only in the final chapter of the gospel does the author finally claim that “this is the disciple bearing witness concerning these things and the one who wrote them down” (*John* 21:24).¹⁰⁶ This author never self-identifies as John, however, leading to alternative theories that the Beloved Disciple may be Mary Magdalene, Lazarus (based on *John* 11:5), or Thomas, among others¹⁰⁷, though many studies continue to argue that John was the Beloved Disciple.¹⁰⁸

Ecclesiastical tradition shows no uncertainty about the identity of the Beloved Disciple, commonly identifying the evangelist with this title and as the one who “lay on Jesus’ breast” (Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 3.23.1; cf. *Hist. eccl.* 6.15.9–10 [Origen]; 7.25.12 [Dionysius]). Eusebius relates this information concerning John’s death: Polycrates, bishop of Ephesus, writing to the bishop of Rome, refers to John as “both a witness and a teacher, who reclined upon the bosom of the Lord,” and states that he is buried at Ephesus (*Hist. eccl.* 3.31.3). Dionysius distinguishes

¹⁰⁵ It is due to this claim that Ehrman classifies *1 John* as a “non-pseudepigraphic forgery,” given its anonymous address along with the claim to eyewitness testimony, *Forgery and Counterforgery*, 424–25.

¹⁰⁶ On literacy and textuality in *John* and its ties to the *Epist. Apost.* and the *Apocr. Jas.*, see Lindenlaub, “The Gospel of John as Model for Literate Authors and their Texts,” 3–27.

¹⁰⁷ Dunderberg offers many examples of other author-claims, but insists that the Beloved Disciple’s identity remains elusive, Dunderberg, *The Beloved Disciple in Conflict?*, 118–29.

¹⁰⁸ See Bauckham, “The Beloved Disciple as Ideal Author,” 24. Numerous other examples are provided in Lincoln, “The Beloved Disciple as Eyewitness and the Fourth Gospel as Witness,” 3–26.

between multiple Johns to whom Johannine literature could be attributed, since there may have been many with the same name on account of their admiration of the evangelist (*Hist. eccl.* 7.25.14). Included among these are John Mark, who attended to Paul and Barnabas (*Acts* 13:5), and at least one other in Asia, due to there being two monuments in Ephesus (*Hist. eccl.* 7.25.16–17). Dionysius, though critical of the association of the Johannine *Revelation* and 2 and 3 *John* with the evangelist, concedes that an inspired, if less grammatically competent, John penned these texts, avoiding the accusation of forgery (*Hist. eccl.* 7.25.24–27). That the author of 1 *John* remained anonymous is for Dionysius a sign of its authenticity, as its stylistic likeness to the *Gospel* makes the link obvious.¹⁰⁹ Papias likewise relays that there were two different Johns buried at Ephesus, which Eusebius uses to emphasize that it was this *other* John who wrote the *Apocalypse*, not the evangelist (Papias, *Hist. eccl.* 3.39.4–6). Eusebius further offers this logic for the placement of his gospel as the fourth: John, having spent all his time preaching, finally wrote his gospel to supplement those already written by Matthew, Mark, and Luke particularly in their lack of the deeds of Jesus early on in his ministry, prior to the imprisonment of John the Baptist (*Hist. eccl.* 3.24.7–14).

Like Eusebius, the author of the Muratorian fragment was also interested in John as an author. The fragment holds John the evangelist in high esteem, relating a legend of the *Gospel of John*'s creation in which John is said to compose a gospel representative of a collective:

To his fellow disciples and bishops, who had been urging him [to write], he said, “Fast with me from today to three days, and what will be revealed to each one let us tell it to one another. [...] And so, though various elements may be taught in the individual books of the Gospels, nevertheless this makes no difference to the faith of believers, since by the one sovereign Spirit all things have been declared in all [the Gospels]. [...] What marvel is it then, if John so consistently mentions these particular points also

¹⁰⁹ That John or the Beloved Disciple is/are not mentioned in the Johannine epistles apart from attribution of 2 and 3 *John* to “the Elder” remains a puzzling feature for modern scholarship, cf. Dunderberg, *The Beloved Disciple in Conflict?*, 128–29.

in his epistles... For in this way he professes [himself] to be not only an eye-witness and hearer, but also a writer of all the marvelous deeds of the Lord, in their order.¹¹⁰

John is presented not only as a gospel writer but as a *definitive* gospel writer, whose epistles also reflect key themes present throughout the fourfold Gospel. While the portion of the text on *Matthew* and *Mark* is lost, the author of the Muratorian fragment notes that Luke was not an eyewitness, while emphasizing the direct witness of John, the “writer of all the marvelous deeds of the Lord.” *2 John*, one of only three Catholic Epistles listed by the Muratorian Fragment, in addition to *1 John* and *Jude*, and *3 John* (not listed by the fragment) both end with the pronouncement that “I have many things to write to you,” further emphasizing John’s identity as a writer (*2 John* 12).

John ends with the claim that “There are also many other things that Jesus did, which, if every one were to be written down, I suppose not even the whole world would have space for the books being written” (*John* 21:25). This apparently served as an encouragement to continue a tradition of Johannine scriptures, including the *Apocryphon of John*, which offers an alternative etiology of creation, and the *Acts of John*, a collection of stories about John the apostle. The *Apocryphon* is however clearly attributed to the disciple “John, the brother of James, the sons of Zebedee” (*Apocr. John* 1,1)¹¹¹ rather than John the Elder. We are left with the *Acts of John*, which lacks attribution within the text but relates traditions surrounding the apostle John as he traveled primarily in Ephesus. While it was condemned as a heretical text, including by Eusebius¹¹², the many translations of at least a portion of the text indicate it was rather popular.¹¹³ Notable inclusions are John’s command over nature, as he raises various

¹¹⁰ *Mur. Frag.* 11.9–32, trans. Metzger, *The Canon of the New Testament*, appendix IV, 305–307.

¹¹¹ Irenaeus describes some of the contents of the *Apocryphon*, the basis for doctrines of various heretical groups, including the Sethians (*Adv. haer.* 1.29–30).

¹¹² The *Acts of John* is one example given by Eusebius as a pseudonymous work cited by heretics, which lack apostolic character and usage (*Hist. eccl.* 3.25.6–7).

¹¹³ Elliott, “The Acts of John,” 305–307.

people from the dead¹¹⁴ and is obeyed by bed bugs¹¹⁵, and the reverence shown to him by many of his hearers—including one who painted John’s face and created a shrine (*Acts John 26–29*).¹¹⁶

Jerome furthermore reports in his commentary on *Galatians* that at the point when John had become so old and tired that he was no longer able to preach very lengthy sermons, he simply resorted to saying, “Children, love one another.” Confronted with his hearers’ boredom and asked why this is all he says, John responded, “Because it is the Lord’s commandment.”¹¹⁷ As Watson points out, this legend echoes the language of *1 John*, in which the author calls his addressees “children” (e.g. *1 John* 2:1, 12, 14, 18, 28; 4:4, 5:21) and exhorts them to “love one another” (e.g. *1 John* 3:11; 4:7, 11).¹¹⁸ John’s essential message, so the legend goes, can be found in the epistles attributed to him.

Concerning the anonymity of *1 John* and the vague attribution to “the Elder” in *2* and *3 John*, both ancient Christian tradition and modern criticism include expressions of doubt over the attribution of *2* and *3 John*. *1 John*, however, in an ancient context remained a text of unquestioned reliability and importance. The authorial portrait that emerges from New Testament Johannine literature and early ecclesiastical writings overwhelmingly favors the tradition of John as *the Beloved Disciple*, the one who rested on Jesus’ breast; as the *writer* of a gospel text and epistles, both in the New Testament and in sources such as the Muratorian fragment; and as an *eyewitness*, a factor that enables the other two principal aspects of John’s portrayal. The Johannine epistles contribute to traditions orbiting the Apostle John as a key witness to Jesus’ body and ministry, the writtenness of his testimony, and teachings that he propagated well into his legendary old age. With John, as with James and Peter, we find the

¹¹⁴ Cf. *Acts of John* 22–24, 48–53, 75, 80 in *ibid.*, 312–13, 324–26, 332–33.

¹¹⁵ Cf. *Acts of John* 60–61, in *ibid.*, 328.

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 313–14.

¹¹⁷ Jerome, *In Epist. ad Gal.*, on *Gal* 6:10, as quoted and translated by Watson, *Gospel Writing*, 91.

¹¹⁸ Watson, *Gospel Writing*, 92. See also *2 John* 4–6; *3 John* 4.

double-sided coin of exemplarity: the stability of Johannine eyewitness traditions, for example, is accompanied by the malleability of John's image, and this exemplary figure is strategically characterized as *the* definitive gospel writer.

3.4 Jude, the Brother of James and Jesus

Traditionally, the interest in Jude's authorship has been historical in nature, questioning whether this Jude was in fact the brother of James the Just, and therefore also related to Jesus, and whether the same Jude did, in fact, author the epistle attributed to him.¹¹⁹ Due to his status as neither a disciple nor a central teacher in early Christianity, Jude is perhaps the lowliest figure among the traditional authors of the Catholic Epistles. The author claims credibility not necessarily in his own right but by association as "Jude... brother of James" (*Jude* 1:1). In doing so he makes two important connections: first, and more obviously, to James, who *was* a central figure of early Christianity; secondly, and more subtly, to Jesus.

Even as a family member of Jesus, references to Jude are sparse in the New Testament. He is listed with James as one of Jesus' brothers in *Matthew* 13:55 and *Mark* 6:3.¹²⁰ Though in Greek he shares a name with Judas, the disciple who betrayed Jesus (cf. *Luke* 22:3–6, 47–47; *Acts* 1:16); Judah, one of the twelve sons of Jacob and a tribe of Israel (cf. *Matt* 1:2; *Luke* 3:33; *Heb* 7:14; *Rev* 5:5); and the region of Judea (cf. *Matt* 2:6; *Luke* 1:39), these are easily distinguished from our Jude. There is a possibility it is Jude's house to which Ananias is instructed to go and find the blinded Paul, but this is not made clear in *Acts* (*Acts* 9:8–19).¹²¹ However, such a paucity of references does not necessarily suggest a figure of prestige, particularly among the Pillar Apostles of James, Peter, and John.¹²²

¹¹⁹ Lockett, *An Introduction to the Catholic Epistles*, 77–79; Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter*, 13–16.

¹²⁰ Only James and Joseph are listed in *Matt* 27:56 and *Mark* 15:40 as sons of Mary.

¹²¹ Bauckham *Jude, 2 Peter*, 14.

¹²² For a helpful discussion of the various Judases in play, see Frey, *The Letter of Jude and the Second Letter of Peter*, 22–25.

The titular traditions associated with both James and Jude in the manuscript tradition offer a hint regarding the association of these authors in reception history: one common title given to both works includes the descriptor ἀδελφόθεος, brother of the Lord, an indication of continued reflection on the prescripts of both letters.¹²³ The same understanding is also present in early Christian tradition, for example from Hegesippus, who refers to two grandsons of Jude – “a brother of Jesus according to the flesh” – who were brought before the Emperor Domitian as potential political foes in the line of David, but the emperor halted the persecution of the church after the two men explained they were poor farmers. They are said to go on to lead churches, as they were witnesses and relatives of Jesus.¹²⁴ Given the hagiographical elements of this story, the historicity of Jude’s relationship to Jesus is not necessarily what is at the fore, rather, the succession of witnesses connected to Jesus is emphasized. Eusebius’s other ancient sources are unusually silent on the character of Jude, despite traditions provided for James, Peter, and John.

There is still the question of *why* one might use such a marginal figure as a pseudonym. Frey suggests that the author derived authority by presenting himself (pseudonymously) as a “second James,” on the grounds that both letters are generally addressed (that is, catholic), use scriptural exempla with paraenetic intention, demonstrate significant familiarity with Jewish tradition, share a similar style and vocabulary, and because Jude “incorporates the critique of the antinomian and pneumatic tendencies of the post-Pauline era.”¹²⁵ For Frey, “[b]y choosing his pseudonym and linking himself to the Epistle of James, the author of Jude has borrowed

¹²³ James is titled ἀδελφοθεος in GA 945 104C 1501 1739 1875; Jude is titled ἀδελφοθεος in GA 431 945 1739C 2243 2492.

¹²⁴ Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 3.19.1–20.8. Jude’s relation to Jesus “according to the flesh: is repeated twice: 3.19.1, 3.20.1. The same account is repeated in 3.32.5–6, including the martyrdom of Symeon, said to be an uncle of the Lord.

¹²⁵ Frey, “The Epistle of Jude Between Judaism and Hellenism,” 309–29, esp. 309, 324–26. See also Frey, “Autorfiktion und Gegnerbild im Judasbrief und im Zweiten Petrusbrief,” 683–732; Grünstäudl, “Die Katholischen Briefe,” 74. Grünstäudl further clarifies that Jude’s reference to James is to a person, not to a text, which calls into question the apparent necessity that *Jude* was written after *James*.

his Jewish Christian identity.”¹²⁶ This would locate *Jude* after *James*, and it also provides a link between *James* and *2 Peter*, due to the material the Petrine author adopts from *Jude*. Nienhuis has argued convincingly that, instead, the author of *James* intentionally links his letter to the other Catholic Epistles in order to establish a sense of cohesiveness across the Catholic corpus.¹²⁷ Similar to Frey, Alexandra Robinson finds the most crucial information in the linguistic choices the author makes to create an authorial persona as a “servant” and the “brother of James,” though she also notes that this does not disqualify the letter from possible authenticity.¹²⁸

Tradition surrounding the Judean author is sparser than that orbiting the pillar apostles James, Peter, and John, but it is clear from the author’s self-identification in the prescript and its ensuing interpretations and additions (including the title ἀδελφόθεος) that key to *Jude*’s exemplarity and authority are the dual associations to James and to Jesus. The figure of *Jude*’s apparent obscurity is outshone by the long history of reception associating him with both figures, and the eagerness of early Christian writers to attach *Jude* to apostolic tradition perhaps aided the letter’s reception as well, despite doubts over its authenticity. As with the other traditional authors of the Catholic Epistles, the portrait of *Jude* that emerges from the parallel view of this variety of ancient references suggests a stability anchored in his identity as Jesus’ kin, which has been strategically associated to *Jude* as an author—and thus as an exemplary pseudonym.

Traditions about the figures of James, Peter, John, and *Jude* contribute to their ancient reception and to the production of a continued stream of texts associated with them. This transcends source-critical notions of intertextuality—exemplarity is an intertraditional aggregation of

¹²⁶ Frey, “the Epistle of *Jude* Between Judaism and Hellenism,” 329.

¹²⁷ Nienhuis, *Not By Paul Alone*, 163–231.

¹²⁸ Robinson, *Jude on the Attack*, 6–9.

material, which produces creative, interpretive, and sometimes novel tradition itself. Nevertheless, it is not a given that the author portraits of the Catholic Epistles follow on from preceding New Testament tradition, and, likewise, these exemplary depictions of James, Peter, John, and Jude are not necessarily definitive or final, but rather they represent a few traditions among others that orbit these figures of prestige.

James's subtle authority in *Acts* gives way to robust traditions of his kinship to Jesus and his renowned piety in *James* and other succeeding literature; after Peter's briefly narrated conflict with Simon Magus in *Acts* 8 follows a lengthier account from the *Acts of Peter* which is more damning to Simon and more glorifying of Peter; despite the ambiguous identity of the Beloved Disciple and author of the *Gospel of John* and the anonymity of *1 John*, ecclesiastical writers attribute both to the apostle John with apparent certainty; and Jude's spare representation in the New Testament nonetheless affords him a prestigious rank as the brother of James, and therefore of Jesus, among ancient writers. As the accumulation of tradition, traditioning functions as a gravitational pull exerted on texts, their pseudonymous authors, and the scriptural exempla they deploy simultaneously, perpetuating the process and enabling the generation of still more tradition.

Crucially, stability and malleability go hand-in-hand when it comes to the characterization of the Christian exempla of James, Peter, John, and Jude, and we will find the same to be the case for the scriptural exempla used throughout the Catholic Epistles in subsequent chapters. Key, stable elements of tradition emerge (such as James' association to Jerusalem or Peter's martyrdom), which anchor the authority – and indeed the exemplary status – of such figures. Yet, as the juxtaposition of traditions associated with each figure has illustrated, they are malleable too, and their use as pseudonyms for apostolic letters suggests that a well of knowledge and tradition about these figures was expanded upon for the purposes of “real” authors. The simultaneous stability and malleability of James, Peter, John, and Jude is key to

what makes them exempla; exemplarity is the *rhetorically strategic* use of central figures from the Christian past, whose prestige underwrites the generation of new tradition tied to them.

The characterization of Paul across the abundant early Christian texts and traditions associated with him, whether they are viewed as authentic or pseudepigraphical, could also be described as authorial exemplarity. I have already explained the tendency of New Testament scholarship to describe the Catholic Epistles' use of exemplarity as typological and intertextual; in the next section I elaborate on further distinctions between the Catholic Epistles' rhetorical strategy of exemplarity and a more distinctly Pauline approach.

4. THE CATHOLIC EPISTLES AND PAULINE TYPOLOGY

In what follows, I compare and contrast the Pauline and Catholic corpora on the use of scriptural exempla with regard to their terminology, selection, and function. What will emerge is that, overall, Paul's use of exemplars is rather narrow and strategically precise, while the Catholic Epistles' use of exemplars is more expansive and perhaps strategically eclectic.

4.1 Key Terminology

The Pauline corpus has various forms of τύπος at least eleven times. In most cases, the use of τύπος applies to Paul himself or to his encouragement to his readers to be examples to believers (e.g. *1 Thess* 1:7; *2 Thess* 3:9; *1 Tim* 1:16, 4:12; *Titus* 2:7). There are two instances in which Paul uses “exemplar” language to describe a scriptural figure: once, in *Romans* 5, he refers to Adam as a “type (τύπος) of the coming one” – Adam is representative of death, which Paul says “reigned from Adam until Moses,” but he prefigures Christ: just as the failure of one man resulted in judgment for all, so the righteousness of one man stands in for all (*Rom* 5:14–18). In *1 Corinthians* 10, Paul describes how, despite having “spiritual” (πνευματικός) food, drink, and water from the rock (“which is Christ”), Israel became “desirers of evil things” and

“grumblers” in the wilderness—which makes them warning “types” (*1 Cor* 10:6, 11). In an article on words denoting “pattern” in the New Testament, Lee calls τύπος language “peculiarly biblical,” used in this typological sense.¹²⁹ Peculiarly *Pauline* might be a better phrase, however; exempla in the Catholic Epistles serve primarily as illustrations of positive and negative actions, not as typological models.

Once, the word ἀλληγορούμενα is used in *Galatians* to describe the children of Hagar and Sarah. Paul writes, “[f]or it has been written that Abraham had two sons: one of the slave woman and one of the free (woman). The one of the slave woman has been born according to the flesh, but the one of the free (woman) through the promise – which are allegorized” as two covenants, one corresponding to Hagar, slavery, Mt. Sinai, and earthly Jerusalem; the other to Sarah, freedom, and “the Jerusalem above” (*Gal* 4:22–26). Overall, Paul appears to be more concerned with allegory and typology than with paraenetic exemplars.

Despite τύπος language being overwhelmingly Pauline among the New Testament letters, this terminology tends to bleed into studies on the Catholic Epistles. An essay on *Jude*’s polemical rhetoric, for example, explains that “the most frequently occurring term in NT paradigm terminology is τύπος. Normally rendered ‘type’, ‘pattern’, or ‘mould’, it conveys the idea of *resemblance*... In the case of *Jude*, typology serves a uniformly hortatory or ethical function; it functions as a warning – and a severe one at that.”¹³⁰ Charles’s claim would seem to imply that *Jude* makes use of this Greek term, and Lockett, following Charles, claims *Jude* uses the terms δεῖγμα, ὑπόδειγμα, and τύπος, but this is not the case—even for textual variants.¹³¹ Only δεῖγμα is found in *Jude*, with reference to Sodom and Gomorrah being made

¹²⁹ Lee, “Words Denoting ‘Pattern,’” 170. Wyrick claims that “typology is one of the most important modes of interaction with biblical exempla in the New Testament,” offering examples from Paul, *Matthew*, *John*, and *Luke*, though he earlier mentions *James* as an example of the *Beispielreihe* form, “Biblical Characters in Hellenistic Judaism,” 20.

¹³⁰ Charles, “Polemic and Persuasion,” 81, italics original.

¹³¹ Lockett, *Introduction to the Catholic Epistles*, 97–99.

an example for their wickedness (*Jude* 7). While it *is* the case that Jude makes use of scriptural exempla, it is done without the use of τύπος—by far the preferred *Pauline* term.

Where Paul has a clear preference for τύπος language, the Catholic Epistles use a wider selection of terminology, as we have seen above: δείγμα, υπόδειγμα, υπογραμμόν, and αντίτυπον. This should not simply be attributed to the multiple authors represented within this corpus versus the supposedly “singular” Pauline authorship of the Pauline corpus: only in *1 Peter*’s reference to Noah and his family’s salvation through water as αντίτυπον to baptism is typology vocabulary employed in the context of a scriptural exemplar (*1 Pet* 3:20–21). *1 Peter* also uses other exemplarity terminology with reference to Jesus as the Isaianic Suffering Servant (*1 Pet* 2:21).

4.2 Selection of Characters

The list of characters included in Paul’s selection of scriptural figures appears to be strategically limited and narrowly focused on key patriarchs and matriarchs from Genesis; he makes specific appeal to the *most* recognizable figures from *Genesis*. This is perhaps due in part to his Gentile readership¹³², but also to the central role these particular characters play in the history of Israel. The prophets, rather than serving as exemplary figures as they do in James, “speak” scripture, as does Moses. If for this reason we exclude the prophets and David who “speak” but do not “exemplify” scripture, Paul uses fifteen characters in total, in contrast to the Catholic Epistles’ eighteen, despite the Pauline corpus taking up significantly more space than the Catholic collection within the New Testament.

Not only are the characters confined primarily to Genesis, but their use within Paul is also confined to a few key passages: Abraham’s faith is exemplified in *Romans* 4; *Romans* 9 moves from Israel (*Rom* 9:4–6) to Abraham and his seed—the children of the promise through

¹³² Lincicum, “Genesis in Paul,” 100–101.

Sarah (*Rom* 9:7–9); to Rebecca who, through Isaac, bore two sons, about whom Paul quotes, “Jacob I loved but Esau I hated” (*Rom* 9:13); to Moses and Pharaoh, who illustrate God’s sovereign prerogative to have mercy and compassion on whom God chooses (*Rom* 9:15–18), then to a brief reference to the warning of Gomorrah (*Rom* 9:29), before concluding with another reference to Israel, who, in contrast to the Gentiles whose righteousness has been attained by faith, “stumbled” in their attempts to attain righteousness through the law (*Rom* 9:30–33).

In *Galatians* 4 a similar argument to *Romans* 9 is made with regard to “children of the promise.” Abraham is mentioned, followed by parallel contrasts between Sarah, the “free” woman, through whom was born the child of promise, Isaac, and Hagar, the “enslaved” woman. In *1 Corinthians* 10, the grumbling Israelites serve as “types” of warning against grumbling and desiring evil (*1 Cor* 10:6–11). Lastly, in *1 Timothy* 2, the Pauline author uses the order of creation (Adam, then Eve) and rebellion (Eve was deceived, and apparently Adam “was not deceived,” v. 14) to qualify his command that the women in this context should not have authority over men (*1 Tim* 2:13–15). In general, Paul’s selection is focused on pairs of characters who illustrate contrasting principles of identity.

In contrast to Paul’s more focused use of characters from Genesis and a few others who ‘speak’ scripture, the Catholic Epistles make use of a variety of exempla from a much wider span of the Hebrew Bible. Characters come from not only *Genesis* (Cain, Enoch, Sinful Angels, Abraham, Sarah, Noah, Lot, and Sodom and Gomorrah) but also the wider Pentateuch (Balaam, Korah, and the Wilderness Generation) and beyond (Rahab, prophets, false prophets, Job, Elijah, Michael the archangel, and Jesus characterized as the Isaianic Suffering Servant).

Along with the wider variety, many of the exempla used throughout the Catholic Epistles reflect what is now parabiblical tradition in a way Paul’s more focused use of exemplars primarily from Genesis does not. Even on a relatively cursory reading of the narrative

exemplars in the Catholic Epistles and their Old Testament counterparts, one might notice that Job is not particularly known for his ὑπομονή in *Job* (*Jas* 5:11), though he is explicitly in the *Testament of Job*; nor does Michael the archangel, who plays a remarkably minor role in the Old Testament, anywhere in canonical scripture argue with the devil over the body of Moses (*Jude* 8–9). Even *1 Peter*, the Catholic Epistle that shows the most connection to the *textual* Old Testament through the use of citations, refers to Sarah, who “obeyed her husband and called him master,” though she does this just once in *Genesis* 17 after she has been told she will bear a child, and she is mocking Abraham for suggesting such a thing, whereas she consistently calls Abraham “master” in the *Testament of Abraham*, a text that portrays her as an ideal, obedient wife (*1 Pet* 3:6).

Furthermore, despite the diversity of authorship and provenance represented by the Catholic Epistles, this collection makes substantial use of a surprising number of narrative exemplars; there are more characters referred to, in fact, than there are textual citations and strong allusions throughout the entire Catholic corpus.¹³³ There are *eighteen* narrative exemplars, six of whom are unmentioned by the Gospels and Paul (Job, Sarah, Michael the archangel, Balaam, Cain, and Korah), and two more who are only mentioned in passing outside the Catholic Epistles (Rahab, *Jas* 2:24–26, cf. *Heb* 11:31; Lot, *2 Pet* 2:7–8, cf. *Luke* 17:28-29). Here, the use of narrative figures, particularly as standalone references, is both more substantial in and more unique to the Catholic Epistles than the use of textual citations.

¹³³ *Jas* 2:8 / *Lev* 19:18 (*Matt* 22:36–40; *Mark* 12:31); *Jas* 2:23 / *Gen* 15:6 (*Rom* 4:3, 9, 22; *Gal* 3:6); *Jas* 4:6 / *Prov* 3:34; *1 Pet* 1:16 / *Lev* 11:44, 19:2; *1 Pet* 1:24–25 / *Isa* 40:6–8 (*Isa* 40:8 is reflected, though not cited, in *Matt* 24:35, *Mark* 13:31; there are clear allusions in *Jas* 1:9–11, *1 Jn* 2:17); *1 Pet* 2:6 / *Isa* 28:16 (*Rom* 9:33); *1 Pet* 2:7 / *Ps* 118:22 (*Matt* 21:42, *Mark* 12:10–11, *Luke* 20:17); *1 Pet* 2:8 / *Isa* 8:14–15 (*Matt* 21:44, *Luke* 20:18); *1 Pet* 2:10 / *Hos* 1:6, 9, 2:23 (*Rom* 9:25–26); *1 Pet* 2:21–25 / *Isa* 53:9, 7, 4 (*Matt* 8:17), 5, 12 (*Mark* 15:28, *Luke* 22:37), 6; *1 Pet* 4:17 / *Prov* 11:31; *1 Pet* 5:5 / *Prov* 3:34; *2 Pet* 2:22 / *Prov* 26:11; *Jude* 1:14–15 / *1 En* 1:9.

4.3 Function of Characters

Two characteristics of Paul's exemplary figures immediately stand out: first, their situated-ness alongside or within scriptural citation, and second, the way they function not only to illustrate but to symbolize the fundamental relationship between humanity and the divine. As a part of this paradigmatic theological orientation, Paul also tends to situate narrative exemplars in *pairs* to best demonstrate two incompatible modes of this totality of being.

First, Paul often uses characters as illustrations in conjunction with a cited text, asking at least twice in the context of a narrative figure the rhetorical question, “[b]ut what does the scripture say?” (*Gal* 4:30; *Rom* 4:3a). As mentioned, narrative figures also act as speakers of scripture, rather than as exemplary actors themselves—Moses, Isaiah, Hosea, Elijah, and David all serve this purpose at least once. These figures function prosopologically rather than illustratively.

Second, in illustrating foundational ways of human being in relation to God, Paul uses pairs of contrasting narrative characters. Bormann argues, for example, “Paul interprets the narrative patterns of the biblical pairs of persons in opposites: Hagar *or* Sara, Ishmael *or* Isaac, Esau *or* Jacob. Additionally, he transforms by allegorical exegesis the oppositional pairs to sharply drawn symbolic dichotomies: slave *or* free, flesh *or* spirit, works *or* faith, circumcision *or* promise.”¹³⁴ In this sense, Paul's use of Sarah and Isaac and Hagar and Ishmael is more allegorical and symbolic than it is paraenetic – they are representative of a whole way of being in relation to God rather than of a behavioral ideal. Paul's narrative exemplars demonstrate not necessarily exemplary behavior but a whole theological orientation showing two incompatible ways of relating to God: Sarah and Isaac represent living into the promise and freedom, where

¹³⁴ Bormann, “Paul and the Patriarchs of the Hebrew Bible,” 184.

Hagar and Ishmael stand in for those who remain enslaved—a stark either/or, with no apparent third way.¹³⁵

For the Catholic Epistles, the narrative exemplars appear to be used in a strategically less precise way than in Paul. This allows for the development of tradition surrounding key figures, as Menken argues with regard to *1 John*'s use of Cain. As a result, the characters used are also more eclectic with regard to their narrative contexts, allowing large portions of narrative to be invoked by a reference as brief as “the way of Cain” or “the error of Balaam” (*Jude* 11). In this sense, the reference to Cain is *strategically vague* in order to make space for echoes of Genesis itself *and* its continued interpretation. Menken goes as far as saying that for the Johannine author (or authors), the book of *Genesis* is not necessarily “Genesis itself, but an already interpreted Genesis.”¹³⁶ Brown similarly states that a person or event in the New Testament “may not solely or primarily be linked to a particular Old Testament text; instead, it may be the composite figure, which resides in the collective memory of author and audience that is in view,” identifying these references with an “expansive view of intertextuality.”¹³⁷ Expansive intertextuality is essentially *intertraditionality*, making space for the composite construction of scriptural exempla as well as the apostolic exempla who “wrote” the Catholic Epistles.

Overall, in contrast to the Pauline tendency to use exemplars typologically or to speak a cited text, the Catholic Epistles overwhelmingly *do not* situate exemplars alongside textual citations—and this is true even in *1 Peter*, in which Sarah, Noah, and Jesus as the Isaianic Suffering Servant are all referenced without an explicit citation (though they do come along

¹³⁵ Lincicum, “Genesis in Paul,” 111: “To describe the function of the Abraham story in Galatians is to touch the central concerns of the letters [...] To keep the Torah in the present time as Gentiles it to deny the reality of God’s invasive, new apocalyptic action in Christ, and to align oneself with the former things: the period of slavery, of adolescence, of discipline, of restraint, of the earthly Jerusalem, of the elements of the world.”

¹³⁶ Menken, “Genesis in John’s Gospel and 1 John,” 98.

¹³⁷ Brown, “Genesis in Matthew’s Gospel,” 54.

with strong allusions), when the author has demonstrated that he is perfectly capable of *also* citing texts (e.g., *1 Pet 2:6*).

In summary, Paul prefers τύπος language, whereas the Catholic Epistles use a more variable vocabulary; Paul's selection is primarily from Genesis, while the Catholic Epistles' exemplars are from a broader selection of narrative contexts throughout the Old Testament and even branching into parabiblical literature; and the function of Paul's exemplars tends to be typological, whereas the Catholic Epistles use exemplars in a broadly paraenetic way. To generalize, where Paul's narrative figures exemplify *God's* action on behalf of humanity, the narrative figures in the Catholic Epistles more straightforwardly tend to exemplify human action in response, whether positive or negative, and the consequences of those actions. This is not to make a judgment of overall theological priority in each corpus, necessarily, but rather specifically with regard to their use of narrative exemplars.

It is more fitting to classify what Paul is up to in his use of scriptural exemplars as "allusion" because in most instances characters accompany a textual citation, sometimes as the *speaker* of scripture (such as Isaiah, David, or Moses). Likewise, the term "typology" better resonates with the Pauline use of exemplars not least because Paul uses exclusively τύπος language, which extends well beyond the use of scriptural exemplars, and also because of his use of Old Testament characters to *symbolize* a whole way of being in relation to God. Typology is a function of exemplarity, but one distinct from the illustrative use of scriptural exempla.

Exempla in the Catholic Epistles, in contrast, tend to be standalone references, rather than accompanied by a citation, and while they recall (primarily narrative) context, strategically vague references indicate audience awareness of these briefly mentioned characters and allow space for the interpretive development of texts like *Genesis*. Moreover, there are more narrative exemplars used throughout the Catholic Epistles than there are textual citations. The eclectic,

wide-ranging approach to narrative exemplars is not the result of the individual letters' diverse authorship—the same eclecticism can be found within single letters. In *1 Peter* Sarah and Noah are cited outside the context of explicit textual citations and Jesus is cited as a Jewish scriptural exemplar, the Isaianic Suffering Servant (*1 Pet* 2:21-25). Even with the “antitype” of salvation through the ark as a symbol of baptism in *1 Peter*, the Catholic Epistles never use τύπος language for scriptural exempla, who instead serve more illustrative and paraenetic roles, and my hunch is that the use of “allusion” and “typological” language even for texts where these are not necessarily the most suitable terms is one sign of the domination of Pauline language in the study of New Testament letters.¹³⁸ The Catholic Epistle collection's substantial and distinct use of scriptural exempla—particularly in contrast to their use of textual citations—effectively illustrates that the use of exempla is a distinct mode of intertraditionality deserving of more thorough attention.

5. CONCLUSION

Exemplarity as a rhetorical strategy includes both pseudonymity and the illustrative use of scriptural exempla to model characteristics a text espouses as ideal. For the Catholic Epistles, these strategies of exemplarity are manifested in their apostolic and quasi-apostolic attributed authors and the use of at least eighteen scriptural exempla whose wider traditional context includes both the now-canonical Old Testament and many other paracanonical texts such as *Jubilees*, the *Testament of Job*, and the *Assumption of Moses*. Exemplarity includes the constructive characterization of both a pseudonymous author and the scriptural exempla—tradition is composite, and no one particular source is necessarily invoked in every usage of a

¹³⁸ Even in *1 Pet* 2:21–25 in which the author invokes language from *Isa* 53 about the Suffering Servant is *not* typological in nature—rather, Jesus is written *into* the text of *Isa* 53 as the Suffering Servant, not necessarily as an antitype or a fulfillment of a Christological passage.

scriptural exemplar. Exemplarity is also tied to *imitation* beyond a vocabulary of mimesis: pseudonymous authors are embodied figures for the “real” authors of the Catholic letters, while the use of illustrative scriptural exempla substantiates the authors’ exhortations toward ethical living. Exemplarity is furthermore not a niche biblical strategy but rather a deliberate literary trope shared by other pseudepigraphic literature (including many other now-canonical works), Jewish hero lists, Greco-Roman deliberative rhetoric, and other New Testament literature also drawing from such traditions.

As we saw in part one, the authorship of the Catholic Epistles was of particular concern in the discussion surrounding their inclusion (or not) among the New Testament collection. Exemplarity is not only a trait shared throughout the Catholic Epistle collection in both authorship and content, but it is one that both affects the canonical reception of the collection, given this ancient Christian concern over the questionable apostolic authorship of five of the Catholic letters, and it creates an expansive intertraditional network via the presence of a remarkable number of exempla from the scriptural past. In the end, pseudonymity did not inhibit the Catholic Epistles’ inclusion in the New Testament but in fact helped to facilitate it through the apostolic exemplarity imbedded in their authorial pseudonyms: key, stable elements of tradition underwrite the use of simultaneously malleable figures of prestige who serve as the attributed authors of an apostolic collection of letters whose authority was both contingent on and troubled by pseudepigraphy.

CHAPTER FOUR:
POSITIVE SCRIPTURAL EXEMPLA IN THE CATHOLIC EPISTLE
COLLECTION

It has previously been established that the Catholic Epistle collection, grouped virtually as a set of seven by Eusebius and materially (sometimes with *Acts*) from the fourth century onward, displays an example of the ancient reception of a scriptural collection. The apostolic authorial pseudonyms have been presented as generative figures who accumulate past tradition, which I have described as their “stability,” and they also inspire reinterpretation and the production of new tradition associated with them, which I have described as their “malleability.”

We will find the same to be true for the scriptural exempla deployed throughout the Catholic Epistles, whose intertraditional stability stems from both the Jewish scriptures and ties to a variety of now-parabiblical literature. Parabiblical and paracanonical literature are understood here to be texts that were not included in the now-canonical collection, but which inhabit the same narrative world as many of the now-canonical works, whether as commentary or rewriting and/or adding new context, such as *Jubilees*, the *Testament of Abraham* or the *Testament of Job*. The use of exempla throughout the Catholic Epistles to illustrate virtues and vices follows in a robust tradition represented in both Jewish and Greco-Roman literature. As we have seen previously, in Jewish literature exempla are found particularly in hero lists of primarily positive figures from the ancient past who often represent a recapitulation of Israel’s past (as in *Ben Sira*). In Greco-Roman literature exempla are used by philosophers, historians, and rhetoricians, such as Plutarch, Seneca, Valerius, Pliny, and Tacitus. The use of exempla is not a niche biblical strategy, but rather a common ancient rhetorical practice. In the Catholic Epistles, scriptural exempla are used in what may be a suggestively hybrid way, resembling both Jewish lists of heroes from the past and the juxtaposition of positive and negative figures as in the deliberative rhetoric of Greco-Roman literature.

The use of scriptural exempla – remarkably more common than textual citation– is one facet of the rhetorical strategy of exemplarity employed in the Catholic Epistle collection along with the use of apostolic pseudonyms, and both of these facets of exemplarity are strategically shaped by tradition. Exemplary figures were not always exempla *par excellence* of particular virtues or vices—they became such through their use and reuse, which is also to say they remain malleable, a crucial feature of exemplarity and its deployment. Besides the overall rhetorical effect of the use of scriptural exempla and their corresponding characterization, the exempla underscore the liminal canonicity of the Catholic Epistle collection: intertraditional ties abound to both Jewish and Christian now-paracanonical literature, and these hyperlinks maintain the porous boundary between what became, for some, “canonical” and what did not. The paracanonicity of the Catholic Epistle collection is inherently tied to its layers of exemplarity, both in its ancient reception – by reason of pseudonymous exemplarity, as we saw in the previous chapter – and the intertraditional web of its scriptural exempla.

In what follows I analyze the use of positive scriptural exempla in the Catholic Epistles, figures who illustrate particular actions or postures of virtue in *James*, *1 and 2 Peter*, and *Jude*.¹ For each figure, in addition to their portrayal in the Catholic Epistles, I give examples of their characterization in the Hebrew Bible and now-parabiblical tradition. In *James*, which includes only positive figures, Abraham and Rahab exemplify an obedience and virtue that epitomizes the synergy of faith and works; the prophets and Job are paradigmatic righteous sufferers; and Elijah exemplifies the effectiveness of active prayer, physically prostrating himself to end a drought. In *1 Peter*, Sarah functions as an ideal Christian wife and matriarch of modesty; the prophets are representatives of divine authority and foreknowledge of Christ; and Jesus is

¹ No positive exempla are used in *1 John* and no scriptural exempla are used at all in *2 or 3 John* so I do not discuss these letters in detail in what follows. This does not diminish the fact that the Catholic Epistles have been received as a seven-letter collection since antiquity, but it does highlight that the Catholic Epistles do not present a systematic or unified usage of scriptural exempla. Nevertheless two negative scriptural exempla, Cain and false prophets, are mentioned in *1 John*, so exempla are represented in every major Catholic Epistle.

written *as* the Isaianic Suffering Servant, the one through whose suffering salvation from sin has been made possible and about whom it is explicitly said believers should “follow in his steps” (*1 Pet* 2:21). In *2 Peter*, positive figures are juxtaposed with negative ones for contrast: Noah, a “preacher of righteousness,” (*2 Pet* 2:5) is saved while the sinful angels are cast into darkness; “righteous Lot” (*2 Pet* 2:7) is rescued while Sodom and Gomorrah are reduced to ashes; and the prophets, again, embody divine (and perhaps, in *2 Peter*, textual) authority. No positive scriptural exempla are used in the Johannine Epistles, perhaps due to the focus on the incarnation of Jesus. As we will see in the next chapter, only negative figures are used in *1 John*: false prophets, who deny that Jesus has come in the flesh, and Cain, who illustrates murder as the ultimate act of hatred.² In *Jude*, Enoch, the only figure directly cited throughout the Catholic Epistles, is a prophet *par excellence* and a herald of the doom that is in store for the ungodly false teachers (*Jud* 14–15); Michael the archangel, when arguing with the devil over the body of Moses, did not dare to slander *even* the devil, mindful of the singular authority of God as judge (*Jud* 8–9).

As we have seen, the canonical history of the Catholic Epistles reflects an external unity superimposed onto this collection of seven letters attributed to important apostolic figures. An analysis of their use of scriptural exempla will reveal an inward unity, as well—these are not random or arbitrary choices to make up an apostolic collection. While the Catholic Epistles do not present an intentionally unified or systematic usage of scriptural exempla, due to the variety of their provenance, viewing the collection through the use of these illustrative figures reveals a number of interesting tendencies, including the authoritative usage of Jewish figures and the tethers they create to a variety of scriptures—ties that only appear “eclectic” when viewed from the perspective of the later New Testament canon(s). These hyperlinks, especially in a

² It is curious that Abel is not named, only called “his brother” in reference to Cain, who *is* a scriptural exemplar for *1 John* (3:12). Abel is not a paradigm of love in the sense that his murder exemplifies hatred, however, so he would not be an appropriate example for the readers of *1 John* or representative scriptural exemplar for the current study.

“canonical” setting, maintain a porous boundary between “the canon” of both the Old and New Testaments and a broad range of scriptural resources, emphasizing the continuing authority of the Jewish scriptures and the usefulness of Jewish exempla in a Christian context. A methodology of reading the Catholic Epistles as a collection, given their ancient reception as such, has uncovered their collective substantial use of scriptural exempla, and thus this is an historically logical, if unconventional, parallel treatment of the scriptural exempla.

I have ordered the exempla not according to their appearance in the Catholic Epistles, but according to their order of appearance in the Septuagint.³ This not to ignore their order and placement within each Catholic letter and the particular rhetorical structure in which they play a role, an undoubtedly important factor in each exemplar’s interpretation, but so that I can highlight the strategy of exemplarity as deployed by the Catholic Epistle collection as a unit. Treating the exempla in the order in which they appear in the Septuagint is also narratively logical, as we are dealing here with exemplary characters from largely narrative scriptural contexts. There are a few figures mentioned in the Catholic Epistles whom, for various reasons, I do not treat as scriptural exempla because I define illustrative scriptural exempla as figures from the scriptural past around whose memory tradition continues to accumulate, such that they become exemplars of key virtues (or, as we shall see in the next chapter, vices). In contrast, Paul is mentioned in *2 Peter*, understood to be a contemporary of the Petrine author and as an author of scripture (*2 Pet* 3:14–16) but not as an illustrative scriptural exemplar. Isaac is named in *James* 2:21, but only as Abraham’s obedient sacrifice—Isaac himself is not the exemplar in this context. When *1 John* 3:21 names Cain as a murderer of “his brother,” this is clearly a

³The Jewish scriptural canon remained in flux in the first two centuries C.E. and existed in multiple (and at times substantially differing, as in the case of MT/LXX *Jeremiah*) translations, so the Catholic Epistles are working from a more fluid sense of the Jewish scriptures than what is now understood as the Christian Old Testament, to say nothing of manuscript variation, which adds another element of fluidity. On the Hebrew Bible canon, see J. C. Ossandón Widow, *The Origins of the Canon of the Hebrew Bible*; Mroczek, *The Literary Imagination in Jewish Antiquity*; Lim, *The Formation of the Jewish*; Sundberg, “The Septuagint: The Bible of Hellenistic Judaism,” 68–90; J. C. VanderKam, “Questions of Canon Viewed through the Dead Sea Scrolls,” 91–109.

reference to Abel, but he is not named, nor does he function here as an exemplar of virtue in contrast to Cain's evil action. The devil makes an appearance in *James* 4:7, *1 Peter* 5:8, and *1 John* 3:8 and 3:10 as a present adversary, rather as a past illustrative figure, so he is not treated here. Lastly, the devil and Moses both appear in *Jude* 9, but the illustrative exemplar in this context is the Archangel Michael—the former are both passing references and so are not treated substantially here. I will, however, discuss Isaac, the devil, Moses, and Abel briefly within the context of the more primary exempla of Abraham, Michael the Archangel, and Cain.

While I have earlier distinguished between Pauline typology and exemplarity language found throughout the Catholic Epistles such as (ὕπό)δειγμα and ὑπογραμμόν, in part on the basis of Paul's nearly exclusive use of τύπος language, Hindy Najman provides a description of τύπος that transcends Pauline typology and effectively describes exemplarity more generally. She discusses exemplarity in the context of Philo's use of Cain and Abel as archetypes, not as a function of Paul's theology that results in the oversimplification of the Catholic Epistles' exemplarity as consonant with Paul's. In her analysis of Philo's allegorical typology, Najman refers to two dimensions of τύπος: the copying dimension indicating that a τύπος is a copy or imprint of some original ideal, and the psychological dimension by which a τύπος is a character trait learned through education and practice.⁴ What she means by τύπος is crucially similar to the way in which exempla from the scriptural past are deployed throughout the Catholic Epistles as ideal characterizations of particular virtues and vices, and this ethical-historical aspect is central to the rhetorical effect of exemplarity. Indeed, as Najman expounds,

the laws themselves are described as *tupoi*, images or impressions which the Israelites are told to stamp upon their hearts. Cosmologically speaking, the law of Moses is a copy of the law of nature. To live in accordance with the law of Moses is to live in accordance with the cosmic order created by God.

⁴ Najman, "Cain and Abel as Character Traits: A Study in the Allegorical Typology of Philo of Alexandria," 211–12.

Psychologically speaking, to observe Mosaic law is to efface the evil that results from transgression and foolishness, and to restamp one's soul with the character of goodness and virtue.⁵

Exemplary figures are not just illustrations of virtue, they are models from the past for readers to imitate in the present. Transgressing these virtuous models, or, as we will find in the following chapter with regard to negative scriptural exempla, following the examples of negative exempla – going “the way of Cain,” as *Jude* puts it – is all the more serious for this reason. This is “paraenesis” at its most substantial: exemplary models leave an impression that changes not only the actions but also the character of their imitator.

Furthermore, the τύποι of Cain and Abel and other scriptural exempla are not limited to a Jewish context but live on in Christian writings such as the Catholic Epistles. When Christian writers make use of such exempla they draw from the Jewish past, appropriating scriptural characters as paradigmatic figures for the Christian present. Annette Yoshiko Reed reinforces this continuity between Jewish and Christian interpreters of the Jewish scriptures:

Contrary to traditional views of the early Christian encounter with the Tanakh/Old Testament as largely limited to the extraction and compilation of Christological prooftexts, the struggle to ‘explain away’ material deemed distasteful or irrelevant to Christians, and the interpretation of Israel’s history in terms of its culmination in Christ and the church, the continued creation of biblical pseudepigrapha (including many with only minor Christological content) may show how some Christians continued to engage, expand, and expound the biblical past in a manner similar to their Jewish predecessors—not just as preface to Christian history but also as cherished past in its own right.⁶

⁵ Furthermore, “[s]ince Cain and Abel exemplify types—at once cosmological and psychological—it is not surprising that they are echoed by their successors in the biblical narratives. Philo compares Abraham, Jacob, Isaac and Moses with Abel. And he compares Esau and Laban to Cain. In this way, Philo’s typological interpretation of the Cain and Abel story enables him to use that story as a lens through which to read other biblical narratives,” Najman, “Cain and Abel as Character Traits,” 212, 218; see also Najman, “Text and Figure in Ancient Jewish Paideia,” 253–65.

⁶ Reed, “Pseudepigraphy, Authorship, and the Reception of ‘the Bible’ in Late Antiquity,” 486.

Many such expansions – testamentary literature that may have a Christian provenance such as the *Testament of Job* or the *Testament of Abraham*, as well as other Jewish texts like *I Enoch* or the Septuagint version of *Job* – influenced the Catholic Epistles’ use of scriptural exempla by serving as key intertraditional sources. These scriptural exempla illustrate a crucial continuity with Judaism and an enduring belief in the usefulness of the scriptural past as a model for the present, as well as a conviction of the continuing authority of the Jewish scriptures and the exemplary figures therein.⁷ There is furthermore no overarching sense of intracanonical fidelity, as if only a particular subset of texts were considered permissible—rather, the scriptural exempla are characterized by their appearances in texts from across the “canonical”/“noncanonical” divide.⁸ This is particularly clear from our first positive exemplar, Enoch.

1. ENOCH

Enoch, seventh from Adam, also prophesied about these [ungodly ones], saying, “Behold, the Lord has come amidst a myriad of his holy ones, to execute judgment against all and to convict all the ungodly for all their works of ungodliness which they have committed and for all the harsh [things] that ungodly sinners have spoken against him.” (*Jude* 14–15)⁹

1.1 Enoch in the Hebrew Bible

In *Genesis*, Enoch is said not to die, but to be taken up at age 365. Having pleased God (in the Masoretic text, Enoch “walked with God”), “he was no longer found, because God took him”

⁷ Contra Wyrick, who claims that Jewish pseudepigraphy is “less developed in Jewish Greek culture than in Hebrew and Aramaic traditions,” and that “[t]he drive to promote the historical significance of biblical heroes did not last long,” having been “abandoned by Jewish Greek historians,” Wyrick, “Biblical Characters in Hellenistic Judaism,” 14, 15. The New Testament writers are “Jewish Greek” writers, after all. For more on this, see Adams, *Greek Genres and Jewish Authors*.

⁸ *2 Peter*’s removal of *Jude*’s examples of Michael the archangel and Enoch could be explained by their lack of a negative counterpart, which are juxtaposed alongside all of *2 Peter*’s positive exemplars, rather than as a removal of “extracanonical” material.

⁹ New Testament citations come from Aland, et al. (eds.), *Novum Testamentum Graece* 28, my translations.

(*Gen* 5:23–24). Aside from his age and his lineage as the son of Jared and the father of Methuselah and other “sons and daughters,” little is said about Enoch in *Genesis* (*Gen* 5:18–24). Enoch is the only figure quoted in the Catholic Epistles. This may appear unusual beside the common Pauline citation formulation in which scriptural quotations are “spoken” by scriptural figures. In the Catholic Epistles this is not standard practice so the Enoch example is unique. The quotation of Enoch as a prophet *par excellence* is particularly notable considering that the text of *1 Enoch* is now-paracanonical in all but the Ethiopian and Eritrean Orthodox canons. The claim that Enoch is “seventh from Adam” is also found in *Genesis*, the *Gospel of Luke*, and *Jude* (*Gen* 5:1–18; *Luke* 3:37–38; *Jude* 14).

1.2 Enoch in the Catholic Epistles

1 Enoch serves for *Jude* as a text that supports the condemnation of ungodly opponents, polemically emphasized by the use of ἀσεβεία and related words four times in just one verse (*Jude* 15).¹⁰ Through Enoch, *Jude* confirms the condemnation “written about long ago” of his opponents’ ungodliness in both practice and speech (*Jude* 4).¹¹ In *Hebrews*, as in *Genesis*, Enoch is an exemplar of faith, having been “taken from this life, so that he did not experience death” (*Heb* 11:5), whereas for *Jude* he is a prophetic voice who testifies to the destruction awaiting “ungodly sinners”—exemplified, as we will see in the next chapter, by the wilderness generation, the sinful angels, Sodom and Gomorrah, Balaam, Cain, and Korah, who help also to characterize the false teachers against whom the letter is levelled. The text of Enoch’s prophecy in *Jude* is also altered such that it refers to Jesus, implying that the prophecy is fulfilled: the future tense is changed to the aorist in Greek and “he” becomes κύριος.¹²

¹⁰ For more on Enoch in *Jude* and *1 Enoch* as scripture, see Asale, *1 Enoch as Christian Scripture*, esp. 23–57.

¹¹ Nienhuis and Wall, *Shaping and Shape*, 234.

¹² Charlesworth, *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha and the New Testament*, 73. Charlesworth compared *Jude*’s Greek to the Aramaic, Ethiopic, and versions found in the Codex Panopolitanus and Pseudo-Cyprian.

By titling Enoch as “seventh from Adam,” a traditional title found also throughout parabiblical literature, *Jude* establishes that Enoch predates the sinful angels who trespassed the heavenly boundary to sleep with human women (*Gen* 6:1–4), as the latter are contemporaries of Noah, the fourth generation after Enoch (*Gen* 5:21–32).¹³ In line with *Jude*’s use of Enoch and the sinful angels, or the Watchers, Falk notes with regard to the disappearance of Enoch that, “Jared’s son Enoch goes to live among the angels, creating balance: angels descend to cohabit with humans, a human goes to live among angels.”¹⁴ While *Jude* does not cite this tradition specifically, the letter does emphasize the juxtaposition of reversals: human desire for angels (Sodom and Gomorrah) and angels’ desire for humans (the Watchers), which also serve as scriptural exempla along with Enoch in *Jude*.

Luke mentions Enoch in the lineage of Jesus, leading back to Adam as “the son of God” (*Luke* 3:37–38). *Hebrews*, in a reflection of the Septuagint, says that, “by faith,” Enoch was changed, or translated (μετατίθημι), “so that he would not see death, and was no more,” having pleased God (*Heb* 11:5). Aside from *Jude* these are the only mentions of Enoch in the New Testament, where he appears just as opaque as in both the Septuagint and the Masoretic versions of *Genesis*. However, parabiblical tradition, particularly *1 Enoch*, expands considerably on this “canonically” ambiguous figure.

1.3 Enoch in Parabiblical Literature

Jude’s citation of *1 Enoch* has proven to be an interesting conundrum for biblical research. Enochic tradition permeates the entire letter of *Jude*, not only this particular example: as Robinson argues, the text of *1 Enoch* serves as “the thematic and structural backbone” to the

¹³ Joseph, “Seventh from Adam,” 473. And cf. *Jub.* 7:39, in which Enoch also “testified” to his sons and grandsons; *Lev. Rab.* 29:11, which notes that “all the sevenths are beloved,” using Enoch as the example of the seventh generation.

¹⁴ Falk, *Parabiblical Texts*, 44. Falk also notes that *Jubilees* includes the pun that Jared, tied to the word for “to descend,” (יָרַד) is named as such because “in his days, the angels of the Lord descended on the earth,” so Enoch’s father’s name is an allusion to the descent of the Watchers (*Jub* 4:15).

entire letter of Jude.¹⁵ The obvious familiarity with much of *I Enoch*, not only *I Enoch* 1:9, is problematic for those wishing to preserve the full sufficiency of the now-canonical Old Testament alone. That *Jude* attributes a quotation directly to Enoch suggests the author viewed *I Enoch*, or at least *the Book of the Watchers*, as authentically authored by Enoch and akin to other revealed ancient prophecies.¹⁶ The quotation also indicates a reliance on *I Enoch* “while alluding in no way to *Gen* 6:1–4,” meaning *Jude* cites the now parabiblical tradition independently from the *Genesis* narrative.¹⁷ Aside from the ties to *I Enoch*, similar to the use of the *Testament of Moses*, *Jude* makes use of the figure of Enoch in an apocalyptic context—the inevitable, final judgment of the ungodly.¹⁸ The author clearly understands Enoch to be among the prophets, predicting the judgment to come, as he cites Enoch with the same force as if he were introducing any other Old Testament prophet.¹⁹

Enoch is perhaps the scriptural exemplar in the Catholic Epistles most obviously tied to now-paracanonical literature, given that *Jude*’s focus is not his old age and ascension, as in *Genesis*, but rather his *prophecy*, which is cited explicitly. Because of *Jude*’s citation, the text of *I Enoch* remains in a liminal position as an ambiguous, semi-canonical text, which is cited in the New Testament but is not held to be universally authoritative. Contrary to the “tradition of scholarly contempt” often associated with *Jude* and its perceived (un)usefulness, the letter plays a crucial role in the canonical process and its supposed boundaries.²⁰ *Jude* and *I Enoch* are caught in a cycle of authoritative mutual exclusivity: *Jude*’s use of *I Enoch* underwrote the

¹⁵ Robinson, “the Enoch Inclusio in Jude,” 212.

¹⁶ Reed, *Fallen Angels*, 105.

¹⁷ Reed, *Fallen Angels*, 106.

¹⁸ Charles, “Jude’s Use of Pseudepigraphical Source-Material,” 140.

¹⁹ Robinson, “The Enoch Inclusio in Jude,” 206; Moore, “Is Enoch Also among the Prophets?,” 504. Davids and Joseph both note Jude’s alteration of the Enochic citation, exchanging κύριος for Ἰησοῦς and its parallel to “predictions of the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ,” Davids, “Pseudepigrapha in the Catholic Epistles,” 241; Joseph, “Seventh from Adam,” 473.

²⁰ Bauckham, *Relatives*, 134–35; Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter*, xi; Charles, “Jude’s Use Pseudepigraphical Source-Material,” 130; Nienhuis and Wall, *Shaping and Shape*, 219; Rowston, “The Most Neglected Book,” 554–63.

authority of the figure of Enoch and the value of Enochic literature, but it also jeopardized *Jude*'s acceptance among the New Testament collection.

It would be an anachronism to label *Jude*'s use of Enoch as a scriptural exemplar as particularly unexpected, given the wide acceptance, for a time, of Enochic literature among early Christians. *Jude*'s role in the liminal position of *1 Enoch* led to a conflict among ancient ecclesiastical writers over the position of *Jude* and the definition of the canon itself. Enochic literature found favor with early Christian writers at least into the third century, including Irenaeus and Origen, though not among their Jewish rabbinic contemporaries, such that Tertullian "finds it plainly absurd" that Christians should adhere to negative Jewish opinions about prophetic literature such as *1 Enoch* and claims, as a decisive final note, that "Enoch possesses a testimony in the Apostle Jude" (*De cult. fem.* 3).²¹ However, as Hultin argues, "Those who wanted to use apocryphal works could and did continue to appeal to Jude's citation of Enoch, a citation made all the more rhetorically potent as the status of the canonical books was elevated."²² It was only after the "closure" of a Christian canon became a concern that Enochic literature is patently rejected—and attempts at closure *highlight* the authority of Enochic literature. Athanasias uses Enoch as a prime example of apocryphal literature, arguing that "no Scripture existed before Moses," and that "simple folk" have been led astray to believe otherwise (*Epist. fest.* 39.21)—and yet he accepts *Jude* unhesitatingly, and without mentioning its citation of the supposed apocryphon of *1 Enoch*.²³

²¹ Hultin, "Jude's Citation of 1 Enoch," 116. Priscillian of Avila will later use *Jude* as his "star witness" that the apocrypha cited by scripture should also be used (*Lib. Fid.* 49.29–50.5), Hultin 118. Hultin notes that it is not a "foregone conclusion" that Enoch was excluded from Christian scripture, since it remains canonical for the Ethiopian Orthodox Church, 119. See also Asale, *1 Enoch as Christian Scripture*; Joseph, "Seventh from Adam," 470–71.

²² Hultin, "Jude's Citation of 1 Enoch," 118, emphasis original. Hultin's also notes that, "[s]omewhat ironically, the very invention of the canon served to amplify the significance and force of Jude's citation of 1 Enoch. It is striking, in this regard, that Barnabas's citations of 1 Enoch are nowhere mentioned in defense of 1 Enoch (or in defense of Jude). It appears that the very creation of a 'closed' canon created a sort of 'wormhole' that connected the canon itself to those apocryphal texts that a strictly delimited list of sacred books was meant to keep out," 120.

²³ Brakke, "A New Fragment," 61; Hultin, "Jude's Citation of 1 Enoch," 117.

The relationship between *Jude* and *1 Enoch* remains a fraught one, especially for the canonical process. As Hultin notes, it calls attention to the ancient concern over authenticity, the consistency of Enochic literature with Christian belief, and Jewish notions of the canon.²⁴ In other words, in reading *Jude* one is reminded that the canon is not as “closed” as Athanasius or other advocates of an explicitly delineated set of Christian scriptures would have it. The exemplar of Enoch serves not only as an illustrative example of prophecy, but also as a liminal figure highlighting the porous canonical boundary.

2. NOAH

...[the sinful angels] were disobedient at the time when the patience of God was waiting in the days of Noah, while the ark was being built, through which a few (that is, eight) souls were saved by means of water, which also corresponds to (ἀντίτυπον) baptism... (*1 Pet* 3:20-21)

...and [God] did not spare the ancient world, but he preserved Noah, a preacher of righteousness, with seven others (ὄγδοον Νῶε), having brought a flood upon the world of the ungodly. (*2 Pet* 2:5)

2.1 Noah in the Hebrew Bible

Noah is introduced in *Genesis* 6, said to be “a righteous man, blameless in his generation,” and “Noah walked with God” (*Gen* 6:9). This is the first identification of a person as “righteous” in *Genesis*, despite Noah’s post-deluge “drunken sprawl,” which tends not to be included in his later characterization (*Gen* 6:9; 9:20–24). Apart from Noah, “God saw how corrupt the earth had become” and decided to destroy it. The “sons of God,” (the sinful angels of *Jude* and *2 Peter*) had trespassed their heavenly realm and conceived children with human women (*Gen* 6:12–13). God makes a covenant with Noah, promising to save him and his family, and Noah,

²⁴ Hultin, “Jude’s Citation of 1 Enoch,” 113. See also VanderKam, “1 Enoch, Enochic Motifs, and Enoch in Early Christian Literature,” 35–36.

his wife, his sons Shem, Ham, Japheth, and their wives are all saved together in the ark built by Noah (*Gen* 6:18; 7:7, 13, 23; 8:16, 18).

2.2 Noah in the Catholic Epistles

1 Peter explicitly connects the salvation of Noah within the ark “through water” to the creedal progression present in the pericope: Jesus’ death (*1 Pet* 3:18), descent (v19), resurrection (v21), and ascension (v22). Noah and his family’s salvation through water, then, corresponds to the resurrection of Jesus from the dead—they are not saved *from* the waters but *through* them, or, more pointedly, *by means of* them. It is the event of salvation through the floodwaters that is illustrative for *1 Peter*, though Noah is named as the representative scriptural figure in association with that event. Specific context is given: Noah and his family’s salvation in the ark happened during the time that the “spirits in prison” were disobedient, so both *1 Peter* and *2 Peter* associate the positive and negative scriptural exempla of Noah and the sinful angels. The association between the suffering and death of Christ and the baptism symbolized by Noah and his family’s salvation through the ark may have an underlying connection to the Psalms. Reicke notes that language of drowning is often used in the Psalter to describe suffering, and that Jesus invokes similar language in the garden of Gethsemane just before his death (cf. *Pss* 42:7; 69:1–4, 12–15; 88:7, 17; 128:1; *Matt* 26:38).²⁵ In linking Jesus’s redemptive suffering (*1 Pet* 3:18–19) and the ark as a symbol of baptism (*1 Pet* 3:20–21), the Petrine author exploits the flexibility of *διά*. According to *2 Peter*, for example, the world was formed out of and through (*διά*) water, by which (*διά*) the world was also flooded; creation came out of the waters of chaos and was undone by those same waters in the Flood (*2 Pet* 3:5, 6).

²⁵ B. Reicke, *The Disobedient Spirits and Christian Baptism: A study of 1 Pet. III. 19 and its Context* (ASNU 13; Copenhagen: Ejnar Munksgaard, 1946), 142–47; see also Sargent, *Written to Serve*, 136–41.

Unlike *1 Peter*, *2 Peter* casts Noah himself more specifically as an exemplary figure. He serves as a contrasting positive figure to the negative example of the sinful angels who transgressed the heavenly boundary to engage in inappropriate sexual conduct with human women. *2 Peter*'s concern over false teaching, particularly in chapter two, also helps to provide context for the emphasis on Noah as a "preacher of righteousness," not only as the builder and benefactor of salvation through the ark.

Jensen argues that Noah, as the "eighth" and as a "preacher," is tied to *2 Peter*'s exegesis of *Genesis* 4:26, and an explicit reference to Noah as the eighth person to proclaim the Lord's name since Enosh (*Gen* 5:6–32). Jensen appears to avoid referring to Jewish paracanonical literature, noting only that the tradition of Noah as a preacher was "already established in the first century CE" and that "Noah as a 'proclaimer of righteousness' is not an unfair inference drawn from the Genesis narrative."²⁶ He goes to some lengths to argue that Noah should be counted as the eighth from Enosh (rather than from Seth) in *Genesis* 4, that the phrase "call on the name of the Lord" implies preaching, and that by extension Noah was the eighth to do this according to *Genesis* 4. Hafemann argues similarly that the reference to Noah's preaching in *2 Peter* 2:5 is part of "a trajectory already reflected within the canon."²⁷ While he does mention *1 Enoch* and *Jubilees*, he maintains that Noah is a "preacher" of God's righteousness, and that this emphasis on divine action "is further highlighted by the fact that the figure of Noah is not embellished in order to communicate an ideology not found in the biblical narrative" or "postbiblical tradition."²⁸ With regard to Jensen, Noah as the "eighth" makes more sense in connection with *1 Peter* 3:21, in which eight souls are said to have been saved in the Ark, along with references in *Genesis* to the people included in the Ark totalling eight, and Jensen's explanation makes no mention of *1 Peter*. More decisively, the *Genesis*

²⁶ Jensen, "Noah, the Eighth Proclaimer of Righteousness," 462.

²⁷ Hafemann, "'Noah, the Preacher of (God's) Righteousness,'" 317.

²⁸ Hafemann, "'Noah, the Preacher of (God's) Righteousness,'" 318. Moreover, what is "postbiblical" for *Genesis* is not necessarily the case for *2 Peter*.

narrative does not include a reference to Noah preaching while many now-noncanonical texts do.

2.3 Noah in Parabiblical Literature

Contrary to Jensen's accounting of *2 Peter's* reference to Noah as "the eighth" and as a "preacher of righteousness" as an explicit reference to *Genesis* 4, both of these references can be more easily explained by shared tradition with now-paracanonical material. The *Sybilline Oracles* note that Noah preached repentance to those who would die in the flood, but he preached "in vain to a lawless generation" (cf. *Syb. Or.* 1:150–195).²⁹ After the ark had landed, Noah, "the most righteous of men, came out eighth" (*Syb. Or.* 1:281).³⁰ Noah also preached repentance according to *1 Clement* (7:6) and according to *Jubilees* he taught his sons after the flood: "Noah began to command his grandsons with ordinances and commandments and all of the judgments which he knew. And he bore witness to his sons so that they might do justice..." (*Jub* 7:20, see vv.20–39).³¹ One of the reasons for the flood, according to the same passage, was the "fornication wherein the Watchers against the law of their ordinances went whoring after the daughters of men..." (*Jub* 7:21).³² In *Jubilees*, the standing of Noah is increased such that he becomes a preacher, and so also is the wrongdoing of the sons of God expanded: as Reed points out, cannibalism is added to their sins.³³ Noah was also upheld by other Jewish and Greco-Roman writers as a paradigm of virtue, a righteous man, and, according to Falk, they described him as a "preacher to his generation, a prophet anticipating Moses, and a man of fervent prayer."³⁴

²⁹ Collins, transl., "Sybilline Oracles," 339.

³⁰ Collins, transl., "Sybilline Oracles," 341.

³¹ Wintermute, trans., "Jubilees," 69–70.

³² *Ibid.*, 70.

³³ Reed, "Retelling Biblical Retellings," 318.

³⁴ Falk, *Parabiblical Texts*, 54. Cf. *Wis* 10:4; *Sir* 44:17; *1 En* 67:1; *Jub* 5:19; 10:17; *Sib. Or.* 1.125; Josephus, *Ant.* 1.75; *Heb* 11:7; *Gen. Rab.* 30:1.

Given the wide reception of Noah as a preacher throughout a range of literature, it is therefore unnecessary to finagle out of *Genesis* a vague reference to Noah's preaching—and Jensen's attempt, for example, reveals not a clearer understanding of Noah but rather an anxiety about the reception of now-paracanonical material in the New Testament. Noah is a stable figure, representative of the time of the flood; but he is also a malleable one, reflecting not only tradition from *Genesis* but also other now-paracanonical tradition about his preaching. While *1 Peter*'s reference to Noah makes more use of the Ark as an illustrative symbol, *2 Peter*'s characterization of Noah as a “preacher of righteousness” provides yet another tether between the Catholic Epistles' scriptural exempla and paracanonical tradition.

3. ABRAHAM

Was not Abraham our father justified by his works, when he offered Isaac his son upon the altar? See, his faith worked together with his works and by works his faith was perfected. And the scripture was fulfilled saying, “Abraham believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness, and he was called a friend of God.” You see, then, that a person is justified by their works, not by faith alone. (*Jas* 2:21–23)³⁵

3.1 Abraham in the Hebrew Bible

Abra(ha)m's story in *Genesis* is a lengthy narrative (*Gen* 11:27–25:11). Between his call in chapter 12 and his death in chapter 25, Abram lies about his wife being his sister—twice (*Gen* 12:10–20; 20:1–18); parts from his nephew Lot and then goes to battle against the kings in the land where Lot settled (*Gen* 13–14); makes a covenant with God while he is asleep (*Gen* 15); at Sarai's prompting, conceives an heir with one of his servant women, Hagar, who is later banished along with her son Ishmael (*Gen* 16; 21:8–20); Abraham receives a name change, as

³⁵ Note the ties between *Jas* 2:21–24; *Rom* 3:28 and 4:1–3, 22; and *Gal* 2:16. For a more thorough examination of the exemplar of Abraham in *James*, see Foster, *Exemplars*, 59–103.

does Sarah, and he and the males of his household must be circumcised and he is promised another son (*Gen 17*); he hosts angelic beings who then destroy Sodom and Gomorrah, sparing only Lot and his family (*Gen 18–19*); Isaac, the child of promise, is born; and then Abraham is asked to sacrifice him (*Gen 21–22*); Sarah dies (*Gen 23*); Abraham blesses a union between Isaac and Rebekah (*Gen 24*); and he dies (*Gen 25:1–11*).

Two key passages are reflected in *James*: when God makes a covenant with Abraham and when Abraham offers Isaac as a sacrifice. When God commanded Abraham to offer up his son Isaac (ἀναφέρω, *Gen 22:2 LXX*), the patriarch responded in immediate compliance, saddling his donkey, making preparations, and setting out on a journey to the place God told him (*Gen 22:3 LXX*). He later bound Isaac and laid him on the altar (θυσιαστήριον), *Gen 22:9 LXX* but was interrupted by an angel, with the knife mid-air, raised to slay his son, and he immediately offered up (ἀναφέρω) a ram in Isaac’s place (*Gen 22:10–13 LXX*).

3.2 Abraham in the Catholic Epistles

Readers are exhorted to “see” and “behold” the example of Abraham, who serves for *James* as an illustration of the indivisible bond between faith and works (*Jas 2:22, 23*). Following a warning that faith without works is useless (*Jas 2:20*), two actions are attributed to Abraham: he offered up his son on the altar (*Jas 2:21*) and he believed God (*Jas 2:22*). In accordance with his active faith, two passive pronouncements are made: Abraham was credited with righteousness and he was called a friend of God (*Jas 2:23*). The near-sacrifice of Isaac is presented by *James* as the “culminating demonstration” of the righteous faith ascribed to Abraham in *Genesis 15:6*.³⁶ The plural reference to his works alongside only one scriptural example may show *James*’ knowledge of the various trials of Abraham detailed in *Jubilees* and elsewhere in pseudepigraphal literature, or the author may be satisfied with references

³⁶ Nienhuis, *Not by Paul Alone*, 116; Allison, *James*, 490.

elsewhere to his hospitality, as Abraham's is well known (e.g. *Jas* 1:27; 2:1-9).³⁷ For *James*, Abraham's belief is confirmed by his willingness to do what he is told, contrary to Paul's presentation of the same story in *Romans* 4, where Abraham's righteousness is pronounced on the basis of his *faith*—even, as Paul emphasizes, prior to his circumcision.³⁸ While Abraham's works are plural, the singular “scripture” to which *James* refers is a conflation of *Genesis* 15:6 and other traditions in which Abraham is called God's friend, including in *2 Chronicles* 20:7, *Isaiah* 41:8, and throughout the *Testament of Abraham*, about which more will be said below.

In contrast to *James*, the many New Testament Gospel uses of Abraham almost entirely reference him not as an exemplar of faith or works, but as a genealogical or spiritual identity marker, referring to “the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob,” (e.g. *Matt* 22:32; *Mark* 12:26) or to descendants of Abraham (e.g. *Matt* 1:1-2, 17; *Luke* 1:55, 13:16; *John* 8:39–58). While *James* does introduce the patriarch as “Abraham our father,” his function here is rather as an illustrative exemplar of faith-works, likely interacting with the Pauline presentation of the patriarch's faith in *Romans*—not as a representative of Jewish identity or history.³⁹ This suggests distance from the interest present in other texts in Abraham as an identity marker as well as *James*'s interpretive development in the interaction with the epistles of Paul, particularly *Romans* and *Galatians*.

For Paul, Abraham represents justification by faith, which enables the inclusion of Gentiles with Jews in the family of Abraham.⁴⁰ As Barclay puts it, Abraham can be read “not as a scriptural proof of a theological concept but as the founding progenitor of a historical

³⁷ Davids, “Pseudepigrapha in the Catholic Epistles,” 230; Ward, “The Works of Abraham,” 288.

³⁸ Nienhuis, *Not by Paul Alone*, 116; Allison, *James*, 490. *James*' use of Abraham, as commonly noted, is formulated as a response to Abraham's Pauline context in *Romans* 4 and *Galatians* 3: e.g. Nienhuis, *Not by Paul Alone*, 99–121, and see especially his third chapter, “Reading *James* as a Canon Conscious Pseudepigraph,” 163–231; on the *James*-Paul relationship, see also Mitchell, “The Letter of *James* as a Document of Paulinism?” 75–98.

³⁹ Contra Foster, *Exemplars*, 59–193 on Abraham, concluding that *James*'s Abraham is essentially Jewish.

⁴⁰ Tilling, “Abraham in the New Testament Letters,” 128. While the title would suggest Tilling treats Abraham in all the New Testament letters, he deals only with Abraham in Paul (*Romans*, *Galatians*, and *Hebrews*).

family”—Abraham as an individual is not the key.⁴¹ Furthermore, “[a]s for many other Jews, the Abraham story defines for Paul both the origin and the shape of the narrative of Israel,” but, as Paul emphasizes, Abraham’s righteousness is pronounced prior to his circumcision, “that distinctive mark” which serves as a sign of his faith (*Rom* 4:10–11).⁴² In contrast, for *James* Abraham functions less as an essentially Jewish, familial, or representative figure and more as an exemplary illustration of the letter’s concern over the integrity that results from the synergy of faith and works. *James*’s connection to Pauline arguments regarding faith and works in this section has resulted in the tendency to treat *James*’s use of Abraham primarily in light of the Pauline parallel. This has created a James-versus-Paul vacuum, detaching *James* 2:14–26 from the rest of the letter, isolating Abraham from his exemplary counterparts.⁴³ It is not that James is *not* likely responding to Paul here, but rather that in making use of scriptural exempla Abraham also contributes to *James*’ rhetorical strategy of exemplarity overall—it is not *only* of interest that *James* interacts with Paul. For *James*, Abraham acts as an illustrative figure whose faith-works make him an example antithetical to the double nature of those who doubt (literally, double-souled, δίψυχος; v.8, cf. *Jas* 1:2–12) and those who hear the word but do not respond to it with action (*Jas* 1:19–27). His juxtaposition alongside Rahab, who will be discussed below, also serves to underscore his illustrative, rather than representative, role.

3.3 Abraham in Parabiblical Literature

Abraham is a popular figure in now-parabiblical literature, from *Jubilees* and the *Testament of Abraham* to his minor mention in the *Second Treatise of the Great Seth* (NHC VII,2), in which he and other patriarchs are said to be a “laughingstock” as “counterfeit fathers” (62,34–35).⁴⁴

⁴¹ Barclay, *Paul and the Gift*, 349.

⁴² Barclay, *Paul and the Gift*, 350–52.

⁴³ Allison’s rehearsal of the history of interpretation of James 2:14–26, for example, exhibits a tendency toward a James-Paul vacuum, *James*, 426–53.

⁴⁴ See Riley, “Introduction to VII,2 *Second Treatise of the Great Seth*,” 129–99. While Abraham is mentioned, only Moses is said to be the one “having been named ‘the Friend,’” (NHC VII 62, 34–35, presumably, of God). In

As with the ties between *James* and now-canonical literature, however, we can narrow down the possible intertraditional ties between *James* and parabiblical literature through the specificity of *James*'s characterization of Abraham. In the case of parabiblical literature, the tradition that Abraham was called God's friend is of particular interest, as this does not occur in *Genesis* or even in *Romans*—only in *2 Chronicles* 20:7 and *Isaiah* 41:8 in the now-canonical Old Testament. It occurs much more widely in now-noncanonical literature. In the former, Abraham is called God's "beloved" (בְּהָא, ἀγαπάω), not simply his friend. However, repeatedly in the *Testament of Abraham* he is called God's friend, using φίλος, as in *James*.⁴⁵ In *Jubilees* 19:9, he is also called God's friend, using another word (גִּיּוֹר).⁴⁶ In the *Apocalypse of Abraham*, likewise, which survives only in Old Slavonic, Abraham is called God's friend (*Apoc. Ab.* 9:6; 10:5).⁴⁷ *James* reflects both Pauline material, especially *Romans*, as well as the widely held tradition that Abraham was called God's friend. While the reference in *James* to Abraham's friendship with God may not stem directly from one of these now-parabiblical passages, the tradition was a common one, particularly in Greek, and *James* participates in Abraham's traditioning by receiving and preserving this tradition.

Abraham and Job, who both make an appearance in *James*, were often associated, leading one scholar to coin the combined name "Jobraham" to describe the reading of these figures "in tandem... for literary, theological, and exegetical comparison."⁴⁸ Not only is Abraham used to rehabilitate the Septuagint figure of Job (which can be seen in the *Testament of Job*, as well), but the Job figure is used too: "the hermeneutical assimilation of these two figures into an

the Masoretic and Septuagint texts, Moses is called God's friend once, while Abraham is twice, cf. *Ex* 33:11, Moses, עֵר, φίλος; *2 Chron* 20:7, Abraham, בְּהָא, ἀγαπάω; *Isa* 41:8, Abraham, בְּהָא, ἀγαπάω).

⁴⁵ *TAbr* (Recension A) 1:6 (ἀγαπάω); 2:3; 4:7; 8:2, 4; 9:7; 15:12, 13, 14; 16:5, 9; 20:14 (φίλος).

⁴⁶ Also in *Jubilees*, Abraham's test is not initiated by God, as in *Gen* 22, but by "Prince Mastema," and details of Job's testing are incorporated into Abraham's; see Ellis, *The Hermeneutics of Divine Testing*, esp. chapter 10, "The Epistle of James and a Hermeneutic of Testing," 185–236; Davids, "The Pseudepigrapha in the Catholic Epistles," 229–30.

⁴⁷ On *Apoc Abr* 9:6, the translator glosses *Isa* 41:8 and *Jas* 2:23, but it is unclear what is present here in the Old Slavonic, see R. Ruinkiewicz, trans., "Apocalypse of Abraham," 693.

⁴⁸ Ellis, *The Hermeneutics of Divine Testing*, 216–36.

anthropologically and cosmologically idealised ‘Jobraham’ narrative provided a biblical example of both appropriate human responses to trials as well as a theologically acceptable cosmic drama which neither narrative could offer in isolation,” a solution which also, Ellis argues, fits with the “theological sensibilities” of *James*.⁴⁹ The version of Job’s trials told in the *Testament of Job*, as we will see, offers a more “robust cosmology” that provides a solution to the problem of Abraham’s test in which God is responsible for the trial.⁵⁰ *James* therefore presents a sophisticated reworking of both Abraham and Job as mutually-informing scriptural exemplars situated within a network of (para)biblical texts such as the *Testament of Job* and the *Testament of Abraham*. This again displays both the stability, as seen in the common use of Abraham as a key scriptural exemplar, and the malleability of the Abraham figure to embody particular narrative representations of his characterization.

4. SARAH

For in this way also the holy women of the past, hoping in God, used to adorn themselves [with a gentle and quiet spirit], being subject to their own husbands—just as Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him “master,” of whom you become her children, doing good and not being frightened of any terror. (*1 Pet* 3:5–6)

4.1 Sarah in the Hebrew Bible

Though her characterization in *1 Peter* would seem to suggest a well-known tradition of Sarah’s humility and submission, just once in the now-canonical Old Testament does Sarah refer to Abraham as her master. In *Genesis* 18, Sarah overhears Abraham speaking with the three men who he met near the trees of Mamre. One of them tells him that in about a year’s

⁴⁹ Ellis, *The Hermeneutics of Divine Testing*, 216. Regarding the reliance on now-paracanonical material in *James*, Davids claims, “[s]o much is this the case that when James writes πειράζει δὲ αὐτὸς [θεὸς] οὐδένα (‘God tests no one’), he apparently feels no tension between this and Gen 22.1.” Davids, “The Use of the Pseudepigrapha in the Catholic Epistles,” 230.

⁵⁰ Ellis, *The Hermeneutics of Divine Testing*, 234.

time, Sarah will have a son, and she laughs skeptically to herself, saying, “now that I am old and my lord (κύριος μου) is also elderly?” (*Gen* 18:12 LXX; the MT has אדוני). God is not pleased with her response, demanding to know why she laughed (*Gen* 18:13–14). Afraid, Sarah lies in response: “I did not laugh,” but is told, “no, you did laugh” (*Gen* 18:15). When Isaac is born, he is named יצחק, because, Sarah says, God brought her laughter (קצח) and all who hear of it will laugh (קצח, *Gen* 21:6). The pun on laughter does not work in Greek—Isaac’s name is simply Ισαακ, and Sarah says all will rejoice (συγγέω) with her (*Gen* 21:6 LXX). Sarah is not deferring to Abraham’s authority as her husband in *Genesis* 18:12, but rather *mocking* the idea that they could have a son; this is not an illustration of Sarah’s modesty and humility as it is intended in *1 Peter*.

4.2 Sarah in the Catholic Epistles

Embedded within *1 Peter*’s “household code,” Sarah at first appears to function straightforwardly as an exemplary, respectful wife, obeying her husband and calling him “lord” or “master” (*1 Pet* 3:6). She is presented as both an ideal biblical wife and the matriarch of women like her in modesty and obedience. Immediately preceding *1 Peter*’s invocation of Sarah, the author refers to “holy women of the past” who had gentle and quiet spirits and remained subject to their husbands (*1 Pet* 3:5).

In a reading that undervalues both Sarah specifically and women in general, Sargent takes *1 Peter*’s characterization of Sarah for granted and asserts that she functions for Christian wives “not in the sense that Sarah prefigures their existence, but because she offers to Christian wives a means of participation in the people of God.”⁵¹ Kiley argues in contrast that “in the mind of the author of *1 Peter*, *Genesis* 12 and 20 form part of the unspoken background to this verse,” suggesting that Sarah’s submissiveness should be understood as having been drawn

⁵¹ Sargent, *Written to Serve*, 136.

from her *mistreatment* in *Genesis* 12 and 20, when Abraham twice lies about his relationship to Sarah, offering her first to Pharaoh and then to king Abimelech.⁵² This is especially the case given the theme of persecution throughout *1 Peter*.⁵³ Misset-Van de Weg finds no evidence for Sarah's role as a submissive wife in *Genesis* and notes just one late Jewish source that exemplifies Sarah for her submissiveness, concluding that the possibility of rabbinic influence on *1 Peter* is unlikely.⁵⁴ Further, an image of Sarah emerges which is distinct from that of a silent, subservient wife when Abraham twice heeds Sarah's words or is told by God to do so (*Gen* 16:2; 21:12).⁵⁵ The second part of *1 Peter*'s reference to Sarah, that "you have become her children," refers to a legacy: Sarah's "daughters" carry on the family name. Just as Abraham's heirs in faith are part of the legacy of God's chosen people, so Sarah's children are her heirs not through biological connection but by common faith and practice. Misset-Van de Weg concludes that the author has independently composed his own version of Sarah in the style of parabiblical literature that depicts scriptural exemplars in unambiguously paraenetic ways in order to idealize her submissiveness for Christian marriage: "Sarah the matriarch was needed, together with the holy women of old, to situate women's submissiveness within the framework of a sacred tradition."⁵⁶ *1 Peter* casts Sarah as an ideal wife in the economy of the household code, distinct from her portrayal in *Genesis*.

4.3 Sarah in Parabiblical Literature

The singular instance of Sarah calling Abraham her "master" in the now-canonical Old Testament turns out to be an example not of submission but of mockery, but a few key examples of now-paracanonical works stand out in relation to Sarah's portrayal in *1 Peter*. For

⁵² M. Kiley, "Like Sarah" 689–92.

⁵³ Kiley, "Like Sarah," 691.

⁵⁴ Misset-Van de Weg, "Sarah Imagery in 1 Peter," 58–59, citing Midrash *Tanhuma* on Genesis 24.

⁵⁵ Misset-Van de Weg, "Sarah Imagery," 57; Sly, "1 Peter 3:6b," 127.

⁵⁶ Misset-Van de Weg, "Sarah Imagery," 57, 62.

one, Dorothy Sly suggests that *1 Peter* characterizes Sarah in accordance with the expectations of the Hellenistic household code, as reflected in the contemporary works of Philo and Josephus.⁵⁷ Troubled by the suggestion that Abraham should listen to Sarah, both writers “state explicitly that it is scandalous for a man to take orders from his wife.”⁵⁸ Josephus even claims scripture says, “[a] woman is inferior to her husband in all things. Let her therefore be obedient to him,” while Philo resorted to stripping Sarah of her womanhood or allegorizing her as Virtue or Wisdom, “even paramount virtue.”⁵⁹ Sly suggests, then, that the author of *1 Peter*, “subject to the same tensions” as Philo and Josephus, “has molded Sarah to the image of the ideal Hellenistic wife, even at the price of reversing the biblical record.”⁶⁰ Throughout the first- or second-century Christian paracanonical work the *Testament of Abraham*, Sarah refers to Abraham repeatedly as “my lord” (*TAbr* 5:12–13; 6:2, 4, 5, 8, etc.). Here, she is characterized as the ideal Christian wife, again written over her portrayal in *Genesis*. The author of *1 Peter* is therefore receiving the stable and consistent tradition of Sarah as Abraham’s wife and using her malleability to his advantage—he recasts her, like the *Testament of Abraham*, Philo, and Josephus, as an idealized submissive wife, while her characterization from *Genesis* fades.

5. LOT

And [God] rescued righteous Lot, who was distressed by lawless and lustful conduct, for the soul of that righteous man – seeing and hearing and dwelling among them day after day – was tormented by their lawless deeds. (*2 Pet* 2:7–8)

⁵⁷ Sly, “1 Peter 3:6b,” 126–29.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 127.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.* Cf. *On the Cherubim* 40–50, where key matriarchs are allegorized as virtues rather than as women, and on Sarah alone, *Cher.* 1, 7, 9, 10; *Life of Abraham* 3.244.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 129.

5.1 Lot in the Hebrew Bible

After finding out that Sodom and Gomorrah are due to be destroyed, Abraham bargains with God to spare the lives of a few righteous people among the corrupt cities (cf. *Gen* 18:23–33). Meanwhile, the men/angels who had spoken with Abraham previously arrive in town and are greeted by Lot, who invites them inside lest they spend the night in the town square (*Gen* 19:1–3). At night, men from the town surround Lot’s house and demand that Lot send the visitors out so that they can have sex with them (*Gen* 19:5). Eventually, Lot is pulled inside and the men/angels implore him to take his family and flee before they destroy the city (*Gen* 19:6–8). As Abraham earlier interceded for the few righteous of the cities, Lot pleads for them to spare the neighboring town of Zoar so that he and his family do not have to hide in the mountains—so they do (*Gen* 19:18–22). While Lot is never explicitly identified as “righteous” in *Genesis*, it seems he was included in Abraham’s plea: the men/angels whom Lot welcomed into his home for the night for protection from the men of the town do not simply tell him and his family to escape to safety, but actually take their hands and pull them there (*Gen* 19:16, 29).

Genesis 19 would seem to suggest that God spared Lot not due to his own righteousness but for Abraham’s sake, as God “remembered Abraham and he brought Lot out of the catastrophe...” (*Gen* 19:29). Alexander argues that *Genesis* 19 does in fact portray Lot in a positive light as a figure of hospitality, and it is this quality that becomes central to his righteousness in later literature, including *Ben Sira* and *1 Clement*.⁶¹ He further suggests that Lot is the focus of the narrative throughout chapters 18 and 19 and that Abraham had Lot in mind in his negotiation with God, a plea based not on their kinship, then, but on Lot’s righteousness.⁶² Bauckham similarly asserts that Jewish tradition interpreted Abraham’s plea as a reference to Lot.⁶³

⁶¹ Alexander, “Lot’s Hospitality,” 289–91.

⁶² Alexander, “Lot’s Hospitality,” 291.

⁶³ Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter*, 252. Cf. *Pirqe R. El.* 25; *Gen. Rab.* 49:13.

One scene does not generally feature in the characterization of Lot following the *Genesis* narrative: after he and his daughters left Zoar, the neighboring town to which they fled from Sodom, his daughters conspire to get their father drunk so that they can sleep with him since “there is no man around to give [them] children” (*Gen* 19:30–32). On two successive nights, they get him drunk and each takes her turn, producing two sons: Moab and Ben-Ammi, the fathers of the Moabites and Ammonites (*Gen* 19:36–38). Each time, it is stated that Lot was unaware of it when the daughters came and went (*Gen* 19:33, 35). This could not exactly be called “righteousness,” but the narrative reinforces that Lot was not at fault, vindicating him from blame for the conception of two later enemies of Israel.

5.2 Lot in the Catholic Epistles

Just as Noah serves as the positive counterpart to the sinful angels in *2 Peter*, Lot parallels Sodom and Gomorrah: Noah’s salvation is contrasted with the inevitable destruction of the trespassing sinful angels, while “righteous Lot,” rescued from fiery destruction and his lawless neighbors, is contrasted with the corrupt cities of Sodom and Gomorrah. The extended description of Lot’s agony over the surrounding lawlessness serves to emphasize the distinction between the righteous, who are delivered from harm, and the unrighteous, who are condemned to destruction.⁶⁴ Reese notes that no existing literature prior to *2 Peter* echoes Lot’s frustration over the wickedness around him.⁶⁵ The author’s exegesis of *Genesis* 19 may have led him to this conclusion, as Lot insists that the men/angels do not sleep in the town square, and later declares to the townsfolk, “[p]lease, my brothers, do not act wickedly (πονηρεύσθε)” when the men of the town, young and old, surround his house and demand to have sexual relations with the two men/angels inside (*Gen* 19:7). However, the choice of Lot, rather than Abraham,

⁶⁴ Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter*, 253.

⁶⁵ Reese, *2 Peter and Jude*, 152.

as the corresponding positive exemplar to Sodom and Gomorrah still appears to be a peculiar choice on the part of the author of *2 Peter*, as Lot is never explicitly identified (or, really, characterized) as righteous in *Genesis*. This becomes less puzzling with a look at now-parabiblical tradition.

5.3 Lot in Parabiblical Literature

Though it is unclear from *Genesis* that Lot was considered a righteous man, now-parabiblical literature is clearer on the issue—there is little ambiguity regarding Lot’s designation among the righteous. He is identified in *1 Clement* as having been saved from Sodom “through his hospitality (φιλοξενίαν) and godliness (εὐσέβεια),” while the cities around him burned (*1 Clem* 11:1). As we are also told in *Genesis*, Lot’s wife was not so lucky: she changed her mind and turned back, becoming a pillar of salt. She serves as a warning to the double-minded (δίψυχοι, *1 Clem* 11:2; cf. *Jas* 1:8, 4:8). In the *Wisdom of Solomon*, a deuterocanonical text in which a personified Wisdom is said to have participated in many scriptural events, Wisdom “rescued a righteous man when the ungodly were perishing; he was escaping the fire that descended on the five cities” and while Lot goes unnamed here it is likely to be him (*Wis.* 10:6). The portrait of Lot that emerges in the Catholic Epistles more closely matches his portrayal in paracanonical tradition.

6. MICHAEL THE ARCHANGEL

Likewise also [to the sinful angels and Sodom and Gomorra] these ones who dream indeed defile the flesh, reject the Lord’s authority, and blaspheme the glorious ones. But Michael the archangel, when disputing with the devil, argued about the body of Moses and did not dare to bring against him a judgment of blasphemy, but said “the Lord rebuke you!” (*Jude* 8–9)

6.1 Michael in the Hebrew Bible

Among the narrative exemplars referenced by *Jude*, and along with Enoch's prophecy, Michael is an outlier: the story detailed about him in *Jude* 8–9 is not present in the now-canonical Old Testament/Hebrew Bible. His role there is opaque at best. Barely mentioned, he appears to be an angel of protection, possibly the same obscure “chief prince” who is said to aid a heavenly messenger sent to Daniel (*Dan* 10:13, 21; 12:1). What is more, no one in the Old Testament argues with the devil regarding Moses's body; in fact, *Deuteronomy* declares that Moses was buried in Moab and no one knows where his grave is to this day (*Deut* 34:5–6)! Given the context of his characterization in *Jude*, following the death of Moses, I have placed him here between the examples of Lot and Rahab.

The closest verbal link with *Jude* 9b is *Zechariah* 3. Here, an “angel of the Lord” is said to rebuke the devil, who is standing ready to accuse Joshua (*Zech* 3:1–2).⁶⁶ The angel declares, as Michael does in *Jude*, “the Lord rebuke you” (ἐπιτιμήσαι κύριος ἐν σοί, *Zech* 3:2 LXX).⁶⁷ As a result of his minor role in the Hebrew Bible/Old Testament, Michael is the exemplar with the weakest connection to the now-canonical Old Testament found in the Catholic Epistles. This is particularly stark in comparison to the examples of Abraham (*Jas* 2:21–26) or Sodom and Gomorrah (*2 Pet* 2:6), whose narrative characterizations in the Catholic Epistles more obviously reflect the text of *Genesis*. Michael's argument with the devil can instead be reconstructed from now-parabiblical literature, particularly the *Assumption* or *Ascension of Moses*.

⁶⁶ Or, possibly to execute him, see Stokes, “Not over Moses' Dead Body,” 200–202.

⁶⁷ B*^{vid} Ψ 1739 all list the textual variant ἐν σοί in *Jude* 9b, bringing the text more closely in line with *Zech* 3:2 LXX.

6.2 Michael in the Catholic Epistles

Though he plays only a minor role in the Hebrew Bible, Michael is not simply mentioned in passing in *Jude*. A story is recounted about a conversation between him and the devil. Unlike the sinful angels, who trespassed the heavenly boundary and descended to the earth to have inappropriate relations with human women, Michael knew his rightful place in the scheme of divine authority: he did not dare to pronounce judgment against the devil but invoked the Lord's judgment instead. While *Jude*'s opponents slander the "glorious ones," claiming for themselves a position of unwarranted authority, Michael refrains from slandering *even* the devil, mindful of the singular authority of God. It is this awareness of divine hierarchy that, for *Jude*, makes Michael exemplary.⁶⁸ As Dochhorn has pointed out, *Jude* 9 can be considered the epistle's center point—its definitive example.⁶⁹ Spitaler similarly asserts that *Jude* 9 is the apex of a chiasmic structure highlighting Michael's rightful deference to God, framed by instances of divine judgment in verses 4 (the condemnation of the "certain individuals" who snuck in among *Jude*'s readers) and 14–15 (the prophecy of Enoch pronouncing judgment on the ungodly).⁷⁰

Jude's accusation against false teachers of being "dreamers" (ἐνὸπνιαζόμενοι, v. 8) is also illuminating, as false prophets in Jewish scriptures are similarly accused of dreaming up messages to speak for God.⁷¹ While ἐνὸπνιάζω does not carry an explicitly negative connotation, the force of *Jude*'s argument lies in the false teachers' self-claimed authority to speak for the divine; it is all the more absurd that *Jude*'s human opponents blaspheme the "glorious ones" (δοξαί, *Jude* 8).

Michael and the devil's "mythological argument" takes place, along with the transgression of the sinful angels (*Jude* 6), in "the metaphysical domain."⁷² Implicit in *Jude* is

⁶⁸ Spitaler, "Doubt or Dispute," 221. See Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter*, 61 for a similar argument.

⁶⁹ Dochhorn, "Ein starkes Stück Schrift," 186.

⁷⁰ Spitaler, "Doubt or Dispute," 207.

⁷¹ ἐνὸπνιαζόμενος: *Deut* 13:1-3; *Jer* 23:16-40.

⁷² Spitaler, "Doubt or Dispute," 207.

a war in the spiritual realm between negative angelic figures – the Watchers of *I Enoch* and sinful angels of *Jude* 6 – and positive angelic figures such as Michael, who knew their place in the heavenly realm and interceded on behalf of human beings (cf. *TDan* 6:2; *I En* 40:6). *Jude*'s portrayal of the conflict between his manipulative opponents and his vulnerable readers, then, is of an apocalyptic and eschatological flavor; the earthly conflict has a corresponding spiritual one.⁷³

6.3 Michael in Parabiblical Literature

The spiritual forces in play, however, are more reflective of now-parabiblical tradition than the Hebrew Bible, and some ancient ecclesiastical writers approved of *Jude* particularly for the credibility it lent to texts such as *I Enoch* and the *Assumption of Moses*. Even aside from *Jude*'s reference to Michael, Bauckham argues the author's "use of Jewish apocryphal works is at least as extensive as his use of the OT" and that in addition he was likely familiar with other Jewish paraenetic and haggadic tradition.⁷⁴ Despite *Jude*'s brevity, two verses cite, and much of the remaining text arguably alludes to, the text of *I Enoch*, for example. Robinson has even argued that *I Enoch* serves as the "thematic and structural backbone" of the entire letter of *Jude*.⁷⁵ Charles has also detailed *Jude*'s use of pseudepigraphal material as an explicit literary strategy, arguing that "[t]he writer moves freely within the world of Jewish apocalyptic thought, a reflection of the theological-literary milieu out of which his readers more than likely come."⁷⁶ There is no shortage of linkages to now-paracanonical material in *Jude*.

⁷³ Also on Michael the archangel, *Jude*, and the New Testament, see Rodenbiker, "Disputing with the Devil."

⁷⁴ Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter*, 7.

⁷⁵ Robinson, "The Enoch Inclusio in *Jude*," 212.

⁷⁶ Charles, *Literary Strategy in the Epistle of Jude*, 164 and chapter 5, "The Use of Extrabiblical Source Material in *Jude*," 128–66; see also Charles, "Jude's Use of Pseudepigraphical Source-Material as Part of a Literary Strategy," 130–45.

In contrast to his opaque presence in the Hebrew Bible, Michael plays a more definitive role in what is variously called the *Testament*, *Assumption*, or *Ascension of Moses*, a part of a testamentary work in which Moses, before his death, passes down wisdom to Joshua about the leadership of Israel.⁷⁷ In the *Assumption*, Michael serves as a chief messenger and mediator between God and humanity. The conflict may be over the devil's accusation against Moses for having murdered an Egyptian (cf. *Exod* 2:11–15), making him undeserving of a proper burial, or that Moses's fleshly body cannot ascend to heaven.⁷⁸ Other such accounts of conflict between an angel and the devil that expand the now-canonical text are extant, including one in which Satan tries to ensure that Isaac is sacrificed (cf. *Jub* 17:15–18:16).⁷⁹ The claim that the devil may have wanted Moses' body in order to make it an idol for the people of Israel to worship may also be an attempt to explain the secret location of Moses's grave at the end of *Deuteronomy*.⁸⁰

The *Assumption* is a fragmentary text and, while its extant form does not include the Michael/devil conflict, ancient references to both the *Assumption* and *Jude*'s use of the Michael example offer evidence that it did indeed contain such a story. Testamentary texts typically include a scene of the death and burial of their subject (*TAbr*, *TJob*), and while references to Moses' death and body can be found throughout the *Testament*, the fragmentary ending does not preserve the narrative, suggesting that the lost ending would contain the events of Moses's death and burial and/or his assumption (either bodily or otherwise) into heaven (cf. *TMos* 1:15–

⁷⁷ Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter*, excursus "The Background and Source of Jude 9," 65–76; Dochhorn, "Ein starkes Stück Schrift," 180–81; Davids, *The Letters of 2 Peter and Jude*, 59–61. See also the 9th-cent *Stichometry of Nicephorus*, in which the *Assumption* directly follows the *Testament*, but is given its own stichometric numbering; and Reed, "The Afterlives of New Testament Apocrypha," 410, which notes that this stichometry presents the first "systematic distinction" between apocrypha of the Old and New Testaments.

⁷⁸ See Stokes, "Not over Moses' Dead Body," 206; Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter*, 73–76. On the angel Michael in other now-paracanonical material cf. *1 En* 20:5; *Life of Adam and Eve* 12-15; 21-22; 28:3-29:1; 43; 46:2-48:3; 56-57; *TAbr* 4–20.

⁷⁹ Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter*, 65; He also cites *Yal. Rub.* 43:3, which identifies the angel in the sacrifice of Isaac story as Michael. See also Stokes, "Not over Moses' Dead Body," 203, 205.

⁸⁰ Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter*, 73.

16; 10:11–12; 11:5–8).⁸¹ This, along with references in other ancient sources to the burial of Moses and the Michael/devil conflict that ensued, citing the *Assumption*, would seem to indicate that the *Assumption* may comprise at least a portion of the lost ending of the *Testament*.⁸²

Ancient sources further corroborate *Jude*'s reliance on such a text. Origen and Clement of Alexandria explicitly link *Jude* to the *Assumption*, referring to Michael's debate with the devil over Moses's body (Clement, *Frag 2 on Jude*; Origen, *de Princ* 3.2.1). Dochhorn argues that *Jude* functions for Origen and Clement of Alexandria to legitimize the use of the *Assumption*, particularly on the issues of pneumatology and angelology.⁸³ Didymus the Blind, writing on *Jude*, gives the link to Michael as the reason some "take exception to the present epistle" and to the *Assumption*.⁸⁴ The example of Michael, then, along with the cited prophecy of Enoch, troubles the status of *Jude* for those who would reject its source material.

The *Assumption* therefore benefited from its ties to *Jude*, which lent credibility to its otherwise paracanonical view of the spiritual realm. *Jude*'s connection with now-parabiblical literature is further emphasized by its history of interpretation among some Patristic writers such as Clement and Origen, who defended the use of the *Assumption* on the basis of its use by *Jude*. While I have called attention to the two-sided coin of stability and malleability when

⁸¹ Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter*, 67; Stokes, "Not over Moses' Dead Body," 197. Stokes argues that Michael and the devil are not arguing over the burial of Moses's corpse, but rather over the possibility of his (live) bodily assumption into heaven. For the text of *TMos*, see Priest, "Testament of Moses," 919–34.

⁸² Charles, in his 1894 critical edition of the *Assumption*, distinguishes between the *Testament* and the *Assumption*, but notes that, as the author of *Jude* was "unquestionably acquainted" with both texts, they were likely combined in antiquity, possibly in the first century C.E., a suggestion Priest finds "attractive" but ultimately not demonstrable and so he prefers to refer to the whole text as the *Testament*; see Charles, *The Assumption of Moses*, xlv–l; Priest, "Testament of Moses," 925.

⁸³ Dochhorn, "Ein starkes Stück Schrift," 180–83. Origen refers to the story about Michael arguing with the devil over Moses' body which is found in the *Ascension/Assumption of Moses* "of which the Apostle Jude makes mention in his epistle." The section briefly describes a number of conflicts with the devil in the "Old Testament," referring without qualification to texts such as the *Assumption* and possibly the *Testament of Job* (*de Principiis* 3.2.1). Clement of Alexandria comments on *Jude* 9 that "this confirms the Assumption of Moses," and in the same fragment claims that Enoch's prophecy verifies the prophecy of the destruction of the Watchers (a Latin fragment of a commentary on *Jude*, *Frag. 2*). For Stokes, Clement's comment may refer either to a text, the *Assumption of Moses*, or to the assumption of Moses into heaven, "Not over Moses' Dead Body," 193–94 n. 4, 5.

⁸⁴ Translation from Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter*, 73; Latin text in Charles, *Assumption*, 108.

it comes to the characterization of scriptural *exempla* throughout the Catholic Epistles, Michael also helps to demonstrate the porousness of the “canonical” boundary. The story recounted by *Jude* is not presented in the now-canonical Old Testament, and yet this has not resulted in Michael’s argument with the devil being understood as “canonical,” but rather in *Jude* being pushed toward the margins of the now-canonical New Testament.

7. RAHAB

Likewise [to Abraham], was not Rahab the prostitute also justified by works, having received the messengers and having sent them out by another way? For just as the body without the spirit is dead, so also faith without works is dead. (*Jas* 2:25–26)⁸⁵

7.1 Rahab in the Hebrew Bible

Rahab is a Canaanite prostitute who, through a stunningly knowledgeable profession of faith and aid to two Israelite spies, is incorporated into the people of Israel along with her family. According to *Joshua* 2, Joshua sent two young men to spy (κατασκοπεῦσαι) on the land of Jericho and when they got there, they entered Rahab’s house (πορευθέντες, εἰσήλθοσαν, *Josh* 2:1). When the king of Jericho was told that spies had been sent to the city, he sent a message to Rahab, demanding that she bring them out (*Josh* 2:2–3). Rahab had already taken (λαβοῦσα) and hidden (ἔκρυψεν) them under stalks of flax on the roof, but she says they have already left and suggests that the king’s messengers rush to catch up with them (*Josh* 2:4–6). She returns to the roof to explain to the spies that she knows who the Israelites are—she has heard of their deliverance from Egypt and she knows that they have been given the surrounding land by God (*Josh* 2:9–11). She asks that they spare her and her family’s lives and they instruct her to tie a

⁸⁵ For a more thorough examination of the exemplar of Rahab in *James*, see Foster, *Exemplars*, 104–27.

red cord in her window to protect her household (*Josh* 2:12–21). Rahab then sends them out and the spies then leave (ἐξαπέστειλεν, ἐπορεύθησαν, *Josh* 2:22 LXX).

Her confession of faith includes decidedly insider language: she calls God Yahweh, invokes the covenant relationship between God and Israel (cf. *1 Sam* 20:8), and understands that the land of Canaan has been promised to Israel (*Josh* 2:9–11; *Exod* 15:15–16; *Num* 22:3). What is more, later generations of Israelites are called a “mixed multitude” (cf. *Exod* 12:38)—in other words, through her confession of faith in *Joshua* Rahab makes clear that Israel is not a racial reality but rather a religious one. Spina has shown that the interplay between insiders and outsiders is an important biblical motif—one of which *Joshua* 1–7 is “arguably more self-consciously geared towards” than perhaps any other biblical narrative.⁸⁶ If Abraham is the definitive insider, Rahab represents a definitive outsider, both in *Joshua* and perhaps in *James*.

7.2 Rahab in the Catholic Epistles

In *James*, the characterization of Rahab runs parallel to that of Abraham, offering another illustration of the bond between faith and works. Wall considers the Rahab example to be part of a triad of “footnotes” illustrating that those who discriminate against the poor and vulnerable are lawbreakers—God’s judgment will be without mercy to any who fail to show mercy.⁸⁷ As in the case of Abraham’s action offering up Isaac on the altar, Rahab’s actions of receiving and sending the messengers are emphasized, a distinction from *Joshua*. The faith-works argument is reiterated before Rahab is introduced: it is by works that someone is made righteous, not by faith only (*Jas* 2:24). The reference to Rahab is then formulated to emphasize her role, specifically her actions: *she* received (ὕποδεξαμένη) the messengers (ἄγγέλους) and sent them out another way (ἐκβαλοῦσα, *Jas* 2:25); in *Joshua* the messengers enter her house and later

⁸⁶ Spina, *The Faith of the Outsider*, 52; McConville and Williams, *Joshua*, 35.

⁸⁷ Wall, “The Example of Rahab,” 220. See *Jas* 2:8–11 on the “royal law” and 2:14–17, 18–20, 21–26 for the “footnotes.”

leave, and after this Rahab is said to have taken and hidden them (*Josh* 2:1, 4, 6, 22). In place of or in addition to ἀγγέλους in *James* 2:25, κατασκόπους is also well attested, bringing the text more closely in line with *Joshua* LXX.⁸⁸

Rahab's statement of faith from *Joshua* 2:9–11 goes unmentioned by *James*—a seemingly odd omission until we consider that her actions are strategically treated as equivalent to her faith. That is, her hospitality in receiving the spies is consequential to her faith.⁸⁹ *James* may have the wider *Joshua* context in mind in which Rahab professes her faith in Yahweh, as his larger point is that faith and works function as a symbiotic pair, but this is not made clear.⁹⁰ Not only is Rahab's confession of faith *not* mentioned, but her title – ἡ πόρνη – is included without qualification as if the author senses no incongruity with the spiritual virtue ascribed to her.⁹¹ This is part of the point. As Wall puts it, “her characterization as a secular prostitute in the biblical narrative marks her as unclean and hardly an exemplar of one who is ‘unstained by the world’ (1:27),” but *James* shows that discrimination against this “secular” woman, who is upheld as an exemplar of hospitality and faith-works, results not in the “purity” of the community, but rather in moral impurity.⁹² For the author of *James*, who characterizes Rahab not according to her piety but as a hospitable prostitute, Rahab is an effective illustration of the integrity of faith-works. As an outsider, Rahab presents an even more potent example of virtue

⁸⁸ Τους κατασκόπους 04. 018Z. 020. 88. 94Z. 218, and many more; κατασκοπους 181Z; τους κατασκοπους ιησου S:H^m; τους αγγελους κατασκοπους 918Z; αγγελους κατασκοπους 918T; κατασκοπους εκ των δωδεκα φυλων των υιων ισραηλ L:F; Aland, Aland, and Mink (eds.), *Editio Critica Maior IV*, I:46.

⁸⁹ Cargal argues that Rahab's faith, not her hospitality, is central for *James*, but the rhetorical point would seem to be that it is both in tandem, “When is a Prostitute Not an Adulteress?” 121.

⁹⁰ Wall argues that Rahab is a “gapped” example, invoking the whole context of her hospitality, her confession of faith, her appeal for mercy, “The Example of Rahab,” 229–32.

⁹¹ This is all the more puzzling, as Cargal notes, if “[w]ithin the rhetoric of the Letter of James, then, the language of sexual infidelity expresses the author's particular concern for readers' ethical failings,” “When is a Prostitute Not an Adulteress?” 114. Rahab is also called ἡ πόρνη in *Heb* 11:31, the only other time she is mentioned in the New Testament, where “by faith” she does not perish with the unbelievers because she “received the spies (δεξαμένη τους κατασκόπους) with peace.”

⁹² Wall, “The Example of Rahab,” 221.

than Abraham, the representative patriarch. However, in Hellenistic Jewish traditions, along with Abraham, she can be found as an example of a Gentile proselyte.⁹³

7.3 Rahab in Parabiblical Literature

While in *Joshua* Abraham is *the* definitive insider, “our father” with whom God made a covenant (*Gen* 12:1–3; *Jas* 2:21), Rahab is a prostitute, a Canaanite, and a woman—a vulnerable outsider. However, in later Rabbinic literature, Rahab is an archetypal proselyte.⁹⁴ *I Clement* goes further than James, specifically naming her faith and hospitality as the reasons for her salvation. More of her story from *Joshua* is detailed, and she is said to have “received” (εἰσδεξαμένη) the spies (κατάσκοποι), in an interesting combination of vocabulary reflecting both *Joshua* LXX and possibly *James*.⁹⁵ The section concludes, “you see, beloved, not only faith but prophecy is found in the woman” (*I Clem* 12:8, cf. vv1–8). In Josephus’s *Antiquities*, Rahab is an innkeeper and never referred to as a prostitute (*Ant.* 5.1.2–7). The tradition that Rahab was an innkeeper belongs to a second stream of Rahab tradition that, unlike the one that says she became an archetypal proselyte, cannot accept her occupation and attempts to recast her as an innkeeper.⁹⁶ Despite Josephus’s generally embellished account, she also plays less of a hands-on role in their escape than in either *Joshua* or *James*. The actions of leaving, climbing down the wall, and escaping are all attributed to the spies rather than to Rahab’s aid (*Ant.* 5.1.2). The characterization of Rahab in *James* is decidedly not tied to this second Hellenistic recasting of Rahab, instead fully embracing her role as a prostitute as an essential aspect of her exemplarity. Rahab’s later reception, building on her early characterization as a faithful

⁹³ Wall, “The Example of Rahab,” 220. Wall argues that *James* “uses Abraham and Rahab as topoi of eschatological Israel,” but this is not necessarily the case—they are not representative or typological figures here, but illustrative examples.

⁹⁴ Davids, “Pseudepigrapha in the Catholic Epistles,” 230; Foster, *Exemplars*, 108.

⁹⁵ The dating of *I Clement*, like *James*, remains contentious, but if *James* is indeed a second-century pseudepigraph and *I Clement* is dated near the end of the first century, *James* may know *I Clement*. For a summary of critical issues, including dating, *I Clement*, see Gregory, “1 Clement,” 223–30.

⁹⁶ Foster, *Exemplars*, 108–110, see also 104–27 on Rahab.

outsider, elevates her from a vulnerable foreigner to an exemplar of hospitality and faith alongside the patriarch Abraham. Even if there are no grammatical indications that *James* drew from now-parabiblical tradition in characterizing Rahab, that she serves as an exemplar at all implies the author’s knowledge of Rahab traditions in early Judaism.

8. JOB

See, we consider those who endure (ὕπομένοντα) blessed. You have heard of the endurance (ὕπομονή) of Job, and you have seen the purpose (τέλος) of the Lord—that the Lord is compassionate and merciful.⁹⁷ (*Jas* 5:11)⁹⁸

8.1 Job in the Hebrew Bible

It may seem obvious, given the now-canonical proximity between the book of *Job* and the letter of *James*, that the figure to whom *James* ascribes such endurance is this “biblical” Job. The beginning of *Job* (in both the LXX and MT) praises his virtue, calling him “blameless and righteous, a man who feared God and turned away from evil” (*Job* 1:1, 8; 2:3). After God calls attention to Job’s blamelessness, the Devil (ὁ διάβολος, ἰσὺπ) challenges back, wondering whether Job would be quite so blameless if he were to suffer (*Job* 1:6–12). God allows the Devil first to kill his livestock, then his children, then to make Job suffer with severe boils and sores (*Job* 1:13–2:10). While Job never does “sin with his lips” by cursing God (*Job* 2:1), he begins to name and to question his suffering, cursing his birth and lamenting his dire circumstances (*Job* 3:1–26). In the form used by *James*, ὑπομονή occurs only once in the book

⁹⁷ Luke also uses οἰκτίρων, but it appears to mean merciful, as it is in parallel context to Matthew’s proclamation in the Sermon on the Mount, ‘blessed are the merciful, for they will receive mercy’: γίνεσθε οἰκτίρμονες καθὼς ὁ πατήρ ὑμῶν οἰκτίρων ἐστίν (Luke 6:36-37, alluding to Leviticus 11:44, 19:2, 20:26, ‘be holy for I am holy’). πολὺσπλαγγνός and οἰκτίρων appear to be essentially synonymous, as both are forms of words meaning both mercy and compassion. The verse might read, then, ‘full of mercy and merciful’ or ‘full of compassion and compassionate,’ to emphasize this divine quality.

⁹⁸ For a more thorough analysis of the exemplar of Job in *James*, *Job* and *TJob*, see Rodenbiker, “The Exemplar of Job in the Letter of James,” 479–96.

of *Job*, as a translation of תְּקוּהָה, hope: as water wears away stones and floods wash away soil, “so you [God] destroy the hope of a man” (*Job* 14:19). The only usage of a verbal form even somewhat comparable to *James* is in the same chapter: Job wonders if someone can live again once they have died and then declares, “I will wait (ὕπομενῶ) to become again (*Job* 14:14 LXX).⁹⁹ As deSilva points out, it is only the narrative frame of the book (*Job* 1–2 and 41) in which Job is presented as a righteous sufferer worthy of the exemplary status recalled in *James*.¹⁰⁰ Throughout the middle chapters, Job cries out in anguish (cf. *Job* 6:11–13; 10:1–22; 14:18–19) and even admits to impatience (*Job* 7:16 LXX). As one scholar cleverly puts it, “As chapter 3 begins, Job emphatically ceases to be patient. Perhaps James never read beyond chapter 2.”¹⁰¹ Even so, the author of *James* may never have read *Job* at all—and this is the point: with regard to the figure of Job, *James* exhibits ties *not* to *Job* LXX but to the *Testament of Job*.

8.2 Job in the Catholic Epistles

Due to the shared virtue of endurance and the close context in which the prophets and Job are presented, Job serves as a specific example of endurance from among “the prophets” (*Jas* 5:10). *James* does not say what Job endured, only that his endurance is renowned—the focus falls not on *what* Job suffered but *how* he suffered. Allison remarks that endurance was a Greek virtue, prized among the Stoics, and it was also associated with martyrdom among Jews.¹⁰² Themes of endurance, suffering, and eternal reward make an appearance at the beginning and the end

⁹⁹ For more references to ὑπομένω in *Job* LXX, see Rodenbiker, “The Exemplar of Job in the Letter of James,” 489–90. For a more thorough examination of the exemplar of Job in *James*, see Foster, *The Significance of Exemplars for the Interpretation of the Letter of James*, 128–64.

¹⁰⁰ deSilva, *The Jewish Teachers of Jesus, James, and Jude*, 239.

¹⁰¹ Good, “The Problem of Evil in the Book of Job,” 54, as quoted in Allison, *James*, 715. Allison adds for contrast Seitz, who argues that *James* was referring to the whole book of *Job*: see Seitz, “The Patience of Job in the Epistle of James,” 380.

¹⁰² Allison, *James*, 713. He also notes that while the Stoic use of ὑπομονή tended to emphasize independence and the self, in the Septuagint the term rendered Hebrew terms such as תְּקוּהָה “and so comes to be associated with hope in God,” citing Spicq, “ὑπομένω, ὑπομονή,” *TLNT* 3.418–19.

of *James* (cf. 1:3–4, 12; 5:7–11), forming an *inclusio* emphasizing that this is related to *James*' central message.¹⁰³ Along with *James*' use of other scriptural exempla – Abraham, Rahab, the prophets, and Elijah, who each illustrate that real faith is manifested in action – the example of Job embodies the endurance of which *James* speaks in chapter 1: testing produces endurance (ὕπομονήν) and endurance produces integrity, “so that you may be perfect (τέλειοι) and complete (όλόκληροι), lacking in nothing” (*Jas* 1:3–4). Job exemplifies for *James* just such integrity, as also indicated by how “the purpose [τέλος] of the Lord” is compassionate and merciful (*Jas* 5:11b).

8.3 Job in Parabiblical Literature

Regarding now-deutero- and paracanonical characterizations of Job, in a rare reference to Job, *Ben Sira* lists Job among the prophets: between Ezekiel who saw a vision of glory “upon the chariot of cherubim” (*Sir* 49:8) and the twelve prophets “who comforted Jacob” (*Sir* 49:10) is Job, whom God “remembered in the thunderstorm” (*Sir* 49:9).¹⁰⁴ Where *Ben Sira*'s reference to the prophets is part of a long recapitulation of Israel's history via a litany of heroes, *James*' reference to Job is not intended as a representative of Israel's past or prophecy, but rather as an illustration of the virtue of endurance. However, *James* may consider Job to be a prophet, as the general example of the prophets shifts to the specific example of Job.¹⁰⁵

Endurance is not the obvious defining characteristic of Job that emerges from the canonical book, as we have seen; rather, a picture of Job like that found in the *Testament of Job* appears to have infused *James*. The *Testament* is a narrative retelling of Septuagint Job,¹⁰⁶

¹⁰³ Allison, *James*, 695.

¹⁰⁴ Foster, *Exemplars*, 134. Foster argues that Job is the more likely interpretation via the Hebrew, אֱיִבִּי (אֱיִבִּי אֱיִבִּי) rather than Job in *Sir* 49:9; www.bensira.org, BXVIII Verso. Yet, the thunderstorm is reminiscent of the whirlwind out of which God answers Job (Job 38:1-3, here λαιλαπος και νεφωv). Further, it makes little sense that there would be a section on God's enemies inserted between two positive figures in a list of faithful prophets.

¹⁰⁵ Allison, *James*, 712.

¹⁰⁶ Dochhorn, “Das Testament Hiobs als exegetischer Text,” 671–88; Spittler, “The Testament of Job,” 830.

sharpening the more ambiguous now-canonical figure into an ideal exemplar of endurance. Here, Job is not an innocent righteous man victimized by Satan, but rather a paradigmatic and willing agent in the destruction of evil. The *Testament* consistently exaggerates characteristics of Job it shares with the book of *Job*, as Begg has shown: “his high social status, wealth, charity, suffering, (initial) patience under trial, and ultimate vindication” are all extended.¹⁰⁷ And so, Job is not just *like* a king (*Job* 29:25; 37:36) but an actual king (*TJob* 3:7; 28:7); he possesses far more animals and wealth than the now-canonical figure (*Job* 1:2–3; *TJob* 9–10); and he is generous to the disenfranchised both before his suffering ordeal (*TJob* 9–10) and also after his restoration (*TJob* 44:2). The *Testament* not only enhances Job’s positive qualities, but shows his suffering to be deeper and his endurance stronger than the now-canonical account. In vivid contrast to the now-canonical narrative of *Job* in which Job’s endurance is not a defining quality, the *Testament* has Job sitting on a dung heap outside the city, imploring the worms wriggling from his open wounds to “[r]emain where you have been placed, until the one who put you there orders you away” (*TJob* 20:9).¹⁰⁸

There are other connections between the *Testament* and *James*. Victorious against Satan (*TJob* 27:1–6), Job exhorts his children toward patience (μακροθυμία), “which is better than anything”; *James*’ readers are exhorted to do the same (*TJob* 27:7, *Jas* 5:7–11). And, like the Job of the *Testament*, who is promised a crown as his reward for endurance (στέφανον, *TJob* 4:10–11), *James*’ readers are promised that those who endure trials will be given a στέφανον τῆς ζωῆς (*Jas* 1:12). With the figure of Job we have another example of the two-sided coin of intertraditionality: stability and malleability. Job’s endurance is renowned enough for the author of *James* to count on his readers’ understanding the reference; but the portrayal of Job

¹⁰⁷ Begg, “Comparing Characters: The Book of Job and the Testament of Job,” 437–38.

¹⁰⁸ Παράμεινον ἐν τῷ αὐτῷ τόπῳ ἐν ᾧ ἐτέθης ἄχρις οὗ ἐνταλθῆ ὑπὸ τοῦ κελεύσαντός σε. See Brock, ed. “Testamentum Iobi,” 33, translation mine.

in *James* reinforces traditions about Job's endurance from the *Testament of Job*, perpetuating a continued flexibility in Job's characterization.

9. THE PROPHETS

Take as an example (ὁπόδειγμα), brothers, of suffering and patience, the prophets who spoke in the name of the Lord. (*Jas* 5:10)

As to this salvation the prophets have investigated and diligently sought, having prophesied about the grace coming to you, [and] inquiring into what person or time the Spirit of Christ in them was indicating when he predicted the sufferings of Christ and the glories to follow. It was revealed to them that they were not serving themselves but you in those things which have now been announced to you through those who proclaimed the gospel to you by the Holy Spirit who was sent from heaven—even angels long to look into these things. (*1 Pet* 1:10-12)

[...that I might remind you] to remember the predictions by the holy prophets and the commandment of the Lord and Savior [spoken] by your apostles. (*2 Pet* 3:2)

9.1 The Prophets in the Hebrew Bible

The general designation “the prophets” in the Hebrew Bible typically refers to prophets of Israel from the scriptural past who served as God's mouthpieces. No individual prophet is specified by name from among this group in the Catholic Epistles, giving the sense of a collective purpose and example. In an anonymous grouping like this, the prophets can be found in *1 Kings* 18, persecuted by Jezebel and Ahab and hidden away by Obadiah for protection. They are a group who can be summoned by kings to give a word about a coming battle (*2 Chron* 18:5–12). And Daniel laments Israel having ignored the teaching of “your [God's] servants the prophets” in a prayer of repentance on behalf of Israel (*Dan* 9:6, 10). “The prophets” is even more often a reference to false prophets (cf. *Jer* 2:8; 4:9; 5:13; 23:9; *Ezek*

13:2; 38:17; *Mic* 3:5–6; *Zech* 13:2–4), which will be addressed in the next chapter. “The prophets” is a rather neutral designation—their context determines whether the group speaks rightly on God’s behalf or if instead the prophets speak from their own intimations, illustrating how far Israel has been led astray (*Jer* 23:9–40).

9.2 The Prophets in the Catholic Epistles

The prophets, representatives of divine authority, are the scriptural example most commonly, if vaguely, referred to throughout the Catholic Epistles. In *James*, the reference to the prophets is “as general as it could be.”¹⁰⁹ The author uses an unusual phrase, ὑπόδειγμα λάβετε, take as an example, which some manuscripts alter to “you have [ἔχω] as an example.”¹¹⁰ *James*’s prophets are those who “spoke in the name of the Lord,” a qualification that may set them apart from *false* prophets who are accused of having dreamed up their own message in passages such as *Jeremiah* 23.¹¹¹ The use of ὑπόδειγμα is the only instance in *James*, and one of the few times in the Catholic Epistles, where specific vocabulary of exemplarity is employed. The prophets exemplify suffering and patience, serving for *James* as illustrations of the earlier imperative instruction toward patience (*Jas* 1:2–4; 5:7–8).¹¹²

For *1 Peter*, the prophets are forerunners of the gospel message (*1 Pet* 1:10–12). They function here as an illustration of prophetic patience as exemplars who understood their role in the timeline of the eschaton despite the mystery surrounding their message. The author may have contemporary Christian prophets in mind, as argued by Selwyn, but it is more likely that “the prophets” refers here to the scriptural prophets, whose actions are located in the past.¹¹³

¹⁰⁹ Popkes, “James and Scripture,” 227.

¹¹⁰ ὑπόδειγμα λάβετε is found in 181Z. 1874. 02. 044. 33. 436. 1067. 1409. 2344. 2464. 2541. 2805; 623. 1735 insert ἔχετε in place of λάβετε with varied word orders; 5. 398C. 623C include both; Aland, et al. (eds.), *Editio Critica Maior IV*, 1:90.

¹¹¹ Allison, *James*, 710.

¹¹² Elsewhere in the NT, the prophets are often referred to as persecuted martyrs, cf. *Matt* 2:23, 5:12, 23:29, 30, 31, 37; *Luke* 6:23, 11:47, 50, 13:28, 34, 16:29, 31, 24:25; *Acts* 3:18, 24, 7:52, 13:27, 40, 15:15; *1 Thess* 2:15; *Heb* 11:32.

¹¹³ Selwyn, *The First Epistle of St. Peter*, 134; Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 108; Sargent, *Written to Serve*, 25.

They serve as an example to the readers of *1 Peter* of fervent waiting.¹¹⁴ This waiting by the prophets for the future fulfillment of their message is realized, according to *1 Peter*, in the “eschatological community of faith.”¹¹⁵ The apocalyptic texture of *1 Peter* can be seen in this wide vision of history: looking back to the historical prophets whose message, hidden even from them, is fulfilled in the community of faith, which looks forward to the Parousia (cf. *1 Pet* 1:7, 13; 2:12; 5:1).¹¹⁶

In a slightly different deployment of the prophets, *2 Peter* mentions the “words spoken in the past” by the prophets along with the commandment of the Lord from the apostles (*2 Pet* 3:2). Earlier in the letter, the author of *2 Peter* asserts that no prophecy of scripture is a matter of individual interpretation or initiative but rather, “carried by the Holy Spirit” people “spoke from God,” ἐλάλησαν ἀπὸ θεοῦ (*2 Pet* 1:20–21).¹¹⁷ This leads directly into the argument regarding the ψευδοπροφήται who were amidst the people of Israel, presuming to speak for God (*2 Pet* 3:1). Referring throughout to examples such as a “prophecy of scripture” (*2 Pet* 1:20, 21), written prophecy, and predictions of the prophets (*2 Pet* 3:2), the author likely has a textual prophetic tradition in mind, rather than “the prophets” as exemplary figures, as in *James* and *1 Peter*. It is unclear whether the author has *read* these texts, however, as none are explicitly cited.

9.3 The Prophets in Parabiblical Literature

On the surface there is no obvious link between the Catholic Epistles’ use of prophets from the scriptural past as exemplars and the use of now-parabiblical literature. However, just as with many other exempla throughout the Catholic corpus, a closer look turns up an interesting link between the three letters that make use of the prophets. Angelic revelations to prophetic figures

¹¹⁴ Mbuvi, *Temple, Exile, and Identity*, 111.

¹¹⁵ Mbuvi, *Temple, Exile, and Identity*, 132–33.

¹¹⁶ For more on elements of apocalypticism in *1 Peter*, see Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 105–107.

¹¹⁷ See Horrell, *Peter and Jude*, 159; Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter*, 229–35.

can also be found in prophetic literature (cf. *Zech* 1:9; *4 Ezra* 4:1–4; *Rev* 17:1–2; 21:9–10), but the mysterious nature of the message in *1 Peter* 1:10–12 is hidden even from the prophets—a notion also found in Jewish apocalyptic literature.¹¹⁸ Likewise, Bauckham argues that underlying the reference to prophecy in *2 Peter* 3, in the context of what is to come in the “last days” (*2 Pet* 3:3), is *2 Peter*’s close dependence on Jewish apocalyptic ideas, including the predictions of Old Testament prophets regarding eschatological judgment.¹¹⁹

That the πνεῦμα Χριστοῦ is said to inspire the prophets may seem unusual in the New Testament but has many parallels in other early Christian and Jewish apocalyptic literature.¹²⁰ The *Epistle of Barnabas*, which may predate *2 Peter*, notes for example that “the prophets, receiving grace from him prophesied concerning him” (*Barn* 5:6a) and how “the spirit of the Lord foresaw their stony hearts and will put into them hearts of flesh” (*Barn* 6:14; cf. *Ezek* 36:26).¹²¹ Justin’s *First Apology*, though likely written after when *2 Peter* was written, also refers to Jewish prophets through whom a “prophetic Spirit” revealed things before they happened, a prophecy revealed through Moses by “a divine Spirit of prophecy” and, finally, to the fact that this “Spirit of prophecy” is none other than “the Word, who is also the first-born of God...” (*1 Apol.* 31–33). Achtemeier notes that the element of the “spirit of Christ” indwelling the prophets with revelation also has ties to apocalyptic literature in which revelation is mediated by an “otherworldly being” to some “venerable figure of the past” in pseudonymous material—just as, he argues, *1 Peter* is attributed to a venerable Christian figure and is also likely pseudonymous.¹²²

¹¹⁸ Mbuvi, *Temple, Exile, and Identity*, 132–33, n. 23. Cf. *1 Enoch* 16:3; 24:3.

¹¹⁹ Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter*, 283–95, esp. 287. Cf. *Amos* 9:10; *Mal* 2:17; *Isa* 5:18–20; *Jer* 5:12–24. Bauckham notes that an apocalyptic source shared by *2 Pet* 3:4 may be preserved in *1 Clem* 23:3–4 and *2 Clem* 11:2–4, which both confront the “problem of eschatological delay,” 283–84.

¹²⁰ Sargent, *Written to Serve*, 25. Sargent lists *Ep. Barn.* 5; *2 Clem* 17:4; Ignatius, *Mag.* 8:2; Justin, *Apol.* 1:31–33; *Dial.* 56; Irenaeus, *Ad. Haer.* 4.20.4; *Shep. Sim.* 9:12; see also Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 109–10.

¹²¹ *Barnabas* is dated sometime after the destruction of the Second Temple in 70 C.E. but before Jerusalem was rebuilt in 132–135 C.E., Holmes, “The Epistle of Barnabas,” 125–127.

¹²² Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 106.

It was not uncommon for early Christian literature concerned with eschatology to exhibit elements of apocalyptic literature or source material, and the Catholic Epistles are no different. “The prophets” in the Catholic Epistles are associated with apocalyptic notions, not only with predictions from the scriptural past. *James* and *1* and *2 Peter* make use of “the prophets” from the scriptural past as exemplars of patience in suffering and fervent waiting for the fulfillment of a message they could not yet understand. Given the eschatological concerns of *1* and *2 Peter* in particular, the prophets embody more than messianic expectation—they call attention to the next coming of Christ, serving as both exempla and continuing prophetic heralds of the anticipated Parousia (*1 Pet* 1:7, 13; 2:12; 5:1; *2 Pet* 3:2–4, 10–13).

10. ELIJAH

Elijah was a man just like us, and he prayed earnestly for it not to rain, and it did not rain upon the earth for three years and six months. And he prayed again and the heaven gave rain and the earth produced its fruit. (*Jas* 5:17–18)¹²³

10.1 Elijah in the Hebrew Bible

Unlike in *James*, Elijah did not explicitly pray for rain in *1 Kings*. However, Elijah’s miraculous provision for the widow and her son (*1 Kings* 17:9–16), the raising of the widow’s son (*1 Kings* 17:17–24), the much-sought-after prophet going before King Ahab (*1 Kings* 18:1–19), and Elijah’s conflict with Ahab and the prophets of Baal (*1 Kings* 18:20–46) is bookended by his claim that no rain will fall unless by his word (*1 Kings* 17:1) and his warning to Ahab to prepare for heavy rain (*1 Kings* 18:41). Elijah does pray, but it is not for rain. He makes a deal with the prophets of Baal: both will prepare a sacrifice, but no fire, and whichever god answers with fire is the real God (*1 Kings* 18:24). After mocking the prophets of Baal for

¹²³ For a more thorough examination of the exemplar of Elijah in *James*, see Foster, *Exemplars*, 165–91.

praying loudly and cutting themselves all day, to no avail (“perhaps he is asleep!” v. 27), Elijah arranges twelve stones on the altar, representing the twelve tribes of Israel, has pitchers of water poured all over the offering and on the wood three times for emphasis, and then he prays for fire to engulf the burnt offering (*1 Kings* 18:36–37). “Fire from the Lord” falls from heaven, consuming not only the offering, but also the wood, stones, dust, and the water that pooled around it (*1 Kings* 18:38). Just after this, Elijah tells Ahab there will soon be rain and then retreats to the top of Mount Carmel, bows forward on the ground (ἔκυψεν ἐπὶ τὴν γῆν) and puts his face between his knees (*3 Kgdms* 18:42).¹²⁴ Elijah’s prayer, then, is not for rain but for fire. As he waits for the coming storm, however, his prostrate posture is suggestive of prayer. As the sky grows black with storm clouds, Elijah, with “the hand of the Lord” upon him, outruns Ahab’s chariot to Jezreel (*1 Kings* 18:45–46).

10.2 Elijah in the Catholic Epistles

Elijah appears in the last chapter of *James*, exemplifying the effectiveness of prayer, which reflects the integrity of the one who prays (*Jas* 4:1–3). In the now-canonical Gospels, Elijah is a representative prophet—the forerunner of the forerunner of Christ, John the Baptist, who is cast as a new Elijah (cf. *Matt* 11:14; 16:14; 17:10–12; *Mark* 6:15; 8:28; 9:11–13; *Luke* 1:17; 9:8, 19; *John* 1:21, 25; see also *Mal* 4:5). At the transfiguration, Moses and Elijah appear, glorified, to talk with Jesus, (cf. *Matt* 17:14–21; *Mark* 9:2–9; *Luke* 9:28–36). Also, in a note of precision on *James*’s part that remains unmentioned in *1 Kings* but can be found in *Luke* 4:25, Elijah is said to have prayed and stopped the rain for three and a half years. In *Romans* Elijah is used as a negative example of a prophet who pleaded with God *against* Israel for killing the

¹²⁴ The exact form ἔκυψεν is used six times in the LXX and in every case it denotes reverence, cf. *1 Kgdms* 24:8 David bows before Saul; *1 Kgdms* 28:14 Saul “did homage” (προσεκύνησεν) before Samuel; *3 Kgdms* 1:16, 31 Bathsheba bows before King David; *1 Kgdms* 24:9; *Isa* 2:9. Elsewhere in the NT John the Baptist calls himself unworthy to “stoop down” (κύνῃσας) and untie Jesus’ sandals (*Mark* 1:7); and Jesus stooped down (κύνῃσας) to write in the dirt (*John* 8:6, 8).

prophets, tearing down altars, and seeking to kill him too (*Rom* 11:2–5). In contrast, for *James*, it is not Elijah’s conflict with the prophets of Baal (*1 King* 18:20–40), his ascension into heaven in chariots of fire (*2 King* 2:10–12), his glorification at the transfiguration, or even his prophecy that appears to be at the forefront. *James* reminds readers, rather, that Elijah “was a man just like us” (*Jas* 5:17) and that his prayers produced results—and the prayers of people “just like” him can do the same. While *James* explicitly exhibits shared tradition with *1 Kings* (and with *Ben Sira* and *4 Ezra*, as we will see) only with regard to his prayers for rain, the surrounding verses of *James* are highly suggestive of the author’s familiarity with his raising of the widow’s son, too: readers are instructed to pray for those who are sick “and the Lord will raise him up” and “the one who turns a sinner back from the error of his ways will save his soul from death...” (*Jas* 5:15, 20).

James focuses on the effectiveness of the prophet’s action: crucially, in understanding Elijah’s posture as prayer, *James* has equated a physical action with prayer similar to the previous example of Rahab, whose actions sufficed as evidence of her faith.¹²⁵ In *James*, the answer to Elijah’s prayers appears to come more swiftly than in *1 Kings*. There, Elijah sends his servant to watch the sky for coming rainclouds and the servant must go back and forth seven times before “a cloud as small as a man’s hand” rises up from the sea, preceding the heavy downpour to come (*1 Kings* 18:43–45). In *James* Elijah prays once and there is no rain for over three years; he prays again and “the heaven gave rain and the earth produced its fruit” (*Jas* 5:18). As with *James*’ interest not in *what* Job suffered but more precisely *how* he suffered, Elijah’s reason for praying for it not to rain (and then to rain again) is not relevant; the focus is on the effectiveness of his prayers, proving his lack of inner turmoil as discussed in *James* 4:1–

¹²⁵ DeVries, *1 Kings*, 219. E.g., ὅτι εἰ μὴ διὰ στόματος λόγου μου (*1 Kings* 17:1; cf. 17:8, 18:1). Allison also notes that *James* shows no familiarity with the Jewish rabbinic interpretation that Elijah putting his face between his knees reminded God that Israel observed circumcision, *James*, 778.

3.¹²⁶ That his prayers have immediate results also illustrates that Elijah has integrity, in contrast to the unstable and “double-souled” doubters of the letter’s opening thesis (*Jas* 1:5–8).

10.3 Elijah in Parabiblical Literature

Elijah is well represented in now-parabiblical tradition as a powerful prophet and exemplar of effective prayer. Because of the abundant now-parabiblical tradition surrounding Elijah, Popkes argues that “obviously” the author of *James* received this information not from *1 Kings* but from secondary sources, possibly (as with Abraham) from Paul.¹²⁷ If he knows the now-canonical account, James is more interested in Elijah’s posture of prayer than his location or the wider context of the conflict with the prophets of Baal, despite the significance of Mount Carmel for the God-Baal conflict.¹²⁸ The author of *James* may be very well familiar with parabiblical tradition such as that surrounding Elijah, perhaps as a collection of small excerpted passages.¹²⁹

In *Ben Sira*, Elijah is presented, as Foster puts it, “as a virtual superman.”¹³⁰ The words of this “fiery” prophet “blazed like a torch,” says *Ben Sira* (*Sir* 48:1). Of special interest for the letter of *James* is that Elijah kept rain from falling, called down fire three times, and brought a dead man back to life (*Sir* 48:3–5). Rather than explicitly identifying these actions as prayer, *Ben Sira* refers to Elijah “speaking in the name of the Lord.” Allison notes that Elijah’s statement at the beginning of *1 Kings* 17 that no rain will fall “except by my word,” as he stands before the Lord implies prayer, as is often claimed; this likely also applies to *Ben Sira*’s

¹²⁶ An earlier Elijah story is mentioned in *Romans* 11—his anxiety over being the last remaining, and persecuted, prophet (cf. *1 Kings* 19:10, 14). Paul uses Elijah here in a context regarding the remnant of Israel and its relationship to God—an explicitly Jewish concern.

¹²⁷ Popkes, “James and Scripture,” 223–24, 228.

¹²⁸ DeVries, *1 Kings*, 219.

¹²⁹ Popkes suggests that James had access not to full texts but to some sort of *Zettelkasten*, a repository of excerpted material, see Popkes, “James and Scripture,” 219–22. For contrast, see Allison, *James*, 777, claiming that *James*’s common vocabulary with the LXX version of the Elijah example indicates familiarity.

¹³⁰ Foster, *Exemplars*, 171.

statement about Elijah’s speech “in the name of the Lord” implying prayer as well.¹³¹ Like standing before the Lord and speaking in the Lord’s name, Elijah’s posture, with his face between his knees, also implies prayer and was taken as such. Along with the presentation of Elijah as a superhuman, *Ben Sira* also refers to Elijah’s fiery ascension on chariots of fire and his future return (*Sir* 48:9–10). Likewise, in a Syriac context it was Elijah’s ascension that garners the most attention, where he is often associated with Enoch.¹³² For Aphrahat, though, a Syrian ecclesiastical writer from the fourth century, Elijah was an exemplar of prayer who should be imitated and he also served as a Christological “type” alongside other scriptural exempla such as Moses, David, and Daniel.¹³³ Aside from the posture of prayer being of import, *James* does not appear to reflect traditions about Elijah’s superhuman power or his ascension; in contrast, *James* emphasizes Elijah’s nature “just like us” (*Jas* 5:17).

The last parabiblical example provides the clearest connection to *James*. In *4 Ezra*, a text written in either Hebrew or Aramaic following the destruction of the Second Temple and widely circulated in a Christian context, Ezra “considers himself to be in the long tradition of those who, like Abraham, prayed for the collective that includes the unrighteous.”¹³⁴ As he pleads with God, Ezra lists patriarchs of the past who interceded through prayer, such as Abraham, Moses, and Elijah who prayed, “concerning those so that they will receive rain and for the dead one, so that he might live,” referring to the drought and to his raising of the widow’s son in *1 Kings* 18:17–24 (*4 Ezra* 7:109).¹³⁵ While Davids argues that *James* cannot

¹³¹ Allison, *James*, 776–777; see also Foster, *Exemplars*, 167. In this sense, *Ben Sira* also appears to equate Elijah’s prophecy and his prayer, as the phrase is typically in reference to prophecy.

¹³² Rouwhorst, “The Biblical Stories about the Prophet Elijah,” 180–81.

¹³³ Rouwhorst, “The Biblical Stories about the Prophet Elijah,” 178, and see Aphrahat, *Demonstrations* 4:3, 12; 23:54; Wilde, “Jesus and Mary: Qur’ānic Echoes of Syriac Homilies,” 293.

¹³⁴ Najman, *Losing the Temple*, 7–8, 84. Najman lists translations in Syriac, Latin, Ethiopic, Armenian, and Arabic, as well as fragments in Coptic and Georgian reflecting a Greek edition.

¹³⁵ Two other exempla featured in *James* also come into play for this “Ezra”: Job, though here the narrator Ezra, like Job, is concerned with questions of theodicy, rather than with Job’s example (*4 Ezra* 4:12; 7:65–68, 116–117), and Abraham (cf. *4 Ezra* 7:106); see Najman, *Losing the Temple*, 82–84. Najman argues that *4 Ezra* represents a “reboot” after the destruction of the Second Temple in which “scriptural tradition is presented as destroyed” in a time of crisis on the road to a Judaism remade. The de-textualization of *4 Ezra*’s scriptural allusions – a striking feature in light of “the textualization that ancient Judaism underwent during the exilic and Second

have known and cited *4 Ezra* because it was likely completed after *James* was “already published,” it is now more commonly asserted that *James* may have been written significantly later and may actually have been influenced by *4 Ezra*.¹³⁶ *James* may or may not be aware of *4 Ezra*, but the shared tradition of Elijah’s prayers for rain and that prayer can raise someone from the dead – without reference to Elijah’s prophecy, his conflict with the prophets of Baal over idolatry, his fiery ascension, or his expected return (cf. *Mal* 4:5) – is a rather modest and specific overlap. If, as Popkes argues, *James* is working not from whole texts from the Septuagint but from a compilation of excerpted works, *4 Ezra* may have been among these. Again we see both the stability and malleability of an exemplar on display: while traditions abound on Elijah’s supernatural reputation, including within the New Testament, *James* narrows in on the effectiveness of Elijah’s prayer, emphasizing the accessibility of his results: anyone who prays and does not doubt can accomplish the same (*Jas* 1:5–8; 5:13–20).

11. JESUS, THE ISAIANIC SUFFERING SERVANT

Into this you have been called, because Christ also suffered for you, leaving behind an example (ὁπολιμπάνων ὑπογραμμὸν) so that you might follow in his steps... (*1 Pet* 2:21)

11.1 The Suffering Servant in the Hebrew Bible

The four “Servant Songs” of *Isaiah* can be found in 42:1–4, 49:1–6, 50:4–9, and 52:13–53:12. It is the last of these which is alluded to in *1 Peter* 2:22–25 and which has been most commonly interpreted in Christian literature as a prophecy regarding the sacrificial suffering and death of

Temple periods” – manifests in many cases as the reference to scriptural exempla, who *recall*, rather than cite, scripture, 91.

¹³⁶ Davids, “The Pseudepigrapha in the Catholic Epistles,” 232. On the pseudepigrapha and the second century dating of *James*, see Allison, *James*, 3–32, esp 29–32; Nienhuis, *Not by Paul Alone*, esp chapter 2, “Early James Traditions and the Canonical Letter of James,” 99–161.

Jesus.¹³⁷ The identity of the servant in the context of *Isaiah* is ambiguous and remains unknown. Proposals include that he is an unknown messianic figure, a collective Israel, or an unnamed suffering person such as King Uzziah, King Hezekiah, King Josiah, Jeremiah, or even Isaiah himself.¹³⁸ The relevant passage, *Isaiah* 53:4–12, describes the Servant not in future, prophetic terms but as if the suffering has already taken place: he was “pierced for our lawlessness, he was bruised for our sins; the punishment for our well-being [in the LXX, lit: cultivation of peace, παιδεία ειρήνης] was laid upon him and by his wounds we were healed” (*Isa* 53:5). He was “oppressed and afflicted, but he did not open his mouth” and he “bore the sin of many” (*Isa* 53:7, 12). A portrait emerges of a tortured figure who has brought about the healing of others through the steadfast endurance of his suffering. This is how *1 Peter* characterizes Jesus’s example in 2:21–25.

11.2 Jesus as the Suffering Servant in the Catholic Epistles

In *1 Peter* 2:21–25, Jesus effectively functions as a scriptural exemplar in the style of the others found throughout the Catholic Epistles, described by strong allusions to the Isaianic Suffering Servant. This is not the only instance in the Catholic Epistles in which Jesus is inscribed into a scriptural narrative: in *Jude* 5 Jesus is said to be the one who delivered the Israelites from Egypt and afterward punished the unbelievers in the desert, and *Jude*’s juxtaposition of the examples of the wilderness generation and the sinful angels also means Jesus is responsible for the imprisonment of the angels (*Jude* 5–6). Later in *1 Peter*, Jesus’s suffering will be recalled prior to the reference to his descent to the disobedient spirits who were imprisoned “in the days of Noah” (*1 Pet* 3:19–20). While the latter example does not place Jesus in the time of their

¹³⁷ Ward, “The Servant Songs in Isaiah,” 433. Morna Hooker has famously (and controversially) questioned the significance of the Servant passages for Jesus’s self-understanding and his presentation in the now-canonical gospels, Hooker, *Jesus and the Servant*, see 103–27 on the Servant in the NT.

¹³⁸ Charlesworth, “The Unperceived Continuity of Isaiah,” 16. See also Zehnder, “Observations on the Relationship Between the ‘Servant of the Lord’ in Isaiah 40–55 and Other Salvific Figures in the Hebrew Bible,” 231–82.

disobedience, it strengthens the association between Jesus and exempla from the scriptural past. For Hooker, *1 Peter* “is the earliest definite proof for the full identification of Jesus with the Servant in all its Christological significance.”¹³⁹ And, the tradition invoked in *1 Peter* 1:10–12 exemplified by “the prophets,” as we saw above, lays the groundwork for the prophetic tradition invoked in chapter two to characterize Jesus, creating a tie between two scriptural exemplars in *1 Peter*.¹⁴⁰

In context, this example is for slaves who may be suffering under harsh masters (*1 Pet* 2:18–20). Prior to the Isaianic allusions, the Petrine author writes that Jesus, “left behind an example (ὕπολιμπάνων ὑπογραμμόν)” (*1 Pet* 2:21). Ὑπογραμμόν, a written copy, pattern, or outline, is used only here in the New Testament. When combined with παιδικοί, ὑπογραμμόν is a page from which children learn by copying the letters of the alphabet.¹⁴¹ In Plato, it refers to the drawing of lines by a schoolteacher to help children who are learning how to write.¹⁴² It connotes an example to be imitated and practiced, not only a model to be observed. The reference to Jesus’s example is followed by “in order that you should follow in his steps” (*1 Pet* 2:21), making the exhortation more emphatic. Some consider *1 Peter* 2:21–25 to be a Christ-hymn similar to *Philippians* 2:5–11, possibly one learned and recited at baptism for members of the Christian community.¹⁴³ Horrell also notes the distinction between this and two other key Petrine texts (*1 Pet* 1:19–21 and 3:18–22) that deal primarily with “classically Christological topics” like incarnation, resurrection, and exaltation, as *1 Peter* 2:21–25 focuses

¹³⁹ Hooker, *Jesus and the Servant*, 127.

¹⁴⁰ Hooker, *Jesus and the Servant*, 124–125.

¹⁴¹ Liddell, Scott, and Jones, “ὕπογραμμόν,” 1877.

¹⁴² The only other place ὑπογραμμόν occurs in now-canonical or deuterocanonical literature is in *2 Maccabees* 2:28, in which it refers to guidelines or a visible imprint used by one author to summarize and elaborate on another with a kind of creative license, leaving the responsibility of exact accuracy to the original writer; see Mbuvi, *Temple, Exile, and Identity*, 137 n. 43; Osborne, “Guide Lines for Christian Suffering,” 392.

¹⁴³ See Osborne, “Guide Lines,” 383–89; Sargent, *Written to Serve*, 126; Pearson, *The Christological and Rhetorical Properties of 1 Peter*, 8–9; Horrell, “Jesus Remembered in 1 Peter?” 149.

on “the character and actions of Jesus during his earthly life, prior to and leading up to his death,” emphasizing the living example set by Jesus which is referenced in *1 Peter* 2:21.¹⁴⁴

Jesus is described not only *like*, but *as* the Servant. In a passage Moyise and Menken call the most “elaborate reorganization or rewriting of Is. 53 in the New Testament,” the Petrine author heavily alludes to but does not explicitly cite the text of *Isaiah* 53.¹⁴⁵ Jesus “did no sin and neither was any deceit found in his mouth” (*1 Pet* 2:22), and ἀνομία (*Isa* 53:9 LXX), lawlessness, is replaced by ἁμαρτία, sins. Further, though Jesus was “abused, he did not abuse in return; suffering, he did not threaten” (*1 Pet* 2:23), which captures closely the sense of *Isaiah* 53:7: “oppressed he did not open his mouth.” *1 Peter* 2:24 reads “who bore our sins” and “by his wounds you were healed” corresponding to *Isaiah* 53:4, “he bore our sins and carried our sorrows.” Finally, *1 Peter* 2:25 reads “like sheep going astray,” while *Isaiah* 53:6 has “all like sheep have gone astray.” The Petrine author also replaces πολλός, many, from *Isaiah* 53:12 with “you were healed” (ιάθητε) and removes πάντες from the reference to those who have gone astray (*1 Pet* 2:24–25), allowing both allusions to apply more explicitly to Peter’s readers rather than generally to “many.” At 2:24 the author begins to speak more specifically about Jesus’ sacrifice, moving from a model of peacefulness and patience who believers should emulate to actions particular to Jesus alone.

In addition to the Suffering Servant links, *1 Peter* also describes Jesus and sacrifice in terms related to the Akedah, exhorting readers to “offer up” spiritual sacrifices (*1 Pet* 2:5) and referring to Jesus as one who “offered up” (ἀνήνεγκεν) our sins in his body upon the wood” (*1 Pet* 2:24). The word referring specifically to a cross is σταυρός, but *1 Peter* opts for ξύλον — the term used repeatedly in *Genesis* for the wood Isaac carried up Mount Moriah and on which he was laid (*Gen* 22:3, 6, 7, 9 LXX). This results in echoes in the character of Jesus not only

¹⁴⁴ Horrell, “Jesus Remembered in 1 Peter?” 129–30.

¹⁴⁵ Moyise and Menken, *Isaiah in the New Testament*, 183.

of the Suffering Servant of *Isaiah* 53, but of the binding of Isaac, too—another son “offered up” as a sacrifice on an altar of wood.¹⁴⁶ The Petrine author is concerned not only with the way Jesus acted but with the way believers act, and the suffering of the community (cf. *1 Pet* 2:19, 20; 3:14, 17; 4:15, 19; 5:10) is likened to that of Christ (*1 Pet* 2:21, 23; 4:1). According to Mbuvi, the influence of *Isaiah* 53 on the depiction of Jesus as the Suffering Servant in *1 Peter* indicates that *1 Peter* follows in a stream of tradition that characterized Jesus’ death using *Isaiah*. However, “1 Peter, nevertheless, takes the tradition a step further when he equates the current sufferings of the believers with those of Christ (2.21).”¹⁴⁷ Jesus’ death as an atoning sacrifice is not the focus here; rather, Jesus is upheld as a model of Christian suffering and stands in a long tradition of the messianic interpretation of *Isaiah*’s Servant songs.¹⁴⁸

11.3 Jesus as the Suffering Servant in Parabiblical Literature

1 Peter is not alone in the messianic interpretation of the Suffering Servant. That the suffering of Jesus is reflective of the Suffering Servant of *Isaiah* 53 was a common view among Christian writers.¹⁴⁹ Hints of the messianic interpretation of the Servant songs could already be seen in Second Temple literature, applying to prophetic, eschatological figures such as Elijah (*Sir* 48:10; cf. *Mal* 4:5–5; *Isa* 49:6); the collective suffering of the righteous (*Wis* 2:10–5:23; cf. *Isa* 52:13–53); and possibly even Enoch as “the Son of Man” as (*1 En* 47:1–4; and 71:14–17).¹⁵⁰ While no Jewish sources prior to Jesus’s death unambiguously refer to a suffering messiah, Page argues that the “raw materials” for such a development are clearly present.¹⁵¹ Early

¹⁴⁶ See also van Rensburg’s analysis of salvific metaphors in *1 Peter*, in which he analyses the example of Jesus and its scriptural ties in *1 Pet* 2 as a salvific metaphor, van Rensburg, “The Old Testament in the Salvific Metaphors in 1 Peter,” 381–96.

¹⁴⁷ Mbuvi, *Temple, Exile, and Identity*, 37.

¹⁴⁸ Sargent, *Written to Serve*, 127.

¹⁴⁹ Page, “The Suffering Servant Between the Testaments,” 481, and see n. 1; Hooker, *Jesus and the Servant*, 62–163; Janowski and Stuhlmacher (eds.), *The Suffering Servant: Isaiah 53 in Jewish and Christian Sources*.

¹⁵⁰ Though Page notes that this is by no means a uniform interpretation of *Isa* 53 across pre-rabbinic sources, Qumran, and later rabbinic works, Page, “The Suffering Servant Between the Testaments,” 481–83, 492–93.

¹⁵¹ Page, “The Suffering Servant Between the Testaments,” 492–93.

Christian sources are more clear. Referring to “the scripture” that “contains some things relating to Israel and some things relating to us,” the *Epistle of Barnabas*, for example, says that “he was pierced for our lawlessness, and he has been bruised for our sins; by his wounds we were healed. As a sheep he was led to slaughter, as a lamb is dumb before his shearer” (*Barn* 5:2; cf. *Isa* 53:5, 7). *Barnabas* does not appear to be relying on *1 Peter* here, having cited more closely the text of *Isaiah* 53, including the reference to the “sheep led to the slaughter,” from *Isaiah* 53:7. *1 Peter* 1:23 alludes to *Isaiah* 53:7a – that Jesus was abused but “did not open his mouth” – but not the part cited by *Barnabas*.

In *1 Peter*, Jesus is inscribed over the textual allusions to the Isaianic Suffering Servant, allowing him to serve as a scriptural exemplar alongside the others found throughout the Catholic Epistles. While not necessarily drawing on a particular parabiblical tradition in the identification of Jesus with the Suffering Servant, *1 Peter* is situated within a long history of the messianic interpretation of the Servant passages, including within Jewish Second Temple literature. The Petrine author both nods to such tradition and extends it by using Jesus not only as a messianic sufferer, but as an ethical example to model oneself after.

12. CONCLUSION

Positive scriptural exempla help throughout the Catholic Epistles to illustrate and undergird the central concerns of each author. *James*’s deployment of exempla is tied to the text’s overall literary architecture: Abraham and Rahab exemplify the synergy of faith-works against a false binary of faith versus works (*Jas* 2:21–25); the prophets and Job, in their steadfastness, exemplify the sort of endurance that culminates in *James*’s ideal of teleological perfection (*Jas* 5:10–11); and Elijah’s fervent prayers and their immediate fulfillment show that prayer, literally, *works* (*Jas* 5:17–18). In *1 Peter*, Jesus could be said to be the central exemplar as he is characterized as the Isaianic Suffering Servant (*1 Pet* 2:21–25), while other exemplars have

a Christological referent: the prophets searched and testified to Jesus' mysterious coming (*1 Pet* 1:10–12); Noah and his family's salvation through the ark symbolizes baptism, which is tied to Jesus's resurrection (*1 Pet* 3:20–21); and as Jesus serves as an example for slaves suffering under harsh masters, the example of Sarah's modesty and submission serves as a testimony to doing what is right without fear (*1 Pet* 3:6). The positive exempla in *2 Peter* and *Jude* serve as counterpoints to the negative exempla who characterize both letters' opponents as manipulative false teachers, about whom readers are seriously warned: Noah's virtue saves him and his family from being caught up in the punishment of the sinful angels (*2 Pet* 2:5); Lot escapes the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah due to his righteousness (*2 Pet* 2:6); Michael is an obedient angel who knows his place in the divine hierarchy (*Jud* 8–9); and the prophets spoke about the last days (*2 Pet* 3:2), while Enoch is a herald of the doom in store for the ungodly (*Jud* 14–15).

These positive scriptural exempla also demonstrate substantial intertraditional ties between the Catholic Epistles and texts both within and beyond the books that became canonical. Regarding the possibility of the literary dependence of *James* on a broader range of exegetical discourses, not only the text of the now-canonical Old Testament, Davids asserts that “we do not know for sure that James actually used any of the pseudepigraphical books, but we do know that in every case in which he cites OT narratives this literature witnesses to Jewish traditions which have certainly (or in the case of Rahab, probably) shaped the way James read the OT. The function of these traditions, then, is to provide a contemporary grid through which James reads his canonical traditions.” He incorrectly assumes, however, though this “does not appear to be a conscious activity” of delineation for *James* between “canonical” and “pseudepigraphal” literature, and thus that the former necessarily serves as the controlling norm for the latter.¹⁵² He likewise claims that though *1 Peter* shares significant overlap with

¹⁵² Davids, “The Pseudepigrapha in the Catholic Epistles,” 233.

pseudepigraphical material, none of the parallels are close enough to determine whether *1 Peter* knew the texts in question: the author is “at home in the world of the apocalyptic streams of first century Judaism.”¹⁵³ While it is difficult to adjudicate between a shared traditional matrix of scriptural references and the explicit use of pseudepigraphal source material, it remains the case that if the writers of the Catholic Epistles had been invested in the now-canonical Old Testament as a scriptural norm, then their use of material outside of it would almost certainly be less substantial and load bearing. In contrast, no clear distinction is made throughout the Catholic Epistles between the use of the texts of the now-canonical Old Testament and those that were not included.¹⁵⁴

One overall result of an analysis of the scriptural exempla used throughout the Catholic Epistles – as we have seen here with regard to the positive exempla, but which will prove to be the case for the negative exempla, as well – is the sense of porousness in the notion of a “canon” put to use in the characterization of these figures. Scriptural exempla tend to exhibit stability, as displayed in their reception of previous tradition in agreement with the prestige of certain figures in particular (Abraham, Elijah, Enoch), with the Catholic Epistles’ exempla often mirroring the characterization found in other texts. They also reveal the strategic malleability of intertraditionality: the exempla can be characterized in whatever way is most rhetorically useful. If the limitation of canon necessarily and inevitably begets the generation of an exegetical tradition – as Jonathan Z. Smith has put it, “overcoming limitation through ingenuity”¹⁵⁵ –, so the traditioning of scriptural exempla reflects the ongoing generativity of scriptural reception.

¹⁵³ Davids, “The Pseudepigrapha in the Catholic Epistles,” 239.

¹⁵⁴ The possible exception here is the removal by the author of *2 Peter of Jude*’s examples of Michael the archangel and Enoch, who would both reflect more obvious now-paracanonical tradition in the second-century context in which *2 Peter* was likely written.

¹⁵⁵ See Smith, “Sacred Persistence,” 48–52; Najman, “Traditionary Processes,” 99–108.

CHAPTER FIVE:
NEGATIVE SCRIPTURAL EXEMPLA IN THE CATHOLIC EPISTLE
COLLECTION

In book one of *Adversus haereses*, Irenaeus details the doctrines of “the Cainites,” heretics accused of upholding Judas as a covert hero, rather than a traitor:

Others again declare that Cain derived his being from the Power above, and acknowledge that Esau, Korah, the Sodomites, and all such persons, are related to themselves [...]. They declare that Judas the traitor was thoroughly acquainted with these things, and that he alone, knowing the truth as no others did, accomplished the mystery of the betrayal; by him all things, both earthly and heavenly, were thus thrown into confusion. They produce a fictitious history of this kind, which they style the Gospel of Judas. (*Adv. haer.* 1.31.1)¹

Cain, Esau, Korah, the Sodomites, and “all such persons” are tethered together by their usage as examples of mysterious outsiders possessing special knowledge that resisted and confused conventionality. “Judas the betrayer” therefore belongs to a lineage of such figures from the scriptural past who likewise went against the grain of what Irenaeus perceived to be orthodoxy but who imagined themselves to be accomplishing some secret divine agenda. While Irenaeus is not necessarily citing *Jude* in his usage of these particular negative exempla, particularly since he is arguably only aware of *1 Peter* and *1* and *2 John* among the Catholic Epistles, he is denouncing what he considers to be heresy in large part by associating his opponents (the Cainites) with negative scriptural exempla.² With the exception of Esau, all the scriptural figures mentioned by Irenaeus are among *Jude*’s negative exempla. Irenaeus

¹ Harvey, *Sancti Irenaei episcopi Lugdunensis libri quinque adversus haereses*, volume 1.

² Though, see Trompf, “The Epistle of Jude, Irenaeus, and the Gospel of Judas,” 555–82, who argues that the Cainites are the second-century opponents, perhaps among others, of both *Jude* and Irenaeus (see pages 564–68; he does not necessarily argue that Irenaeus knew *Jude*). While Trompf posits that *Jude* followed and distilled *2 Peter*, the negative exempla used by *Jude* to characterize the letter’s opponents make more sense as an original deployment of anti-heretical exemplarity.

reinforces a tradition of the usage of scriptural exempla while providing a specific case of the polemical usage of negative figures.

Just as we have seen previously with positive figures who serve as examples of virtuous actions or postures, so it is with these negative figures—they embody particular vices and serve as model characterizations of immorality. In the Catholic Epistles, negative exempla serve a number of purposes as illustrative figures, appearing in *1* and *2 Peter*, *1 John*, and *Jude*. They provide contrast with positive characters (as in *2 Peter* and *Jude*); they embody the false teaching of a letter's opponents, in part because of their interpretation as false teachers (as with Cain, for example); and they serve as examples from the scriptural past of precisely what *not* to do.

2 Peter and *Jude* provide the most substantial usage of negative figures in the collection. These negative exempla also make up the portion of *Jude* which is most obviously appropriated by *2 Peter* as an incriminating description of both letters' opponents, who are characterized primarily through the use of negative scriptural exempla. In this way they are accused of leading others astray and earning their inevitable destruction. For *Jude*, these are the "certain persons" who have "secretly slipped in among you," the "ungodly people" who deny Jesus and who take grace as a license to be immoral (*Jude* 4). In *2 Peter*, these persons are explicitly called "false teachers" who "secretly introduce destructive heresies" (*2 Pet* 2:1). *2 Peter* intersperses positive and negative exempla in chapter two, while *Jude* presents negative figures in two triads (vv. 5–7, 11), each followed by a reference back to the false-teaching opponents, likened to the negative figures (vv. 8, 12–13) and then a contrasting positive example (Michael the archangel in v. 9 and Enoch in vv. 14–15). Representative of the core sins of a traditional list of heretics, *Jude*'s second triad of negative figures continues straight into a list of four comprehensive images of the cosmos.³ These natural-world metaphors (e.g., hidden reefs,

³ Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter*, 46. Cf. *Sir.* 16:7–10, *CD* 2:17–3:12; *3 Macc* 2:4–7; Bauckham, *Relatives*, 191.

waterless clouds, fruitless trees, etc., v. 12) emphasize the totality of the false teachers' transgressions against the natural order of creation. For both *Jude* and *2 Peter 2*, the negative scriptural exempla are deployed in the characterization of their opponents as false teachers by whom readers are in danger of being led astray.

In addition to these figures, “the destruction of Korah” (*Jude* 11c) comes as a result of the denial of the divine authority bestowed on Moses and Aaron and the mob of rivals Korah stirred up and led astray; Sodom and Gomorrah illustrate various immoralities, depending on which stream of tradition one follows—a sexual violation of nature (the human desire for “strange” angels) and/or a lack of hospitality; the wilderness generation of Israelites were delivered from Egypt but proved to be disobedient and met their end in the desert; and false prophets, well represented throughout the Hebrew Bible, embody the godlessness of the contemporary opponents of both *2 Peter* and *1 John*.

Just as with the positive exempla, negative exempla provide vivid and familiar examples to illustrate the rhetorical purposes of the authors of the Catholic Epistles, while also demonstrating substantial intertraditional ties beyond the boundaries of what became the Old Testament canon. As with both the composite author portraits of *James*, *Peter*, *John*, and *Jude* and the positive exempla, the connection between the negative figures and their prior scriptural contexts is not as simple as an “New Testament use of the Old Testament,” but rather reveals an intricate web of broader intertraditionality. The use of exempla throughout the Catholic Epistle collection suggests the developed and sharpened usage of characters from the scriptural past who serve as distilled illustrations—for example, the sinful angels are reflective not only of *Genesis* but also of *Enoch*; Cain is not only a murderer but also a false teacher who leads others astray; and Balaam, a rather neutral figure in *Numbers*, is exposed as a greedy false prophet.

As with the positive exempla, I address the negative exempla found throughout the Catholic Epistles in the order in which they appear in the Septuagint.⁴ Again, this is not to ignore the context and rhetorical effect of each exemplar, but rather so that I can treat the Catholic Epistles as a unit, under the historical precedence of their collective reception in an ancient context. This collective reading uncovers a number of interesting trends also highlighted by the positive exempla, including that the Catholic Epistles overall reference notably more scriptural exempla than they cite explicit scriptural passages, and that the characterization of these exempla tends to maintain significant ties to now-paracanonical scripture, not necessarily to reinforce the intracanonical relationship between the Old and New Testaments. With the first negative exemplar – the sinful angels – we find for example that the ties between the Catholic Epistles and Enochic literature go beyond *Jude*'s naming of Enoch as a positive exemplar.

1. SINFUL ANGELS / SPIRITS IN PRISON

[By the Spirit also, Jesus] went and preached to the spirits in prison, who were disobedient at the time when the patience of God was waiting in the days of Noah... (*1 Pet* 3:19–20)

For if God did not spare the angels who sinned, but, in chains of darkness, cast them into the abyss (ταρταρώσας), being kept for judgment... (*2 Pet* 2:4)⁵

The angels, having not kept their own origin (ἀρχὴν) but having deserted (ἀπολιπόντας) their own dwelling, he has kept in chains of eternal darkness until the judgment of the great day. (*Jude* 6)⁶

⁴ See above, chapter 4, n. 3, on the fluctuation of the Jewish canon in the first centuries C.E. The Catholic Epistles were not making use of a definitive collection of Jewish Scriptures, even if some texts may have been widely considered authoritative.

⁵ Σειραῖς is substituted in some manuscripts with σιροῖς, meaning more clearly, “chains of hell” (ABC81 h vg^{ms}; Aug Cass); κολαζομένους τηρεῖν, to guard for punishment, is in 8, A, Ψ, 5. 81. 436. 1735. 2344. This is more closely in line with *Jude*'s τηρήσαντας, having kept. In Job LXX, Tartarus is used more generally to qualify “the deep” where a sea monster lives; cf. Job LXX 41:23–24 [MT 41:31–32].

⁶ Ἀλουτοῖς και is inserted (33. 2344) between δεσμοῖς and αἰδίοις, causing the text to read “eternal and unbreakable chains,” which may be redundant. *Jude* is more specific than *2 Peter*, using “eternal chains,” which may be what *2 Peter* is getting at with “chains of the underworld.”

In *2 Peter* and *Jude* the sinful angels represent an original and fundamental trespassing of nature and the eschatological judgment reserved for those who violate proper boundaries. Both *Jude* and *2 Peter* allege that their opponents are like the sinful angels. Like other scriptural figures who are rehabilitated or whose (im)moral edges are sharpened by parabiblical literature (e.g., Job, Sarah, and, as we shall see, Balaam, Cain, and Korah), so are the angels of *Genesis* 6:1–4 more precisely condemned in such texts than in the now-canonical account, a fact reflected in their usage in the Catholic Epistles.

1.1 Sinful Angels in the Hebrew Bible

According to *Genesis* 6, “the sons of God” (ὕιοι τοῦ θεοῦ) were taken with the beauty of human women and took some of these women as their wives (*Gen* 6:2 LXX). After this, God limited the human lifespan to 120 years (*Gen* 6:3). But the damage had already been done: the hybrid Nephilim, born to the sons of God and their human wives, continued on the earth as “men of renown” (ἄνθρωποι οἱ ὀνομαστοί, *Gen* 6:4 LXX). Despite the brevity of the *Genesis* account, the passage became one of high importance during the Second Temple period, serving to explain the origin of evil, sin, and the degradation of the good world God had created.⁷ To evoke the angels as sinful exemplars, then, was to cite *the* origin of heavenly apostasy. Falk calls this brief narrative a “myth fragment” that “poorly fits its context, and it reads like an off-hand allusion to a well-known story, the point of which remains obscure without prior familiarity.”⁸ Behind the opacity of the *Genesis* narrative of the sinful angels is a much more substantial account in *1 Enoch*, which elaborates on the sinful angels – the Watchers – and their demise. It is this narrative, rather than *Genesis*, that also lies behind the Catholic Epistles’ references to the sinful angels.

⁷ Falk, *Parabiblical Texts*, 43–44. Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter*, 51. A Few of Falk’s examples of textual expansion include: *1 En* 6–7, 106–107; *Jub.* 4:15, 22; 5:1–11; 7:21–24, 27; 8:3; *CD* 2:1621; 4Q180 7–9; *TLev* 18:12; 1Q27 1i5, 2 *Bar.* 56:11–16.

⁸ Falk, *Parabiblical Texts*, 43.

1.2 Sinful Angels in the Catholic Epistles

1 Peter 3:19–20, which shares the Noachic/salvific context of *2 Peter* 2:4, arguably refers to the sinful angels.⁹ Having “died for sins once for all, the just for the unjust,” Jesus preaches to imprisoned spirits (ἐν φυλακῇ πνεύμασιν) who were disobedient contemporaries of Noah (*1 Pet* 3:18-20). However, some have wondered whether the imprisoned spirits are the fallen angels of *1 Enoch* or humans in Sheol, particularly considering that *1 Peter*’s reference to the sinful angels is not obvious unless now-parabiblical literature is taken into account. According to *1 Peter* 3:17, it is better to suffer for doing right than for doing wrong; Jesus serves as an example of suffering for doing what is right (*1 Pet* 3:18) while the spirits in prison, who were imprisoned as a result of their disobedience, follow as a negative correlative to Jesus. Davids argues persuasively that the spirits are not human souls and cannot be those held in Sheol.¹⁰ Regarding the potentially problematic negative usage of κηρύσσω, *1 Peter* distinguishes between the proclamation of the gospel as εὐαγγελίζεσθαι and Jesus’ proclamation to the imprisoned spirits confirming their damnation.¹¹ Reed also identifies the “spirits in prison” as these same Watchers in a “terse reference” in *1 Peter*, while VanderKam also takes this as a given, as highlighted by the reference to the time of the flood.¹² The πνεύματα appear to be the sinful angels, as they are nonhuman, disobedient, and contemporaries of Noah.¹³ Reed further notes that *1 Peter* uses “Enochic tradition in the service of Christology,” and that if the audience of the letter was “familiar with the story to which he alludes, they would know that Jesus here walks in the footsteps of Enoch, witnessing against the wicked before God’s wrath once again

⁹ *1 Pet* 4:6 also refers to the gospel preached “to the dead” (νέκροις). The two verses are clearly related: For *1 Peter*, Jesus makes it possible that humans, though “put to death in the flesh” might “be made alive in the spirit” (*1 Pet* 3:18) while the dead, though “judged in the flesh” might “live in the spirit” (*1 Pet* 4:6).

¹⁰ Davids, “Pseudepigrapha in the CE,” 235. However, a different Petrine text suggests otherwise: in the *GPet*, when Jesus is raised from his tomb, a voice from heaven asks, “have you preached to the dead [or, to those fallen asleep, κοιμωμένοις]?” and an animate cross answers, yes (*GPet* 10:39c). See P. Foster, *The Gospel of Peter*, 408, 417–418.

¹¹ Davids, “Pseudepigrapha in the CE,” 236.

¹² Reed, *Fallen Angels*, 110; VanderKam, “1 Enoch, Enochic Motifs, and Enoch in Early Christian Literature,” 62–63. He also cites *1 Enoch* 15:4, 6, 7 identifying the Watchers as “spiritual” before “lust overcame them.”

¹³ This is the dominant perspective according to Allen, “Genesis in James, 1 and 2 Peter and Jude,” 159.

cleanses the earth of wickedness.”¹⁴ The readers of *1 Peter* likely knew the myth of the Watchers as it is unclear what exactly the spirits are imprisoned *for* unless we know the myth behind this passage—a background about which *2 Peter* and *Jude* offer a little bit more information.

For both *Jude* and *2 Peter*, the sinning angels represent the inescapable eschatological divine judgment reserved for those who violate their proper boundaries—in other words, apostates. As Reed notes, the fallen angels are placed alongside human sinners, which she claims reinforces their function as “exemplars of the punished wicked,” rather than active spreaders of apostasy.¹⁵ While both *2 Peter* and *Jude* use the angels in a similar manner, a few differences are worth noting. *2 Peter* juxtaposes the sinful angels with the positive example of Noah, grouping these exempla chronologically according to the scriptural narrative and highlighting the contrasting exemplary actions of both. The association between the sinful angels and Noah also serves as an overlap with *1 Peter*, in which a similar juxtaposition takes place (*1 Pet* 3:19–21). *Jude*, on the other hand, lists negative exempla in triads, and the sinful angels are listed with the wilderness generation of Israelites and Sodom and Gomorrah—three examples of divine retribution for apostasy. While *Jude* elaborates that the angels’ sin was trespassing their “proper dwelling,” *2 Peter*, in an apparent abbreviation of *Jude*, only states that they sinned and were punished for it. *2 Peter* assumes that readers are familiar with the shared sexual sins of the fallen angels and the Sodomites, “presenting them as twin paradigms of the sexually impure... implying but not explaining what these angels share with the inhabitants of Sodom.”¹⁶ Sexual sin, however, is not the point here: the Sodomites and sinful angels are grouped with the wilderness generation, suggesting that apostasy, which includes

¹⁴ Reed, *Fallen Angels*, 110.

¹⁵ Reed, *Fallen Angels*, 104. She also asserts “it is not improbable that traditional lists of paradigmatic sinners circulated at this time [the late first or early second century, when *Jude* was written], akin to the lists of the biblical heroes found in many texts,” though in this case we can be certain *Jude* was dependent on the *Book of the Watchers* and not necessarily one of such lists since the letter quotes directly from it.

¹⁶ Reed, *Fallen Angels*, 107.

the trespass of the angels and the desire of the Sodomites for “strange [angel] flesh” is the focus.

1.3 Sinful Angels in Parabiblical Literature

As noted above, the reference in three Catholic Epistles to the sinful angels, or the Watchers, appears to stem not from the *Genesis* 6 account but rather from the extensive narrative about the Watchers in *1 Enoch*. Regarding the angels’ punishment unmentioned in *Genesis*, for example, *1 Enoch* offers more specific detail: “Bind Azazel hand and foot, and throw him into the darkness... in order that he may be sent into the fire on the great day of judgment” (*1 En* 10:4–6).¹⁷ For Hultin, it is specifically the fall of the angels which is the “paradigmatic sin,” not only the sinful angels who are paradigmatic exempla in *Jude* 6. Moreover, while *Gen* 6:1–4 is widely interpreted as a reference to the “Fall of the Watchers,” *1 Enoch* 6–16 is the “earliest and most influential version of this mythic event” and the sustained connections to *1 Enoch* throughout *Jude* make it safe, according to Hultin, to presume that *1 Enoch* was the source of this tradition.¹⁸ That *1 Peter*, *Jude* and *2 Peter* all take for granted their audiences’ awareness of the Watchers’ sin and consequential punishment – even apart from the *Genesis* narrative – indicates an unhesitating reliance on ancient mythologies apart from *Genesis* and what became the canonical Old Testament. This is once again an example of the intertraditional tethers between scriptural exempla in the Catholic Epistles and parabiblical tradition.

Reed wonders, “in appealing to the *Book of the Watchers*, did [Jude and other Jesus followers] deliberately embrace a text that was noncanonical among other Jews? In other words, should the earliest Christian use of Enochic pseudepigrapha be seen as one of a series of strategies by which this movement distinguished itself from the rest of Israel?”¹⁹ However,

¹⁷ Isaac (transl.), “1 (Ethiopian Apocalypse of) Enoch,” 17.

¹⁸ Hultin, “Jude’s Citation of 1 Enoch,” 114.

¹⁹ Reed, *Fallen Angels*, 129.

as Reed also notes, “the earliest Christian approach to Gen 6:1–4 is one of many examples that serve to remind us of the profound continuity with Judaism that served as the very ground for such innovations.”²⁰ The “innovations” to which she refers are not heterodox movements within Christianity but rather the gradual distinguishing of Christianity from Judaism. If it is indeed the case that Christians using *1 Enoch* were intentionally creating distance from Judaism, then the use of scriptural exempla, at least in the case of the sinful angels but perhaps others as well, simultaneously tethers these Christian letters to Jewish tradition and distinguishes the Christian usage of that tradition from its use by contemporary Jewish sects.²¹ That is, the use of exempla from the *Jewish* scriptural past ties Christianity to this literary-mythic history while at the same time constructing a present ethical framework for the Christian community—Christian authors participate in Jewish scriptural development; they don’t simply appropriate it as Christian scripture. The sinful angels play a role in this appropriative ethic as imprisoned spirits in *1 Peter* and as archetypal trespassers in *2 Peter* and *Jude* who illustrate the inevitable demise of those who would become like them.

2. CAIN

[We should love one another,] not like Cain, who was from the evil one and killed his brother. And why did he kill him? Because his works were evil, while those of his brother were righteous. (*1 John* 3:12)

Woe to them, because they have gone the way of Cain... (*Jude* 11a)

²⁰ Reed, *Fallen Angels*, 122.

²¹ According to Reed, some studies “construct a monolithic pre-Rabbinic Judaism and anachronistically define what is ‘normative’ on the basis of much later Rabbinic views,” suggesting that “the Pharisaic sect and/or the ‘mainline’ Judaism of Second Temple Judaism simply evolved into Rabbinic Judaism”; however, it is more likely that “the multiformity of pre-Rabbinic Judaism persisted even after the destruction of the Temple, defining the religious landscape from which the Rabbinic movement (and early Christianity) emerged,” *Fallen Angels*, 133.

2.1 Cain in the Hebrew Bible

Cain illustrates murder as the ultimate act of hatred for *1 John* and represents an archetypal false teacher for *Jude*. He begins Jude's second triad of negative scriptural exempla, this time of figures traditionally known not only for being heretical sinners themselves, but also for teaching their ways to others: Cain, Balaam, and Korah. Each of the triad has, in some way, gone 'off-message' from the truth and serves as a representative of heresy.²² As we have seen with other exempla, the portrait of Cain in the Catholic Epistles is not only reflective of his portrayal in *Genesis*, but also of parabiblical literature characterizing him as a false teacher and a heretic—even as the son of the devil and the father of all heretics.

In *Genesis* 4, Eve gives birth first to Cain and then to Abel. After some time, both sons brought an offering before God—Cain from the fruit of the ground and Abel from his flock. God “regarded,” or noticed, Abel’s offering; Cain’s was ignored (*Gen* 4:5). Apparently unable to bear this rejection, Cain murders Abel in a field (*Gen* 4:8). After the murder, God states and then Cain reiterates that as a punishment he will be *נֹדֵד*, a fugitive and a wanderer, which is a play on the place where Cain settles, *בְּאֶרֶץ נֹדֵד*, or Nod (literally: in the land of wandering, *Gen* 4:12, 14 MT). Cain believes everyone will want him dead, too (*Gen* 4:14 MT). In Hebrew, Cain is thus “a wanderer and a vagrant” in “the land of wandering” (*Gen* 4:12 MT). In the Septuagint, however, Cain says, “I will be confined (*στένων*) and trembling (*τρέφων*)” and the place he settles is called *γῆ Ναιδ*, the Land of Nod—an indeclinable proper name, so the linguistic play on wandering does not exist in Greek as it does in Hebrew (*Gen* 4:16).

2.2 Cain in the Catholic Epistles

For *1 John*, Cain’s action exemplifies murder as an ultimate act of hatred against another person. This is especially the case considering that “the commandment you have heard from

²² Davids, *2 Peter, Jude*, 68.

the beginning” is to love one another (*1 John* 3:11). The love command is heightened by the insistence that hatred is equivalent to murder, calling anyone who hates a brother or sister ἀνθρωποκτόνος, literally, humanslayer (*1 John* 3:15, used twice).²³ Cain is said to be “from the evil one” and he kills his brother *because* his works were righteous and Cain’s were evil (*1 John* 3:10, 12). *Genesis* gives no indication that Cain’s *offering* was evil, only that it was “of the fruit of the ground” (*Gen* 4:3) while Abel’s was “the firstlings of his flock and their fat portions” (*Gen* 4:4). It is worth noting that Abel does not serve as an illustrative exemplar here in the same way as Cain, and he remains unnamed, despite the declaration that his works were righteous. Abel does not exemplify love in the same way that Cain exemplifies hatred.²⁴ It may seem that, for *1 John*, Cain is straightforwardly characterized as a murderer, having killed his brother in the narrative of *Genesis* 4, but we are also told that Cain was “from the evil one”—a possible tie to *John*, where Jesus accuses “the Jews” of being “from your father, the devil” (*John* 8:44).

Jude does not appear to be attributing the particular sin of murder to the false teachers accused of following Cain. Instead, *Jude* has grouped Cain among archetypal heretics also known for leading others astray: Balaam and Korah. All three are destined for destruction as a result of their intentional deception, and *Jude* proclaims, “woe to them” – his false-teaching opponents, those “irrational animals” and “ungodly people” (*Jude* 8, 10) – who would lead others astray like these scriptural examples from the past. Bauckham explains that Cain’s “way” is a reference to having followed him by imitating his sin, listing many examples where “walked in the way of...” means to follow someone’s (im)moral example. Cain was not only the first murderer but also “the archetypal sinner and the instructor of others in sin” and “the

²³ The root of this noun is the same as the verb used in *Genesis* 4 LXX, κτεινω, rather than σφάζω, the verb used by *1 John* to describe Cain’s action against Abel when he “rose up against his brother and killed him” (ἀπέκτεινεν, *Gen* 4:8).

²⁴ However, Abel is an exemplar of *faith* in *Hebrews* 11:4, 12:24.

prototype of hatred and envy toward one's brothers."²⁵ According to Davids, *Jude* may also be aligning himself against false teachers who, like the Sadducees, did not believe in final judgment and therefore did not believe there would be any punishment for doing evil.²⁶ It is not only the *Genesis* portrait of Cain that is reflected in *Jude*'s reference to Cain's "way," as Jewish and other early Christian interpretations can also be inferred.²⁷

2.3 Cain in Parabiblical Literature

Further to the use of parabiblical tradition reflected in Cain's characterization in both *1 John* and *Jude*, Dochhorn notes a tradition, found in a variety of sources, that Cain may not only be "from the evil one" in a metaphorical sense but also in lineage, as the product of Eve's desire for the devil—a tradition that he argues anchors the context of *1 John* 3:12. In *Targum Pseudo-Jonathan*'s version of *Genesis* 4:1, Eve's desire for "the Angel" (the devil) produces Cain, and she says she has "acquired a husband, the Angel of the Lord."²⁸ This tradition begets the understanding of the wicked as the sons of Cain as well as that of "transferred" devil sonship.²⁹ However, Dochhorn argues, the reference to Cain in *Jude* is not as a murderer but as a heretic, and this tradition provides yet more evidence of the parabiblical ties of *Jude*'s scriptural exempla.³⁰ Furthermore, with regard not only to Cain but also Balaam and Korah, alongside whom he is situated, this illustrates "[t]he extent to which Jude operates with extra-biblical Jewish tradition in the rest of his epistle," which, "makes it virtually certain that, in verse eleven, he has in mind not only the O.T. accounts of Cain, Balaam and Korah, but also the use

²⁵ Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter*, 79. Cf. *TBenj* 7:5; *1 Clem* 4:7; Josephus, *Ant.* 1.52–66; Philo, *Det.* 32, 78.

²⁶ Davids, *2 Peter, Jude*, 66, n.25.

²⁷ Bauckham, *Relatives*, 183, 189.

²⁸ Maher, *Targum Pseudo-Jonathan: Genesis*, 31 n. 2.

²⁹ Dochhorn, "Kain, der Sohn des Teufels," 169–187. For a similar argument, see García Martínez, "Eve's Children in the Targumim," 27–45. See also *John* 8:44, where Jesus accuses the Jews of being children of "your father, the devil... a murderer from the beginning," in contrast to Abraham's children.

³⁰ Dochhorn, "Eine starkes Stück Schrift," 187 and n. 45. Dochhorn points to a tradition in *Targum Pseudo-Jonathan* on *Gen* 4:8 and Polycarp, *Phil* 7:1, also hinted at in *1 John*, that even before Abel's murder, Cain denied the judgment and resurrection and therefore also the divine order of retribution.

made of these men in subsequent Jewish tradition.”³¹ The use of scriptural exempla in *Jude* is highly reflective of parabiblical tradition.

Cain is therefore received as both the son of the devil and the father of the wicked and a paradigmatic teacher of evil and heresy. This characterization is reflective not only of the *Genesis* account, particularly in its Greek form, but especially of other interpretive traditions, including *Targum Pseudo-Jonathan* and Polycarp’s *Letter to the Philippians*. Here again we see that a scriptural exemplar in the Catholic Epistles maintains the porous boundary between what became canonical and parabiblical traditions.

3. KORAH

...and they were destroyed in the rebellion of Korah. (*Jude* 11c)

3.1 Korah in the Hebrew Bible

The destruction of Korah and the Korahites in *Numbers* comes as a result of the denial of the divine authority bestowed on Moses and Aaron and the mob of rivals Korah stirred up and led astray. For *Jude*, Korah represents both rebellion and false teaching—characterizations levelled against the letter’s opponents especially through the triad of the negative exemplars of Balaam, Cain, and Korah. *Jude*’s use of Korah is unique not only among the Catholic Epistles but within the entire New Testament aside from a passing quote of *Numbers* 16:5 in *2 Timothy* 2:19: “[t]he Lord knows those who are his,” referring to those who are able to approach God in *Numbers* 19. This single reference, in addition to *Jude*’s, is so obscure that most readers would likely not recognize its original context.

³¹ G. H. Boobyer, “The Verbs in Jude 11,” *NTS* 5.1 (1958), 45–47, 46. Boobyer also argues that the succession does not represent increasing severity of crime and punishment, but rather are all “datives of manner,” 47.

The rebellion of Korah and the Korahites is found in *Numbers* 16, narratively preceding the Balaam narrative (*Num* 16:1–34). Korah, Dathan, and Abiram “rose up before Moses, together with some of the sons of Israel... they assembled together against Moses and Aaron...” and accused the two leaders of exalting themselves above the rest of the people (*Num* 16:1–3). Dathan and Abiram further accuse Moses of bringing them up out of “a land flowing with milk and honey” (presumably Egypt) to die in the wilderness (*Num* 16:13).³² As chief priest, Aaron held authority over the Korahites, who were among the Levites—the priestly tribe purified and set apart to serve in the Tent of Meeting as mediators between God and the Israelites (*Num* 8:5–26). Throughout the exchange, Moses calls them “sons of Levi” as if to emphasize their legitimate priestly lineage alongside the illegitimacy of their attempted usurpation (*Num* 16:7, 8, 10). In the end, they are outdone in their attempt to establish self-imposed order: the earth opens and swallows everyone and everything belonging to Korah, “and they perished (ἀπόλοντο) from the midst of the assembly (τῆς συναγωγῆς)” (*Num* 16:27–35, esp. 31–32; 26:9–10). According to *Numbers* 16, Moses warned everyone to stay away from Korah and his kind lest they be “destroyed along with (συναπόλησθε) all their sin” (*Num* 16:26). Because the rebellion and the threat of destruction-by-association are so clear, Korah is perhaps the most obvious exemplar of the opponents of *Jude* among the three successive archetypes of heresy and leading others astray. We also see a tie to *Jude*’s first negative triad in which the wilderness generation, the sinful angels, and Sodom and Gomorrah each represent both apostasy and its destructive consequences.

³² A similar bitterness about leaving Egypt behind can be found in *Num* 14:1–4, in which the Israelites grumble and say they should choose a new leader and return to Egypt, and *Num* 11:4–34, in which the Israelites grumble about Moses’s leadership and their lack of food, saying they had fish, melon, cucumber, leeks, onion, and garlic in Egypt, and they are tired of manna, the coriander-like grain that settled on the ground with the dew.

3.2 Korah in the Catholic Epistles

Through the illustration of Korah, then, the false teachers are accused of self-appointment to positions of power devoid of accountability or divine ordination—and therefore the claim to illegitimate authority. *Jude*'s claim that the false teachers are not only *like* but in fact *have already* perished in Korah's rebellion is a forceful way of equating his contemporaries with the rebels in *Numbers*, and such a vague reference to Korah's destruction suggests that his rebellion and demise were well known.³³ It may be the exceptional specificity and intensity of Korah's fate—being swallowed whole by a suddenly appearing chasm—that makes his destruction worth mentioning where Cain's and Balaam's are not. *Jude*'s list of these three figures, culminating in Korah despite being out of narrative chronology, has the climactic rhetorical effect of giving all three negative exempla, as well as *Jude*'s opponents, a share in Korah's destruction.³⁴

3.3 Korah in Parabiblical Literature

Parabiblical sources do not appear to expand on the *Numbers* narrative as considerably as upon those of Cain and Balaam, though Korah became “a prime example in Jewish culture of the judgment God metes out to those who fail to follow the law that is given”³⁵ and a proverbial illustration of a rebel or schismatic in both Jewish and Christian tradition.³⁶ While the now-canonical account would seem to have very little cohesive context, as Feldman points out, the scene of Korah's rebellion is juxtaposed in both Josephus and Philo with other examples of the Israelites' disobedience toward their God-appointed leadership. For Pseudo-Philo, the account

³³ Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter*, 83. And cf. *Targum Pseudo-Jonathan* on *Num* 26:9, in which Korah, Dathan, and Abiram are said to have “made a schism”; *I Clem* 51:1–4, where Korah exemplifies those “who set themselves up as leaders of rebellion and dissension”; and *Prot. Jas.* 9:2, in which a priest warns Joseph to “remember what the Lord did to Dathan and Abiram and Korah, how the earth opened and they were swallowed up on account of their contradiction (ἀντιλογία, the same term used in *Jude*).”

³⁴ Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter*, 84; Davids, *2 Peter, Jude*, 68.

³⁵ Reese, *2 Peter and Jude*, 56.

³⁶ Davids, *2 Peter, Jude*, 67. He lists the examples of Josephus, *Ant.* 4.14–21; Pseudo-Philo, *Antiquities* 16; and *I Clem* 4:12; 51:1–4.

represents a revolt not only against Moses but, in more pointedly theological terms, against God and the Torah.³⁷ The Korahites rejected the divinely conferred authority of Moses and Aaron in a rebellion not simply against human leadership but against God and God’s divine law. While this more theological rebellion can be inferred from the narrative in *Numbers*, it is not explicit, since the Korahites specifically reject the leadership of Moses and Aaron in *Numbers* 16.

Jude, then, reflects both now-canonical and parabiblical tradition in that Korah is representative not only of rebellion against Moses or religious leadership but, in an interpretive move, against God. As a common illustrative scriptural exemplar in both Jewish and Christian tradition Korah is both stable, in that he represents rebellion, and malleable, such that *Jude* can emphasize his role as a schismatic teacher whose destruction is also in store for the false-teaching opponents of *Jude*.

4. BALAAM

They left the straight path and wandered astray (ἐπλανήθησαν), having followed the way of Balaam, son of Bosor, who loved the profit (μισθὸν) of unrighteousness. But he received a rebuke for his transgression by a mute donkey who spoke in a human voice and restrained the prophet’s madness. (*2 Peter* 2:15-16)

...and they rushed greedily into the error (πλάνη) of Balaam for profit (μισθοῦ). (*Jude* 11b)

4.1 Balaam in the Hebrew Bible

Balaam is a seemingly benign figure in the “Balaam cycle” of *Numbers* 22–24, if not at least an ambivalent one—he does, after all, bless Israel, apparently obedient to the words spoken to him by God and an angel.³⁸ However, Balaam is revealed to be a subtly malevolent figure, and

³⁷ Feldman, “Philo’s Interpretation of Korah,” 55–56.

³⁸ Cf. *Num* 23:7–10, 18–24; 24:3–9.

his negative portrayal at the end of *Numbers* and in *Deuteronomy*, *Joshua*, and *Nehemiah* is later echoed by *2 Peter* and *Jude* (*Num* 31:8; *Deut* 23:5; *Josh* 13:22, 24:9–10; *Neh* 13:2).³⁹ Balaam’s greedy desire for payment betrayed him as a prophet-for hire. As part of the triad of heretics in *Jude* 11 and among a grouping of negative exempla in *2 Peter*, the figure of Balaam is deployed as an accusative characterization of both letters’ opponents—false teachers who would lead the readers astray. As there is no shortage of ancient opinions about Balaam, this portrayal in the New Testament is both sharpened and complicated by a wide range of ancient literature.

In *Numbers* 22 Balaam is summoned by Balak, King of Moab, to put a curse on Israel, as he feared that the Israelites would decimate Moab as they did the Ammonites (*Num* 22:2–6). That night, God tells Balaam he cannot go to Balak or attempt the curse, but after a second request by Balak and his messengers, God tells Balaam to go and do only what God tells him (*Num* 22: 9–20). The prophet appears to reject Balak’s bribe outright in *Numbers* 22:18. Balak’s offer to Balaam is to “honor you richly and whatever you say I will do for you” (*Num* 22:17; ἐντίμως γὰρ τιμήσω in LXX). This euphemistic bribe is clarified when Balaam “refuses” a price he names himself, twice: “[e]ven if Balak gave to me his house full of silver and gold I would not be able to go against the word of the Lord God to do it” (*Num* 22:18; 24:13 LXX).⁴⁰ While he may not expect to receive a house full of silver and gold, the excessive price indicates he hopes for a substantial sum and it is here that his immoral character is obviously displayed: he negotiates despite the knowledge he will be unable to curse Israel, and is indeed unsuccessful in doing so (*Num* 22:12, 17-18, 20, 35; 23:11-12, 25-26; 24:10-13). Despite having told him to go, God is angry and sends an angel to block Balaam’s way and to prevent his donkey from turning either “right or left”—a scene reminiscent of the call to Israel not to

³⁹ For a thorough examination of Balaam in a variety of texts, see Robker, *Balaam in Text and Tradition*.

⁴⁰ The situation is similar to that in *Genesis* 23, where Abraham buys a field in which to bury Sarah. Abraham offers to pay but must keep insisting that the owner name his price (*Gen* 24:4, 8–9, 13), which he finally does (*Gen* 24:15–16).

“turn to the right or to the left.”⁴¹ But Balaam does not see it and he beats his donkey three times for getting him stuck (*Num* 22:21–30). Finally, the donkey speaks, asking Balaam why he continues to beat it, and Balaam answers that it has made a fool of him—and only then does Balaam see the angel standing in the road (*Num* 22:31–33). Despite having blocked Balaam’s way, the angel then tells him to go to Balak (*Num* 22:34–35). Balaam proceeds to give seven messages, all of which bless Israel, rather than curse them as Balak had intended (*Num* 23:7–10, 18–24; 24:3–9, 15–24).

After Balaam was compelled to bless rather than curse Israel, later on in *Numbers* we learn that Balaam aided Moab anyways: he advised Balak to use the women of Moab to deceive the Israelites into debauchery and apostasy, which resulted in the deaths of 24,000 people (*Num* 25:1–9, 31:16). According to *Joshua*, “Balaam the diviner” was killed by the Israelites while with the Midianite kings, which, according to later tradition, was when he returned to collect his reward (*Num* 31:8; *Josh* 13:22).⁴² *Deuteronomy* and *Nehemiah* also remember Balaam only for his curse-turned-blessing as a prophet for hire (*Deut* 23:5, *Neh* 13:2). As for Balaam’s blessings, these are credited to God, who compelled Balaam to bless Israel rather than curse them as Balak asked (*Josh* 24:9–10; *Neh* 13:2). His wickedness also came to indicate his role in leading others astray, as *Revelation* condemns false teachers for following Balaam, “who taught Balak to throw a stumbling block (βαλεῖν σκάνδαλον)” before Israel (*Rev* 2:14). The depictions of Balaam that follow the initial account in *Numbers* 22–24, then, show the development of his increasingly negative portrayal, and *2 Peter* and *Jude* both explicitly reinforce his status not only as a greedy prophet but as a false teacher who contributes to the characterization of false teachers.

⁴¹ *Deut* 2:27; 5:32; 28:14; *Josh* 1:7; 23:6; *1 Sam* 6:12; *2 Sam* 2:19; 14:19; *2 Kings* 22:2; *2 Chron* 34:2; *Prov* 4:27; *Isa* 30:21. Bauckham focuses on “the straight way” as a metaphor for obedience: *Jude*, *2 Peter*, 267.

⁴² Bauckham, *Jude*, *2 Peter*, 81.

4.2 Balaam in the Catholic Epistles

Where *Jude* only implies Balaam's avarice – the mistaken “way of Balaam” to which the false teachers “rushed for reward” – *2 Peter* expands the story, covering the same ground at a more leisurely pace by subsuming archetypal heresy under Balaam.⁴³ The irony that an animal altered the path of a prophet may be connected to the “irrational animals” of *2 Pet* 2:12 and *Jude* 10, in keeping with the role reversal of a mute prophet and a speaking donkey.⁴⁴ The false teachers have “left the straight way (εὐθεῖαν ὁδόν) and have gone astray (ἐπλανήθησαν)” and the author refers to τῆ ὁδοῦ τοῦ Βαλαάμ possibly combining *Jude*'s τῆ πλάνη τοῦ Βαλαάμ and τῆ ὁδοῦ τοῦ Κάϊν (*2 Pet* 2:15). *2 Peter* also accuses his opponents of sexual immorality (*2 Pet* 2:2, 10, 13-14) and further associates them with licentiousness both by naming Balaam of *Bosor* (a possible play on the Hebrew *basar*, flesh⁴⁵), rather than Beor (*Num* 22:5), and by condemning his love of wages earned through his immoral advice (*Num* 31:16).⁴⁶ Due to the author's strategic conflation, Balaam stands in as *2 Peter*'s definitive heretic.⁴⁷ Though Balaam is never designated a “prophet” in the Septuagint, he is identified as such by the author of *2 Peter*, possibly in connection with the ψευδοπροφήται of *2 Peter* 2:1-3.⁴⁸ However, false prophecy is not Balaam's chief sin – his prophecies were effective, after all, since God compelled him to bless, rather than curse, Israel – but rather what makes him a negative exemplar is his greed in being willing to curse Israel in exchange for payment.

⁴³ Fornberg, “Balaam and 2 Peter 2:15,” 266.

⁴⁴ Moyer, “Who is the Prophet, and Who the Ass?” 167–183; Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter*, 267; Fornberg, “Balaam and 2 Peter 2:15,” 269.

⁴⁵ Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter*, 268; Fornberg, “Balaam and 2 Peter 2:15,” 268.

⁴⁶ Caulley argues that the variant text in \mathfrak{P}^{72} which has “Balaak” in place of Balaam, which has been read as a careless scribal error, is representative of a theological tendency in the Bodmer Codex to alter the texts toward a christological end, exonerating Balaam and allowing him to remain a “Spirit-filled” Hebrew prophet: Caulley, “BAAAAC in the \mathfrak{P}^{72} Text of *Jude* 11,” 73–82. Robker argues that the author of *2 Peter* is writing from memory, rather than copying from a text, due to the misrepresentation of his title and the preoccupation with money, which, according to Robker, plays only a minor role in the *Numbers* narrative, *Balaam in Text and Tradition*, 229–61.

⁴⁷ Fornberg, “Balaam and 2 Peter 2:15,” 267.

⁴⁸ Cavallin, “the False Teachers of 2 Pt as Pseudo-Prophets,” 267. See also 4Q339, an Aramaic text in which Balaam is listed among false prophets who arose in Israel; García Martínez, “Balaam in the Dead Sea Scrolls,” 71.

In some traditions, Balaam is received more positively, though in the New Testament he is a definitively negative figure. According to Greene, Balaam, as an outsider diviner-king, was used by competing Israelite priesthods locked in a conflict for and against priestly hegemony—explaining, in part, the positive and negative portrayals of Balaam even within *Numbers*.⁴⁹ Barré notes that “[n]owhere else in the Old Testament is a non-Israelite seer viewed so favorably as in *Numbers* 22–24,” and this, together with an ancient inscription from Tell Deir ‘Allā depicting Balaam in a manner much like the account in *Numbers* 22–24, presents a rare positive characterization of Balaam.⁵⁰ But, Dochhorn notes that Balaam is more clearly characterized as a heretic in *Jude*, as in *Revelation* 2:14, than as a prophet, as in *Numbers*—a factor tied to the parabiblical reception of Balaam in the New Testament.⁵¹ While *Jude* does not use the language of “heresy” in regard to Balaam, the opponents are said to be “certain persons” and “ungodly ones” who crept in secretly and deny Jesus Christ—a claim *2 Peter* expands to say that they “secretly introduce destructive heresies (αἰρέσεις)” (*2 Pet* 2:1).

4.3 Balaam in Parabiblical Literature

Regardless of the positive or negative portrayal of Balaam himself, his prophecy in *Numbers* 24:15–17, the “star and scepter” oracle, was preserved at Qumran in multiple messianic passages—in the *Testimonia* among three other quotations from four messianic figures (*4Q175*), in a battle hymn (*1QM* 11:5–6), and in the *Damascus Document* in what is known as the “Amos-Numbers Midrash” section (*CD* 7:14–21).⁵² García Martínez argues that this may be the oldest messianic interpretation of the biblical text.⁵³ For *1 Enoch* he served as a model

⁴⁹ Greene, “The Balaam Figure,” 68.

⁵⁰ Barré, “The Portrait of Balaam in Numbers 22–24,” 264.

⁵¹ Dochhorn, “Eine starkes Stück Schrift,” 187.

⁵² García Martínez, “Balaam in the Dead Sea Scrolls,” 75–82; Robker notes that no negative word is spoken about Balaam in the Qumran material, *Balaam*, 254–56.

⁵³ García Martínez, “Balaam in the Dead Sea Scrolls,” 76.

for the prophet Enoch himself, who is cast in the mold of Balaam.⁵⁴ Josephus also employed Balaam as a prophetic vehicle, this time for revealing Israel to itself in a speech akin to the Deuteronomist's recapitulation of Israel's history.⁵⁵ But Balaam's reception as a herald of the messianic descendent of David's rule over an eschatological age, or even as a true prophet of Yahweh, does not emerge as the overwhelming portrait of the prophet. In other Jewish scriptures and in the New Testament his greedy desire for payment contributes to his characterization as a negative exemplar—regardless of whatever “true” prophecies he may have been compelled by God to proclaim to Balak. Bauckham cites Pseudo-Philo's expansion of *Numbers* 25 illustrating the long tradition of upholding some bad advice as Balaam's chief sin: here Balaam specifically recommends, “[s]elect the most beautiful women among you and in Midian, and set them before [the Israelites] naked [...] [and] they will sin against the Lord their God and they will fall into your hands, for otherwise you cannot overcome them.”⁵⁶

In *2 Peter* and *Jude* Balaam is not presented as a false prophet exactly, but as an example of greed and one who led others astray—a portrait that may have its roots in the *Numbers* narrative, but that is refracted through other more negative portrayals. The Catholic Epistles perpetuate the characterization of Balaam as a prophet-for-hire—a man with no true loyalty but to his reward, regardless of who paid it, as well as a heretical false teacher. His greediness contributes to these letters' characterizations of their opponents as false teachers who infiltrated their readers' communities to lead them astray. As with the other negative exempla in *2 Peter* and *Jude*, especially the sinful angels, Sodom and Gomorrah, Cain, and Korah, Balaam represents a heretic whose sins have earned him the inevitable destruction reserved for such figures. While Balaam traditions are extant outside the now-canonical texts that portray Balaam

⁵⁴ Greene, “The Balaam Figure,” 97–100. See *1 Enoch* 1.2 and *Num* 23:15–16. See also, Tigchelaar, “Balaam and Enoch,” 87–99.

⁵⁵ Greene, “The Balaam Figure,” 102–103. See Josephus, *Antiquities* 4.6, and the extended account of Balaam's engagement with the Midianite women in 4.6.6–13, which lets Balaam off the hook, even saying he was humble for not claiming the glory of his prophecies for himself.

⁵⁶ Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter*, 81; Pseudo-Philo, *LAB* 18:13.

in a positive light, within the biblical narrative a shifting characterization toward a negative depiction of Balaam can be observed as a result of the interpretation of key elements in the “Balaam cycle” narrative of *Numbers* 22–24, including within *Numbers* itself. Balaam is a somewhat variable figure throughout the collective reception of his brief role in Israel’s literary history, and there is no shortage of interpretations of his character. For the Catholic Epistles, he remains definitively negative, exemplifying both heresy and its inevitable destruction.

5. SODOM AND GOMORRAH

And [if] the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah he condemned to destruction and reduced to ashes, having made them an example (ὑπόδειγμα) of what is coming to the ungodly... (*2 Pet* 2:6)

...just as [the sinful angels] Sodom and Gomorrah and the cities around them, in like manner, having indulged in sexual immorality and having gone after strange flesh, are set forth as an example (δειγμα) of suffering the punishment of eternal fire. (*Jude* 7)

The cities of Sodom and Gomorrah complete *Jude*’s first triad of apostates, while in *2 Peter* they are juxtaposed with “righteous Lot,” who is said to have been tormented by their lawlessness (*2 Pet* 2:7–8). Showered with fire (*Gen* 19:24) and “overthrown” by God for their sinfulness, Sodom and Gomorrah serve as archetypes of divine judgment.⁵⁷

5.1 Sodom and Gomorrah in the Hebrew Bible

In *Genesis* 18 God told Abraham that Sodom and Gomorrah’s sin “is exceedingly grave” (*Gen* 18:20). Abraham bargained for the lives of a few among them who he claimed remained

⁵⁷ Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter*, 53. Cf. *Deut* 29:23; 32:32; *Isa* 1:9–10; 13:19; *Jer* 23:14; 49:18; 50:40; *Lam* 4:6; *Hos* 11:8; *Amos* 4:11; *Zeph* 2:9; *Matt* 10:15; 11:23–24; *Mar* 6:11; *Luk* 10:12; 17:29; *Rom* 9:29 (quoting *Isa* 1:9). Regarding the language of “overthrown,” κατέστρεψεν is also a rare variant of 2 Peter’s καταστροφῆ, Aland, Aland, and Mink, *Editio Critica Maior IV*, 1:227.

righteous, presumably including Lot, who is spared from the cities' destruction (*Gen* 18:20–33; *2 Pet* 2:7–8). When the angels who had previously spoken with Abraham arrive in Sodom, Lot greets them and invites them in for food and shelter; at his insistence, they agree not to spend the night in the town square (*Gen* 19:1–3). But in the night, men from the town surround Lot's house and demand that Lot send the visitors out so that they can have sex with them (*Gen* 19:5). Lot refuses but offers his daughters instead (*Gen* 19:6–8). The visitors pull Lot inside, strike the men of the town with blindness, and implore Lot to take his family and leave before they destroy the city (*Gen* 19:10–15). Lot pleads for them to spare the neighboring town of Zoar so that they do not have to flee into the mountains, and they do so (*Gen* 19:18–22). Then, “the Lord rained down burning sulphur on Sodom and Gomorrah... thus he overthrew those cities...” (*Gen* 19:24).

5.2 Sodom and Gomorrah in the Catholic Epistles

For both *2 Peter* and *Jude*, Sodom and Gomorrah are examples of the destruction in store for those who would follow this epitome of immorality—especially the opponents of *Jude* and *2 Peter*, who are characterized substantially through the use of negative scriptural exempla. *2 Peter* offers the expansion that the cities were reduced to ashes as an example to anyone who would live in the same immoral way, while *Jude*'s appropriation remains distinctive in its emphasis on the eternality of their punishment, with a reference to the “eternal fire,” which carries an eschatological connotation.⁵⁸ Though in the *Genesis* narrative “the entire plain” is decimated, at least one neighboring city is spared: Zoar, to which Lot and his daughters fled for safety (*Gen* 19:20–25). In *Jude*, however, the inclusion of “the cities around them” emphasizes the totality of the destruction wrought on Sodom and Gomorrah.

⁵⁸ Allen, “Genesis in James, 1 and 2 Peter and Jude,” 160.

Jude's reference to "strange flesh" is not to homosexual practices but to the Sodomites' desire for the angels—truly "strange," nonhuman beings (*Gen* 19:4–5). This can be deduced from the *Genesis* narrative, as well, but it is reinforced by the presence of the sinful angels: in order to emphasize the totality of their opponents' rejection of the natural order of creation, both *2 Peter* and *Jude* also give the example of angels trespassing the heavenly boundary to sleep with humans, while the example of Sodom and Gomorrah demonstrates a human desire for angels. The pairing of Sodom and Gomorrah and the sinful angels serves as a two-sided indictment also found in parabiblical literature of forsaking the order of nature—the Watchers desiring humans and the inhabitants of Sodom and Gomorrah desiring angels.⁵⁹

5.3 Sodom and Gomorrah in Parabiblical Literature

Beyond the *Genesis* narrative, Sodom and Gomorrah are a prevalent and definitive example of those who commit immoral acts and incur divine judgment as a result, which can also be found in other ancient Jewish material. Philo provides one example condemning Sodom for homosexual practice, though this is not the norm in wider Jewish tradition, which tended to focus on the violation of hospitality or sexuality in general.⁶⁰ In *Ben Sira*, the "neighbors of Lot" are condemned for their pride (16:8), while in Josephus, Sodom and Gomorrah are said to have been overcome by various sins: pride, injustice, impiety, "sodomitical practices," and the hatred of strangers.⁶¹ In *Jubilees*, the story is shorter than the *Genesis* narrative, rendered "briefly and concisely" with a focus on their judgment, not their precise sin: Sodom and Gomorrah are annihilated for defiling themselves through "sexual sins in their flesh," and it is emphasized that "the Lord will execute judgment in the same way in the places where people

⁵⁹ *Jub* 20:5 and the *TNaph* 3:4–5; see Lietaert-Peerbolte, "Sodom, Egypt, and the Two Witnesses of Revelation 11:8," 75–76: "The examples mentioned point out that Sodom was indeed known for its inversion of nature, to such an extent even that it was referred to as an example also in contexts in which its sexual reputation was unimportant," so it can function as a "sinful town par excellence."

⁶⁰ Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter*, 54. See Philo, *On Abraham* 135–36.

⁶¹ *Ant.* 1.9–11, esp. 1.11.1; text found at <https://penelope.uchicago.edu/josephus/ant-1.html> (accessed 9/11/20).

commit the same sort of impure actions as Sodom—just like the judgment on Sodom” (*Jub* 16:5–6).⁶²

Outside the now-canonical narrative, then, Sodom and Gomorrah are said to be destroyed for reasons other than their sexual immorality, which is symptomatic of their pride and lack of hospitality. While it is not obvious whether these paracanonical traditions undergird the example of Sodom and Gomorrah in the Catholic Epistles, *2 Peter* is similarly vague in the condemnation of their particular sin, focusing instead on their total destruction. *Jude* condemns them for the sexual immorality exhibited by their counter-natural desire for the “strange flesh” of the angels, which is reinforced by the presence of the sinful angels who desired equally “strange” human flesh and trespassed their rightful place to indulge themselves. In the Catholic Epistles, Sodom and Gomorrah are representative of the total destruction awaiting the immoral.

6. THE WILDERNESS GENERATION

Jesus, after having saved a people out of the land of Egypt, destroyed those who did not believe. (*Jude* 5)

6.1 The Wilderness Generation in the Hebrew Bible

The wilderness generation of Israelites were delivered from Egypt but the many who proved to be disobedient to God met their end in the desert, according to *Jude*. The wilderness generation is of a piece with the subsequent two examples, the sinful angels and Sodom and Gomorrah, as a trio of archetypal apostates.

The destruction of the wilderness generation is a pointed example because the judgment is levelled against the very same people who experienced *the* definitive salvific moment in ancient Israel’s history, the Exodus from Egypt. After a group goes out to explore Canaan, at God’s suggestion, the spies return and give a false report that the inhabitants are too

⁶² See van Ruiten, “Lot versus Abraham,” 36.

strong—in fact, they are the descendants of the Nephilim, giants who made the spies seem “like grasshoppers” (*Num* 13:1–33). Their scheme works: fearful of an impending war with these indomitable inhabitants of Canaan before the land can become theirs, the Israelites grumble and proclaim that a new leader should be chosen who could lead them back to Egypt (*Num* 14:1–4). Moses and Aaron attempt to reason with them, pleading with the people not to be afraid or to rebel, but still they consider stoning the two leaders (*Num* 14:5–10). God then speaks to Moses, saying “how long will they not believe in me (ἕως τίνος οὐ πιστεύουσίν μοι)?” and goes on to declare that the unbelievers will not see the Promised Land (*Num* 14:11, 22–35 LXX). Later on, a census is taken, and none of those who rebelled were among “the sons of Israel in the wilderness of Sinai,” with the exceptions of Caleb and Joshua, who were spared from the plague with which God struck the other spies who gave the false report (*Num* 14:36–38; 26:64–65).

6.2 The Wilderness Generation in the Catholic Epistles

“Out of [the land of] Egypt” is a common scriptural phrase, occurring at least 100 times in the form found in *Jude*, and the Exodus is a significant theme in the now-canonical Old Testament.⁶³ While “the wilderness generation” may at first seem rather vague, there is general agreement that *Jude* refers here to the generation of Israelites who were delivered from Egypt only to die in the desert because of their disobedience, condemned for their desire to return to Egypt (*Num* 14:26–35; 32:13). *Jude*’s reference to those who did not believe corresponds to the unbelievers of *Numbers* 14.

The suggestion that *Jesus* delivered the Israelites out of Egypt and then destroyed the unbelievers is certainly not obvious from the narrative in *Exodus*, and there is widespread

⁶³ Cf. *Exod* 3:11; 6:13; 12:51; 13:3, 14; 16:6, 32; 18:1; 32:1, 23; *Lev* 26:45; *Num* 11:1; 20:16; *Deut* 1:27; 4:20; 7:8; 26:8; 29:25; *Josh* 24:30; *I Sam* 12:8; *I Kings* 9:9; *Ps* 114; *Isa* 11:16; *Jer* 7:22, 25; *Hos* 11:1; *Hag* 2:15.

manuscript disagreement regarding the presence of “Jesus” at the Exodus in *Jude* 5.⁶⁴ The NA²⁸ includes Ἰησοῦς in the main text of *Jude* 5, while most manuscripts read κύριος (including Codex Sinaiticus), though a few important exceptions do include Ἰησοῦς, and P⁷² reads, uniquely, θεός χριστός. Is *Jude* referring to the preexistent Christ or exploiting Jesus’ shared Hebrew name with Joshua son of Nun? Susan Graham notes that this narrative of Israel’s rebellion in the wilderness is given little attention by Christian authors prior to Irenaeus, and it tends to be received in two streams: either a focus on the name Joshua and its association with Jesus, or the rebellion and punishment of the Israelites.⁶⁵ The latter is the case in *Jude*, in which the unbelieving Israelites emphasize the destruction awaiting those who rebel against God. Ounsworth concludes that Ἰησοῦς is the original intent of *Jude*, a move he argues would not occur to a scribe as a clarification or expansion of κύριος, which shows the author’s attention to the typology at play between Joshua and Jesus.⁶⁶ However, Bauckham claims *Jude* cannot possibly have been referring either to the preexistent Christ *or* a play on Jesus’ name, despite the second century exploitation of the coincidence of the names of Joshua and Jesus “in the interests of typology” because Joshua did not destroy the unbelievers or punish the sinful angels of *Jude* 6 (an action of the same individual referred to in *Jude* 5).⁶⁷ But, neither did the incarnate Jesus destroy the unbelieving Israelites or the sinful angels. *Jude*’s use of σώσας – where the Septuagint typically reads ἐξήγαγεν, “brought up,” referring not to salvation but to deliverance from slavery at the Exodus – is uncontested in all extant manuscripts and seems to tilt the preferred reading in favor of Ἰησοῦς. Furthermore, the rhetorical point of the passage is that the wilderness generation serves as a scriptural exemplar of the destruction awaiting those who trespass against God, not that Joshua prefigures Jesus; a reference to Joshua is unneeded.

⁶⁴ Variants include κύριος κ. Ψ. 1175. 1448 Byz. 307. 436. 642. 1611; θεός C² 5 vg^{ms}. 442. 1243. 2492 vg^{mss} sy^{ph}; θεός Χριστός P⁷²; κύριος Ἰησοῦς 1735.

⁶⁵ Graham, “The Next Generation: Irenaeus on the Rebellion in the Desert of Paran,” 183.

⁶⁶ Ounsworth, *Joshua Typology*, 11.

⁶⁷ E.g., A B and vg cop^{sa, bo} eth Origen; Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter*, 43. See also Aland, et al. (eds.), *Editio Critica Maior IV*, 1:410.

The focus here is not a typological tie between Joshua and Jesus, but rather it appears that *Jude* has actually inserted Jesus into the *Exodus* narrative, perhaps with a similar objective as *1 Peter*'s portrayal of Jesus as the Isaianic Suffering Servant. This may not be accidental, as both letters retroactively insert Jesus into scriptural narratives: *1 Peter* also refers to Jesus' descent and proclamation to the spirits imprisoned for their disobedience during the days of Noah (*1 Pet* 3:19–20). In *1 Peter*, as we saw previously, Jesus overwrites the Isaianic Servant as an exemplar of suffering, and his suffering is again referenced before his proclamation to the sinful angels (*1 Pet* 3:17–18). *Jude*'s juxtaposition of the examples of the wilderness generation and the sinful angels means that Jesus is also the one responsible for the destruction of the unbelievers as well as the captivity of the sinful angels.⁶⁸

Jude's use of the wilderness generation also closely associates salvation and the unbelievers' subsequent desertion. The triad of scriptural exempla in vv.5–7 is of an eschatological flavor, according to Bauckham: the rebellious wilderness generation, the sinful angels, and Sodom and Gomorrah are, for *Jude*, "eschatological types" who "prefigure the final judgment at the Parousia," since *Jude* depends on the association between the Israelites' Exodus and an eschatological new Exodus.⁶⁹ Green likewise refers to these as "archetypal judgment scenes," used by *Jude* and later borrowed by *2 Peter*.⁷⁰ In this way the scriptural exempla serve not only as examples *from* the past but as examples *for* the present and continuing into the future, demonstrating the destruction awaiting those who would follow in their steps.

⁶⁸ Bauckham uses this juxtaposition as an argument in favor of κύριος, rather than Ἰησοῦς in the text of v. 5. The link to *1 Peter*'s similar insertion of Jesus into a scriptural context and its association with Jesus' proclamation to the sinful angels is a compelling reason to think the inclusion of Jesus in *Jude* 5 is not as unusual as Bauckham has suggested, *Jude, 2 Peter*, 49.

⁶⁹ Bauckham, *Relatives*, 187–88; idem, *Jude, 2 Peter*, 50.

⁷⁰ Green, "Second Peter's Use of Jude," 14.

6.3 The Wilderness Generation in Parabiblical Literature

This is one of the few examples throughout the Catholic Epistles that does not display significant connection to or reliance on parabiblical literature. *Deuteronomy* recapitulates the *Numbers* narrative as part of Moses's speech prior his death (*Deut* 1:19–36) and *Psalms* 95 reiterates the wilderness rebellion as a model of Israel's disobedience and lack of faith as part of an exhortation to worship God and a warning not to harden one's heart as in the rebellion (*Ps* 95:8–11). Elsewhere in the New Testament, *Hebrews* also refers to the rebellion in the wilderness via a citation of *Psalms* 95 (*Heb* 3:7–11, 15; *Ps* 95:8–11), noting that the ones who disobeyed "perished in the wilderness" and were not able to enter the promised land "because of their unbelief" (*Heb* 3:17–19).

Though *Jude*'s specific reference to the destruction of the unbelievers does not appear to be refracted through layers of tradition beyond the Pentateuch, the wilderness theme is a motif deeply imbedded in both now-canonical and paracanonical literature.⁷¹ Traditions which use the same exempla are also extant: the triad of the wilderness generation, the sinful angels, and Sodom and Gomorrah, aside from their use in *Jude* and *2 Peter*, make up the core of a traditional list of prototypical sinners who fell under divine judgment, including among the Dead Sea Scrolls.⁷² Graham reports that in the second century only Justin Martyr and *Barnabas* allude to the story of the men who spied on the land of Canaan and returned and incited fear in the other Israelites (*Num* 14:36–38), while the so-called gnostic authors do not seem to have had much interest in the story.⁷³ While *Jude* may not have explicitly borrowed now-extracanonical tradition for the wilderness example, the letter is not alone in the use of the wilderness motif as a paradigm of Israel's rebellion. The wilderness generation used in *Jude* as a scriptural exemplar of rebellion against God and the destruction awaiting such rebels exhibits

⁷¹ See Schofield, "The Wilderness Motif in the Dead Sea Scrolls," 37–53, esp. 37–40.

⁷² Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter*, 46–47; cf. *Sir.* 16:7–10; *CD* 2:17–3:12; *3 Macc.* 2:4–7; *Jub* 20:5; *TNaph* 3:4–5.

⁷³ Graham, "The Next Generation," 185–86.

both stability, as a motif that is frequently appealed to, especially in Jewish tradition, as well as malleability, with *Jude*'s addition of *Jesus* as the one who saved Israel and destroyed the unbelievers.

7. FALSE PROPHETS

There were false prophets (ψευδοπροφήται) among the people, as there will also be false teachers (ψευδοδιδάσκαλοι) among you, who will stealthily introduce destructive heresies, even denying the master who bought them, bringing upon themselves quick destruction. And many will follow after their lasciviousness, and because of them the way of truth will be slandered. And through greed, with fabricated (πλαστοῖς) words they will exploit you, those for whom the judgment of long ago is not idle, nor is their destruction asleep. (*2 Peter* 2:1-3)

Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits [to see] if they are of God, because many false prophets (ψευδοπροφήται) have gone out into the world. (*1 John* 4:1)

False prophets are used to characterize the contemporary opponents of both *2 Peter* and *1 John*. For *2 Peter* these are manipulative false teachers (ψευδοδιδάσκαλοι) who espouse heresy and who have earned their coming destruction. For *1 John* they are “antichrists” (ἀντίχριστοι) who explicitly deny the incarnation of Christ and, like the opponents of *2 Peter*, they emerge from among the community to cause dissension and to lead people astray (*2 Pet* 2:1; *1 John* 2:18–19).

7.1 False Prophets in the Hebrew Bible

In the Septuagint, “false prophet” (ψευδοπροφήτης, or the plural, ψευδοπροφήται) is substituted for the more neutral term “prophet” in contexts in which the label is meant negatively. The term is used almost exclusively in Jeremiah, especially in reference to prophets

who have been definitively discredited by the debunking of their supposed prophecies.⁷⁴ Hananiah, the false prophet foil to Jeremiah in chapter 28, for example, makes a prophecy about Israel that, contrary to Jeremiah’s prophecies, says Israel will return from exile within two years. In response, Jeremiah says, “Amen! ... But the prophet who prophesies peace—only when the word comes to pass will they be known as one truly sent by the Lord (*Jer* 28:9/35:9 LXX).⁷⁵ In the Masoretic text of *Jeremiah* 29, “Jeremiah the prophet” sends a letter from Jerusalem to the elders, priests, prophets, and captives whom Nebuchadnezzar had exiled in Babylon. In the Septuagint, however, Jeremiah is not called a prophet, while the term “false prophets” is substituted for הנביאים, “the prophets” (*Jer* 29:1). False prophets are even said to be “no better than Sodom and Gomorrah”—another negative example in the Catholic Epistles, as we have seen, which is paradigmatic of sin and its ultimate consequences (*Jer* 23:14). The “pseudo” addition, then, is an innovation of the Septuagint in order to distinguish between false and true prophets, since the Masoretic text simply refers to “prophets” in these same contexts. Because the term “false prophet” is so particular to the Greek version of *Jeremiah*, it could be that the Catholic Epistles are drawing from this tradition, as well as possibly from the Deuteronomic tradition undergirding Jeremiah which asserts that “prophets” or teachers who speak against God are not only liars but deserve to be destroyed (*Deut* 18:17–22).

7.2 False Prophets in the Catholic Epistles

The end of *2 Peter* 1 states that prophecy is not a matter of individual interpretation but rather only those “carried by the Holy Spirit” spoke from God (*1 Pet* 1:20–21). *2 Peter*’s statement

⁷⁴ Cf. *Jer* 6:13; 26:7, 8, 11, 16 [LXX 33:7, 8, 11, 16]; 27:9 [LXX 34:9]; 28:1 [LXX 35:1]; 29:1, 8 [LXX 36:1, 8]; *Zech* 13:2. *Deuteronomy* 13 discusses deceitful prophets, especially those who encourage idolatry, but does not use the term false prophet (*Deut* 13:1–5). *1 Kings* has a conversation between King Ahab and the prophet Micaiah over what should be done with false prophets, but again the term is only “prophets” (*1 Kings* 22:22–23). *Ezekiel* 13 also condemns prophets who have spoken falsely “out of their own hearts” but does not explicitly use the term ψευδοπροφήται, though they are accused of speaking “falsehoods” and lying.

⁷⁵ This also recalls *Deuteronomy* 18, which explains that if a prophet’s word does not come to pass, they are a false prophet and should be put to death (*Deut* 18:20).

on the false teachers who will arise from within the community, like the false prophets previously, follows on from this statement about what constitutes true prophecy. As we have seen, “true” prophets in the Catholic Epistles provide an example of suffering patiently (*Jas* 5:10) and they are the forerunners of the Christian gospel (*1 Pet* 1:10–12). In contrast, the false teachers of *2 Peter* – who are equated with the false prophets of the past – are an insidious presence, covertly introducing heresy and misleading many. Twice *2 Peter* calls attention to the destruction awaiting them (*2 Pet* 2:1, 3). For *2 Peter* the false prophets exist as figures in Israel’s past who are analogous to the present false teachers: the prophets *were* (ἐγένοντο), just as false teachers *will be* (ἔσονται) among the readers (*2 Pet* 2:1), and Frey notes that this change into a “prophetic” future tense lends itself to *2 Peter*’s testamentary form, which involves ethical admonishment for the future.⁷⁶ *2 Peter*’s warning against false teachers arising among the letter’s readers is also consistent with the testament genre in which it is common to offer eschatological predictions and warn against false teachers.⁷⁷

For *1 John*, the false prophets are a very present threat and the author makes no attempt to tie them to figures of Israel’s past. Rather, they are from the world (κόσμος, *1 John* 4:5), into which false prophets have gone out. Clear criteria are offered for discerning between false and true prophets/spirits: “every spirit that confesses Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God” while every spirit that does not is “of the antichrist (τοῦ ἀντιχρίστου) (*1 John* 4:2-3). The ἀντίχριστοι are conflated with the author’s sense of false prophecy—to teach against Christ’s true identity is to be anti-Christ. The prophets’ false teaching is identified specifically: ψευδοπροφηταὶ are those who claim that Christ did not come in the flesh. Of the Septuagint references to false prophets, only Zechariah appears to associate them with spirit(s) as *1 John* does: God says false prophets and the unclean spirit will be removed from the land (*Zech* 13:2).

⁷⁶ Frey, *The Letter of Jude and the Second Letter of Peter*, 314.

⁷⁷ Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter*, 237–38.

While Jude does not use the term ψευδοπροφήται, *2 Pet* 2:1–3 closely parallels *Jude* 4, and indeed the majority of *2 Peter* 2 is adopted from *Jude*, particularly the negative scriptural exempla. Frey notes that *2 Peter*'s appropriation of *Jude* is done with “linguistic independence and a strict focus on his own intention,” against a different set of opponents.⁷⁸ *Jude* more ambiguously refers to “certain persons” who have crept in (παρεισέδυσαν), who were marked for judgment (προγεγραμμένοι, κρίμα), and who likewise deny Jesus Christ (*Jude* 4). *Jude* also writes of those who, “by dreaming (ἐνυπνιαζόμενοι) defile the flesh, reject authority, and blaspheme against the glorious ones” (*Jude* 8). The tie to false prophets is not as explicit as in *2 Peter* and *1 John*, but it is possible *Jude* nods here to the false prophets of *Jeremiah* who claimed to be speaking on God’s behalf and who are accused of “dreaming” (*Jer* 23:25-40). *Deuteronomy* similarly refers negatively to “a prophet or dreamer of dreams” (*Deut* 13:1, 3, 5).⁷⁹

7.3 False Prophets in Parabiblical Literature

Aside from the Catholic Epistles, in the New Testament, ψευδοπροφήται are found in *Acts*, the Synoptic Gospels, and *Revelation*.⁸⁰ The *Ascension of Isaiah*, one of the so-called Old Testament Pseudepigrapha widely considered to be a Christian compilation, uses the term multiple times.⁸¹ Josephus, in the first century, uses the term relatively often—for example in reference to the false prophets appointed by Jezebel to the god Baal and the prophets Ahab

⁷⁸ Frey, *The Letter of Jude and the Second Letter of Peter*, 313.

⁷⁹ The same word is used positively in *Acts* 2:17 (quoting *Joel* 2:28), though in *Jude* it is clearly negative.

⁸⁰ *Acts* 13:6–8 [the false prophet is identified as Βαριησοῦς, or Ἐλύμας μάγος, “Elymas the sorcerer,” said to be a Jew]; *Matt* 7:15, 24:11, 24; *Mark* 13:22; *Luke* 6:26; *Acts* 13:6; *2 Pet* 2:1; *1 John* 4:1; *Rev* 16:13, 19:20, 20:10. The term is notably absent from Pauline literature, however, though he uses the term ψευδαδελφός in *Gal* 2:4 in reference to some who, like the opponents of *2 Pet* and *Jude*, attempted to covertly undermine Paul and his companions.

⁸¹ Cf. *Asc. Isa.* 2:12, 15; 5:2, 12, see Knibb (trans.), “The Ascension and Martyrdom of Isaiah the Prophet,” 143–76. And see for example Carey, “The *Ascension of Isaiah*,” 65–78.

appoints to ask God whether he would be victorious against the king of Syria.⁸² In a passage that appears remarkably similar to *2 Pet* 2:1–3, the second Petrine fragment in P.Cairo 1079 has Jesus himself announcing to Peter the coming of false prophets who will preach doctrines that lead to destruction (vv.1–4).⁸³ While the term ψευδοπροφήται was relatively common, the term ψευδοδιδάσκαλοι was rare in early Christianity, according to Frey, who identifies only one other instance in which false prophets are equated with false teachers, in Justin’s *Dialogue* 82.1: “Just as there were false prophets in the time of your [the Jews’] holy prophets, so there are now many false teachers among us, of whom our Lord forewarned us to beware.”⁸⁴

Rather than with these false-speaking figures from Israel’s past, *1 John* associates the ψευδοπροφήται with contemporary preachers and teachers who claim that Christ did not come in the flesh, while *2 Peter* refrains from describing his contemporaries as ψευδοπροφήται, instead drawing the connection between present false teachers and false prophets from the past who infiltrated “the people.” The term ψευδοπροφήται is a common term among Christian and Jewish writers in the first and second centuries and was therefore, according to Frey, not necessarily motivated by a specific tradition, whether now-canonical or parabiblical, but rather serves as a “conscious linguistic choice” for the author of *2 Peter*.⁸⁵ However, the identification of the opponents of both *2 Peter* and *1 John* with “false prophets” is not only a linguistic choice, but (even if unintentionally) a narrative one, necessitating at least some familiarity with these false prophets from the scriptural past. The Catholic Epistles contribute to the traditioning of

⁸² *Ant.* 8.319; 8.402, 406, 409. See also, e.g., *Ant.* 2.261, 6.285, 8.236; 10.111. Other examples include the *Didache* 16:3; Clement of Alexandria, *Strom.* 1.17.84–85; and Eusebius, who references Josephus in *Hist. eccl.* 2.21.1 and discusses Montanus and false prophets in *Hist. eccl.* 5.16–17.

⁸³ See Kraus and Nicklas, *Das Petrus-evangelium und die Petrusapokalypse*, 104. See also, Frey, *The Letter of Jude and the Second Letter of Peter*, 316.

⁸⁴ Frey, *The Letter of Jude and the Second Letter of Peter*, 316; text of Justin’s *Dialogue* is from Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter*, 237. Bauckham argues that the term ψευδοδιδάσκαλοι indicates that Justin knew *2 Peter*, but Frey disagrees. The only other early Christian usage of ψευδοδιδάσκαλοι is in Polycarp’s *Letter to the Philippians* 7:2, which does not exhibit any distinct reliance on *2 Peter*.

⁸⁵ Frey, *The Letter of Jude and the Second Letter of Peter*, 317.

“false prophets” as a negative example from the scriptural past as apostates in the vein of other negative exempla used in both *2 Peter* and *Jude* who are likewise condemned to destruction.

8. CONCLUSION

As with the positive exempla, the use of negative exempla provides vivid and familiar examples to illustrate the rhetorical purposes of the authors of the Catholic Epistles, while also demonstrating substantial intertraditional ties both within and beyond the books that became canonical. As we saw in part one, the ancient reception of the Catholic Epistles affirms that they were considered a collection at least by the fourth century; in reading these letters as such the use of scriptural exempla emerges as a common trend. Like the positive exempla, through use and reuse in scriptural tradition negative exemplary figures from the scriptural past were distilled into emblematic and unambiguous figures who represent vices such as false teaching, greed, and rebellion and apostasy. Notable tethers to parabiblical tradition are evident in the Catholic Epistles’ use of these exempla. As we have seen, for example, the sinful angels in *1* and *2 Peter* and *Jude* display obvious connections to the Watchers in *1 Enoch*; the tradition that Cain was actually the devil’s son comes not from *Genesis* but from a Jewish targum; and the characterization of Cain, Balaam, and Korah as false teachers is not necessarily obvious from the Masoretic text but can be found in other ancient literature.

The Catholic Epistles do not present a collectively intentional rhetorical usage of scriptural exempla, but interrelationships between specific Catholic Epistles do contribute to the overall effect of the use of exempla. This is especially the case with *2 Peter*.⁸⁶ *1 Peter* and

⁸⁶ On *2 Peter*’s unique role in combining material from other New Testament texts, see Nienhuis, “The Formation of an Apostolic Christian Identity in *2 Peter* and 1–3 John,” 7085; Wall, “The Canonical Function of *2 Peter*,” 64–81. *2 Peter* is the only Catholic Epistle that may exhibit a concentrated effort to tie other texts together. However, Grünstäudl has shown, contra Bauckham’s argument that *ApocPet* relies on *2 Peter*, that *2 Peter* 1:16–18 synthesizes *Matthew* and the Ethiopic *ApocPet*, Grünstäudl, *Petrus Alexandrinus*, 121–23; see also Frey, *The Letter of Jude and the Second Letter of Peter*, 203–206.

2 Peter, for example both make use of the negative example of the sinful angels and the positive example of Noah (though no other examples are shared in common). The two uses of Cain, however, in *1 John* 3:12 and *Jude* 11c, and references to prophets and false prophets (cf. *Jas* 5:10; *1 Pet* 1:10; *2 Pet* 2:1–3, 5; *1 John* 4:1) do not appear to be tethered by more than their shared usage of stereotypical scriptural exemplars—which all the more underscores the usefulness of scriptural exempla and their deployment by individual authors of the Catholic Epistles. The literary relationship between *Jude* and *2 Peter* is most obviously on display in *2 Peter* 2, a chapter largely comprised of illustrative scriptural exempla, both positive and negative. *2 Peter*, following in the steps of *Jude*, repeats many of the same exemplary figures, expanding or contracting their characterizations as it suits the testamentary arc of this letter. That *2 Peter* adopts from *Jude* the characterization of the letter’s opponents as negative scriptural exempla accentuates the crucial role played by these exempla.

While many of the scriptural exempla used throughout the Catholic Epistles demonstrate ties to now paracanonical literature, *Jude* presents the most considerable tether between now-canonical literature and paracanonical material.⁸⁷ *Jude* also plays a key role as a source text for those wishing to affirm the authority of texts that had lost (or never had) widely favorable reception among early Christians, namely Enochic literature, particularly the *Book of the Watchers*, and the *Assumption of Moses*. Both texts come into play with regard to the positive figures cited in contrast to *Jude*’s negative triads: the wilderness generation, the sinful angels, and Sodom and Gomorrah help to characterize the apostate opponents of the letter—in sharp contradistinction to Michael the archangel, who maintains his rightful place, refusing to slander even the devil. The story of Michael the archangel arguing with the devil over the body of Moses is not found in the “Old Testament,” however, but in the *Assumption of Moses*. Both Origen and Clement of Alexandria find this text useful, and appeal to *Jude* to underwrite its

⁸⁷ On this, see Charles, “Jude’s Use of Pseudepigraphal Source Material.”

credibility.⁸⁸ Rather than Enochic literature (which he claims is inherently apocryphal as no scripture existed prior to Moses) or the *Assumption*, Athanasius appeals directly to *Jude* – a text he includes among his “canonical” New Testament – for evidence of the fall of the angels. The author of *2 Peter* has removed the references to Michael the archangel (*Jude* 9) and Enoch (*Jude* 14–15), which also minimises the intertraditional ties to the *Assumption of Moses* and *1 Enoch*. It could be the case that *2 Peter* was written late enough that the concern over such texts was already growing, and the author removed these references in order to bring the use of scriptural exempla more in line with a particular collection of Jewish scriptures.

Still, the overall portrait of the scriptural material that emerges from an analysis of these exempla in the Catholic Epistles is one much wider than an intracanonial picture of “the New Testament use of the Old Testament.” This furthermore shows that the New Testament authors were aware of a broad swath of early Jewish scriptural texts, and that they participated in the continued traditioning of Second Temple Jewish and early Christian material and the characterization of exempla in like manner to the “re-written” texts of early Judaism such as *Jubilees* and the *Genesis Apocryphon*. The use of sinful angels, Cain, Korah, Balaam, the wilderness generation, and false prophets in the Catholic Epistle collection both benefits from and contributes to the reception of these figures throughout Jewish and Christian tradition. Scripture begets scripture, and in the Catholic Epistles, this is particularly on display in the use of illustrative exempla.

⁸⁸ Dochhorn, “Ein starkes Stück Schrift,” 180–83. Origen refers to the story about Michael arguing with the devil over Moses’ body which is found in the *Ascension/Assumption of Moses* “of which the Apostle Jude makes mention in his epistle; *de Principiis* 3.2.1). In a Latin fragment of a commentary on *Jude*, Clement of Alexandria comments on *Jude* 9 that “this confirms the Assumption of Moses,” and in the same fragment claims that Enoch’s prophecy verifies the prophecy of the destruction of the Watchers (*Frag. in Ep. Jud.*).

CONCLUSION: EXEMPLARITY, CANONICITY, AND THE CATHOLIC EPISTLE COLLECTION

The history of the Catholic Epistles in the formation of the New Testament collection is a fraught one marked by the perceived pseudonymity of *James*, *2 Peter*, *2* and *3 John*, and *Jude*. In part one, I argued that key antecedents prepared the ground for the Catholic Epistle collection: the Muratorian fragment, the early manuscript tradition, and ancient references to “catholic epistles.” But the Catholic corpus was not an inevitability. The only material evidence for a cluster of Catholic Epistles prior to the major uncial codices is found in the Bodmer Miscellaneous Codex, where the texts of *Jude* and *1* and *2 Peter* are non-consecutive and grouped with now-paracanonical material such as *3 Corinthians* and the *Eleventh Ode of Solomon*. The first unambiguous designation of seven Catholic letters is found in Eusebius’s *Historia ecclesiastica* (*Hist. eccl.* 2.23.25), but he conveys a suspicion over five of the seven Catholic Epistles, relegating *James*, *2 Peter*, *2* and *3 John*, and *Jude* to a liminal group of ἀντιλεγόμενα (*Hist. eccl.* 3.25.3). The Catholic Epistles are not only mentioned by Eusebius in the context of textual collections; he also lists both accepted and disputed texts in sections where he describes the historical figures of James, Peter, and John (*Hist. eccl.* 2.23.25; 2.15.2; 3.23–24). In this sense, he ties the historical memory of these apostolic figures to the textual traditions ascribed to them, an additional sign of his concern over the historical authenticity of scriptural material.

Athanasius included all seven Catholic letters among his list of κανονιζόμενα without any apparent reservation (*Epist. fest.* 39.18). The wider context of the *Epistula festalis* 39 in which this “canonized” list is included condemns pseudepigraphical literature in no uncertain terms, and yet Athanasius lists only “Old Testament Pseudepigrapha” (*Epist. fest.* 39.21). Avoiding the question of New Testament pseudepigraphy altogether allows his readers to take

the authenticity of the Catholic Epistles for granted on the basis of their attribution to apostolic figures.

In contrast to Eusebius, who prioritized ancient usage by trusted authorities as confirming the early provenance, and therefore the genuineness, of scriptural texts, and Athanasius, who did not address the issue of New Testament pseudepigraphy, Jerome explicitly noted the questioned authorship of the Catholic Epistles. He nevertheless considered them to be “holy scriptures” among the New Testament collection (*Vir. ill.* 1, 2, 4, 9, 18). No explicit arguments are made on behalf of the genuineness of the disputed Catholic Epistles; they simply become incorporated into more New Testament collections, winning a battle of attrition through their continued use.¹ This indicates a shift from the concern over historical authenticity to a sort of textual apostolic succession, in which the Catholic Epistles can still be considered apostolic on the basis of their association with key apostolic figures and their “handed-on-ness” from trusted leaders such as Athanasius.

The late-fourth-century Western reception of the Catholic Epistles is not indicative of their universal acceptance, however. The fifth-century Syriac New Testament includes just *James*, *1 Peter*, and *1 John* until other Syriac versions emerged in the sixth and seventh centuries that included all seven Catholic letters. The liminality of the Catholic Epistle collection is therefore emblematic of the unclear shape of the New Testament beyond the fourth century, when it is often said that the canonical process came to a halt. It is the perceived pseudonymity of the majority of the Catholic Epistles that prevents their unhesitating inclusion in the New Testament collection.

¹ See Gamble, “Pseudonymity,” 343–44: The inclusion of the Catholic Epistle collection in so many canon lists in the fourth century cannot be taken as evidence that doubts about their authenticity had disappeared; “[t]o the contrary, it can only be assumed that those long-standing reservations were not overcome but were only set aside, and the apostolic authorship of all the catholic epistles, whether pseudonymously claimed or merely attributed, was simply presumed. Questions about authorship were now judged less important than the value of a collection of seven catholic epistles that could be assigned to apostolic figures.”

In part two, I showed that pseudonymity is one facet of exemplarity, a rhetorical strategy involving the accumulation of tradition around characters of prestige. Pseudonymous exemplarity is at work in the author portraits of the apostolic and quasi-apostolic figures of James, Peter, John, and Jude. Another facet of exemplarity employed by the Catholic Epistle collection is the illustrative use of both positive and negative exemplars from the scriptural past, such as Enoch, Abraham, Sarah, Cain, and Balaam. For both pseudonymous and illustrative exemplarity, stability and malleability go hand in hand: key elements of tradition anchor the exemplary status of each figure, such as James's association to Jerusalem, Peter's martyrdom, Abraham's obedience, or Cain's murder of his brother. But tradition also proves to be strategically pliable, as each figure is characterized according to the rhetorical purposes of the authors who employ them.

These exempla not only demonstrate the composite accumulation of tradition that is used in their characterization, but they also reveal links to both now-canonical and paracanonical material, beyond an intracanonical conception of "the New Testament use of the Old Testament." Some of these ties to paracanonical tradition are more obvious, such as *Jude's* reference to the conflict between Michael the archangel and the devil, which does not appear in the Hebrew Bible (*Jude* 8–9). But there are also more subtle examples, such as *1 Peter's* reference to Sarah, who called her husband "master" (*1 Pet* 3:6). The only time she does this in the Hebrew Bible it is meant mockingly (*Gen* 18:12), while in the *Testament of Abraham* she calls Abraham her "master" repeatedly, which tracks with her more unambiguous portrayal in this paracanonical testamentary text as an ideal Christian wife. The intertraditional web that results from both pseudonymous and illustrative exemplarity maintains a sense of "canonical" porousness, and exemplarity in the Catholic Epistle collection is inherently tethered to its canonical reception.

1. CANONS, JUDAISMS, CHRISTIANITIES

As we have seen, the canonical process was not an inevitable plod toward a teleological end resulting in the 27-book New Testament collection. In contrast to a singular, definitive collection, it is not so much that the canon remains *open* as that *local canons* emerged from a variety of communities. Differing streams of Christian (and Jewish) tradition resulted from the variety represented by differing groups, and their “canons” reflect this diversity.² The Christian canonical process, bound up with that of Judaism, reflects scriptural practices, each employed with differing goals by Christian groups such as bishops and other ecclesiastical leaders, scholars, teachers, and monks and ascetics—a diversity further heightened by linguistic and geographical differences between, for example, Greek and Coptic, or East and West.³ For the author of *Jude* and his readers, for example, *1 Enoch* and likely the *Assumption of Moses* were authoritative scripture; for the author of *James*, the *Testament of Job* arguably served as scripture.

Along with significant ties to paracanonical material, the use of scriptural exempla throughout the Catholic Epistles evinces the continuing interest in and value ascribed to Jewish scripture, particularly figures from the Jewish scriptural past. Some provide ethical examples of how one should act; others offer illustrations of how *not* to act. In many cases these figures are referenced without substantial context, suggesting that even for letters that were written later (*2 Peter* and arguably *James*), Christian authors relied on their readers’ familiarity with Jewish tradition, particularly in the form of narrative or storytelling.

The Christian use of Jewish scriptures represents one of the dimensions of use for Jewish scripture, rather than the linear progression of a stabilized Jewish canon that was appropriated by a fixed Christianity to which a stable collection of authoritative Christian

² Sanders argues that canons are reflective of the communities that use them, survive as a result of the survival of those communities, and rely on repetition of use, *From Sacred Story to Sacred Text*, esp. 19–25, 29–30.

³ See Brakke, “Scriptural Practices.”

scriptures was added, creating a “closed” two-testament canon. As Annette Yoshiko Reed argues, “the scant evidence for an official canon in pre-70 Judaism also suggests a lack of interest in defining the precise limits of scriptural authority. Strikingly, we only find evidence for the emergence of ‘canonical consciousness’ – a sense of the need to delineate the bounds of the written scriptures – in texts composed after the destruction of the Second Temple.” Even then, some Jews retained “a more inclusive understanding of the scope of revealed writings,” as evidenced in part by the “continued flexibility in the Christian use of Jewish scriptures.”⁴ That is, the shift to rabbinic Judaism after the destruction of the temple in the late first century influenced the increased authority of textuality, but not necessarily a closed canon of authoritative texts, nor a monolithic “Judaism.”⁵ Just as the multifaceted nature of Judaism contributed to the diversity of its scriptures, the layered Christianities of the first few centuries did not result in a scriptural singularity of “The Bible.”⁶

This diversity is reflected in the reception of (some of) the Catholic Epistles in the fourth and fifth centuries—for Eusebius, two; for Athanasius, seven; for the Syriac Church, three, all influenced by their perceived (in)authenticity. To claim that there existed an “early” and definitive New Testament canon is to grant priority to the fourfold Gospel and the Pauline corpus over the Catholic Epistle collection, lending greater “canonical” authority to some texts over others. The narrative that a fully formed and authoritative New Testament canon had emerged by as early as the late first century, and certainly by the fourth century, does not fit with the common marginalization of the majority of the Catholic Epistles; this collection throws a wrench in the gears of such an apparently straightforward canonical process, revealing a diversity of usage.

⁴ Reed, *Fallen Angels*, 135. Further, “the scriptures were just as multiform as the Judaism (and, hence, the Christianity) of this early period.”

⁵ Reed, *Fallen Angels*, 132.

⁶ See especially Mroczek’s conclusion to *Literary Imagination*, “Outside the Number,” 156–83.

2. EXEMPLARITY AND CANONICITY

When Jonathan Z. Smith insisted that canons are, by their nature, closed, he also emphasized that this limitation leads to the development of exegetical traditions seeking to understand, and even to subvert, that authoritative content.⁷ This textual generativity is also emphasized by Hindy Najman, for whom “the vitality of scripture” is a key consequence – even a benefit – of textual authority: “such texts have an excess of vitality that expresses itself in the fact that they provide the basis for new texts,” since “it is the nature of life to generate life, to sustain and reproduce itself. Insofar as scripture is *authoritative*, it is also *generative*.”⁸ Canon itself can even be considered a form of exemplarity, since in an ancient context, “to be canonical in the academic sense was to be exemplary for performance by teachers and for emulation by disciples.”⁹ This is true in terms of content put to use for instruction and preaching as well as for textual production—for example by the Melitians, who continued to produce and to use newly inspired scriptural works.¹⁰

This scriptural generativity is reflected in the multifaceted exemplarity employed in the Catholic Epistle collection: the author portraits that resonate with a diversity of early Christian traditions about James, Peter, John, and Jude, and the illustrative exemplary figures, who represent the continued use of Jewish tradition as well as reveal significant tethers to now-paracanonial material. The Catholic Epistles exhibit not a straightforward sense of intracanonial overlap, but rather an abundant and diverse intertraditionality. Because of the limitations of “canonical” collections of Jewish and Christian scriptures and the variety of material reflected in the Catholic Epistles’ author portraits and scriptural exempla, there

⁷ Smith, “Sacred Persistence,” 44–52.

⁸ Najman, “The Vitality of Scripture,” 497–518, here 516, emphasis original.

⁹ Najman, “The Vitality of Scripture,” 504.

¹⁰ Najman, “The Vitality of Scripture,” 504. This is particularly the case as the Melitians organized their scriptural practices and community understanding around key exemplary figures, martyrs, who were “understood not as a model from the past but as a living presence in the community,” Brakke, “Scriptural Practices,” 275.

remains a sense of porousness that cannot be overcome by closure. Even a fixed canonical boundary cannot seal off the permeability that results from intertraditional ties between texts that become, for some, “canonical” and those that do not. Paracanonical tradition does not just make use of or comment on earlier canonical material; now-canonical material also rings with a paracanonical tune.

For both scriptural exempla and the accumulated tradition represented by an attributed author, meaning pings back and forth between past and present, shifting between stability and malleability. As facets of exemplarity, pseudonymity and the illustrative use of scriptural exempla involve the accumulation of tradition, but they also contribute fresh versions and amalgamations of tradition. This intertraditional generativity touches *back* to received traditions and characterizations from previous representations of exemplary figures and *forward* to the creation of new traditions that orbit around a figure of prestige. The authorial figures of the Catholic Epistles are drawn from the scriptural present contemporary with the New Testament world—James, the brother of Jesus and leader of the Jerusalem church; Peter, the ideal disciple; John, the beloved disciple and writer; and Jude, the brother of James and Jesus. Exemplary figures provide illustrations from the Jewish scriptural past appropriated for a Christian context while also pulling Christian tradition backwards into Judaism’s history and narrative. The use and reuse of such figures recasts them in a new light, drawing still more tradition into their orbit for continued use and reinterpretation. In the Catholic Epistle collection, canonicity and exemplarity are intertwined: scripture receives scripture; scripture begets scripture.

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