

Do We Still Need Inspiration?

Judaism, Christianity, and Islam – Tension, Transmission, Transformation



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7 New Testament Inspiration and Apocryphal Subtext: The Case of the Epistle of Jude

In Christianity, there is another Sinai, and it stands in Emmaus. In Judaism, the account of what occurred at Sinai constructs a stenographic ideal of revelation according to which God would dictate his will to humankind; in Christianity, the Emmaus narrative shows that Jewish and Christian Scriptures stand in perfect continuity, as if God had performed the same revelation in two stages. In this well-known pericope, the evangelist Luke recounts the meeting of the risen Jesus and two disciples who are grieving over his death. They rail about what had happened to him and lament the end of their hopes. Jesus replies:

“Oh, how foolish you are, and how slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have declared!
²⁶ Was it not necessary that the Messiah should suffer these things and then enter into his glory?” ²⁷ Then beginning with Moses and all the prophets, he interpreted to them the things about himself in all the scriptures. (Luke 24:25–27)¹

Most interpreters understand this passage as the hermeneutic key to the relationship between the two Testaments. Such a sophisticated exegete as Luke Timothy Johnson exemplifies the widespread idea, expressed since the Church Fathers.²

The Emmaus story showed that Moses and the prophets foretold the suffering and resurrection of the Messiah. Now the suffering and resurrection of the Messiah are shown to be the interpretive key both to the words of Jesus and to Law, Prophets, and Writings. It is the risen Lord who teaches the Church to read Torah properly. He “opens their mind to understand the Scriptures.” And this is necessary if those who have been “eyewitnesses” are also to be “ministers of the word” (1:2) in preaching these events and interpreting them from Torah.³

In other words, the text of the New Testament presents itself as a continuation of the Scriptures of Israel, seen from a messianic viewpoint. Inspired Scripture begets inspired Scripture, as if the Jewish canon of Scripture had been fixed from all eternity and had produced another rigid canon, the one of the Christian Scriptures.

1 All bible translations in this article come from the NRSV.

2 Arthur A. Just, ed., *Luke*, ACCS 3 (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2003), 380–1; Joel B. Green, *The Gospel of Luke*, NICNT (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1997), 848–9; Hans Klein, *Das Lukasevangelium*, KEK 1/3/10 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2006), 732; John T. Carroll, *Luke: A Commentary*, NTL (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2012), 485–6.

3 Luke Timothy Johnson, *The Gospel of Luke*, SP 3 (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1991), 405.

Did it really happen that way? As he showed in the preceding lecture and in his book *Revelation and Authority*, Benjamin Sommer advocates a participatory theology of revelation. Relying on the work of Franz Rosenzweig and Abraham Heschel, Sommer defines revelation as “a joint effort involving heavenly and earthly contributions; or the wording may be an entirely human response to God’s real but nonverbal revelation.”⁴ This means a dialogue between God and Israel, in which human words are provisional rather than definitive.⁵ Taking this idea to its logical final stage, Sommer then concludes that this never-ending dialogue inevitably muddles the boundaries between inspired Scripture and tradition. More accurately, the written Torah is a subset⁶ of the Oral Torah, and thus the fringes of the canon are shifting and blurring. I would like to show that the same applies to Christianity. If the Emmaus episode serves to build a kind of *regulatory ideal* of transmission according to which only inspired Scripture generates inspired Scripture, a precise investigation of the New Testament proves that things did not turn out this way.

The Epistle of Jude is a case in point. In this letter, the one who presents himself as “the brother of James” and therefore, indirectly, the brother of Jesus,⁷ quotes, both implicitly and explicitly, texts that do not belong to the Torah-Prophets set. A historical analysis of what the Christian communities have done with it does not only enable us to generalize Benjamin Sommer’s thesis; it also helps to understand why and how the Christian churches have maintained in the canon writing that deviated so much from the Emmaus regulatory ideal.

1 A Scripture born of tradition

In recounting how Jesus interprets the events of his life ἀπὸ Μωϋσέως καὶ ἀπὸ πάντων τῶν προφητῶν, the evangelist constructs a kind of fuzzy canon that would be composed of the Pentateuch of Moses and an ill-defined set, the prophets. Irrespective of this rule, Jude quotes a text which is authoritative for him, but does not belong to this group, since it relates to a patriarch, Enoch. Jude demonstrates, in the words of Sommer, that Scripture can be born of other traditions.

⁴ Benjamin D. Sommer, *Revelation and Authority: Sinai in Jewish Scripture and Tradition*, AYBR (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2015), 2.

⁵ Sommer, *Revelation and Authority*, 147.

⁶ Sommer, *Revelation and Authority*, 170.

⁷ Richard Bauckham, *Jude and the Relatives of Jesus in the Early Church*, T&T Clark Academic Paperbacks (London/New York: T&T Clark International, 2004).

1.1 Jude and his quote from Enoch

The Epistle of Jude is a short letter of 24 verses which aims to resist the ascendancy in a Christian community of individuals whom the author violently opposes. It is very difficult to know who they were. The fact that “Jude” refers to them as “dreamers” (ἐνυπνιαζόμενοι, Jude 8) has often led commentators to view them as charismatics, fond of mystical experience.⁸ Whatever they were, “Jude” reviles them and accuses them of all the biblical evils (Jude 5–13): they have the sexual perversity of the people of Sodom and Gomorrah, they are without faith like the rebellious angels, they are ungodly like the devil, Cain, Balaam and the sons of Korah, they are similar to clouds without rain, or the foam of the wave, or wandering stars. Eventually, he condemns them in a radical way with the help of the patriarch Enoch:

¹⁴ It was also about these that Enoch, in the seventh generation from Adam, prophesied, saying, “See, the Lord is coming with ten thousand of his holy ones,¹⁵ to execute judgment on all, and to convict everyone of all the deeds of ungodliness that they have committed in such an ungodly way, and of all the harsh things that ungodly sinners have spoken against him.” (Jude 14–15)

Three verbs pertaining to divine action (come/ἔρχομαι, judge/ποιεῖν κρίσιν, convince/ἐλέγχω) are set alongside a threefold emphasis on the ungodliness (ἀσεβεία) of behaviours, both of deeds (ἔργον) and of speech (λαλέω).⁹ Such vigor should not be surprising. These imprecations are extremely oratorical,¹⁰ since mobilizing eschatology does not necessarily mean preaching the doomsday; there exists a rhetorical use of the end of time whose purpose is simply to reinforce the identity of a community by confronting it with a radical choice for the future that is relevant in the present.¹¹

“Jude” not only alludes to the son of Jared (Gen 5:18), of whom Genesis says that he lived 365 years, walked with God; then he was no more, because God took him (Gen 5:22–24); more crucially, he quotes a phrase from a work often referred to as the “Book of Watchers” (1 En 1:9), attributed to this same Enoch and preserved in a book usually called 1 Enoch (a collection of different treatises, actually). The

⁸ Richard Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter*, WBC 50 (Waco, TX: Word Books, 1983), 11; Jerome H. Neyrey, *2 Peter, Jude: A New Translation with Commentary*, AB 37C (New York: Doubleday, 1993), 31; Steven J. Kraftchick, *Jude, 2 Peter*, ANTC (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2002), 33.

⁹ William F. Brosend, *James and Jude*, NCBC (Cambridge/New York: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 179.

¹⁰ Lauri Thurén, “Hey Jude! Asking for the Original Situation and Message of a Catholic Epistle,” *NTS* 43 (1997): 451–65.

¹¹ Robert L. Webb, “The Eschatology of the Epistle of Jude and Its Rhetorical and Social Functions,” *BBR* 6 (1996): 139–51.

Hebrew or Aramaic original of this writing is lost. The text cited by the author of Jude cannot be found exactly in the versions now available and looks like a sort of combination of Ethiopic and Greek, which suggests that Jude has his own version or that he quotes from memory.¹²

1.2 The recourse to particular traditions within Second Temple Judaism

By referring in this way to the book of Enoch, and also, by veiled allusion, to several other texts identified by Jeremy Hultin and David A. deSilva,¹³ the epistle of Jude makes use of a corpus of traditions that flourished in the last centuries before the common era. These traditions support a particular vision of the universe, as George Nickelsburg and Michael Stone have shown.¹⁴ It portrays a world haunted by evil, originating from angelic sin, which precipitated the Flood. On our post-diluvian earth, this evil persists, and is perpetuated and nurtured by the demonic order, stemming from antediluvian wickedness. Hopefully, this sin, depicted as a sign of rebellion against the divine sovereignty, will be annihilated by God himself who will come as a judge to restore justice and as a savior to reinstate his elect in his mercy.

The quote describes this energetic move by God, accompanied by his “saints,” who refer to the heavenly creatures. This verse itself seems to be inspired by two prophetic passages, Jer 25:30–31 and Isa 66:16–16, although it introduces a major difference: sin, ostensibly pervasive, is manifested in deeds and words.¹⁵ By mentioning the term κύριος, which the scholars still do not know if it was part of the

¹² Henning Paulsen, *Der Zweite Petrusbrief Und Der Judasbrief*, KEK 12,2 (Göttingen, Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1992), 74–6. See also Lewis R. Donelson, *I & II Peter and Jude: A Commentary*, NTL (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2010), 191.

¹³ Jeremy Hultin, *Jude's Citation of 1 Enoch*, in *Jewish and Christian Scriptures: The Function of “Canonical” and “Non-Canonical” Religious Texts*, eds. James Hamilton Charlesworth and Lee Martin McDonald, *Jewish and Christian Texts in Contexts and Related Studies* 7 (London/New York: T&T Clark, 2010): 113–28; David A. deSilva, *The Jewish Teachers of Jesus, James, and Jude: What Earliest Christianity Learned from the Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012), 101–40, 175–236. See also Peter H. Davids, “The Use of Second Temple Traditions in 1 and 2 Peter and Jude,” in *The Catholic Epistles and the Tradition*, ed. Jacques Schlosser, BETL 176 (Leuven: Peeters, 2004): 409–32.

¹⁴ George W.E. Nickelsburg, *1 Enoch: A Commentary on the Book of 1 Enoch*, Hermeneia (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress, 2001), 37–57; Michael E. Stone, *Ancient Judaism: New Visions and Views* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2011), 31–58.

¹⁵ Nickelsburg, *1 Enoch*, 149.

original text, “Jude” operates a Christological reading of the book of the Watchers. Jesus is this very Messiah who is going to swiftly take action with the support of angelic forces.¹⁶ One might ask whether the author opts for this assimilation because he is familiar with a pre-existing Christology based on the figure of the Son of Man drawn from the Enochic traditions (and which is also at work in Matthew, for example), or whether he makes a personal innovation, but this would be the subject of another work.¹⁷ What is certain, however, is that “Jude” considers that this tradition has authority,¹⁸ perhaps because of the antiquity and dignity of Enoch.¹⁹

1.3 The reception of Enoch and Jude in the first centuries

The appeal to this Enochian tradition is not eccentric in Second Temple Judaism.²⁰ Many fragments of the text have been discovered in caves 1 and 4 of Qumran and a number of parallels can be drawn between these texts and the writings of the sect, which constructs itself as an eschatological Israel established by divine revelation.²¹ In the early days of Christianity, many authors likewise refer to it.²² One can cite in particular the epistle of Barnabas (c. 96) which makes several allusions to it (Barn 16). Many authors tell the account of the fall of the angels, present in the book of the Watchers: Athenagoras in his *Embassy for the Christians*, around 176–180, Irenaeus of Lyon in the *Against the Heresies* (Adv. Hær. 4,16,2 & 4,36,4), but also Justin Martyr, Tatian, Clement of Alexandria, Bardaisan, Tertullian, Commo-

16 Simon J. Joseph, “‘Seventh from Adam’ (Jude 1:14–15): Re-Examining Enochic Traditions and The Christology of Jude,” *JTS* 64 (2013): 463–81.

17 See Nickelsburg, *1 Enoch*, 123–4. See also George W.E. Nickelsburg and David N. Freedman, “Son of Man,” *ABD* 6: 137–50.

18 Paulsen, *Judasbrief*, 74.

19 Neyrey, *2 Peter*; *Jude*, 81.

20 John C. Reeves and Annette Yoshiko-Reed, *Enoch from Antiquity to the Middle Ages* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018).

21 Nickelsburg, *1 Enoch*, 77. References are 1Q19; 4Q201; 4Q204; 4Q213; 4Q227; 4Q228; 4Q369; 4Q534; 5Q13; 11Q12.

22 James C. VanderKam, “1Enoch, Enochic Motives and Early Christian Literature,” in *The Jewish Apocalyptic Heritage in Early Christianity*, eds. James C. VanderKam and William Adler, CRINT (Assen/Minneapolis, MN: Van Gorcum/Fortress Press, 1996): 33–101. See also Wolfgang Grünstäudl and Tobias Nicklas, “Searching for Evidence: The History of Reception of the Epistles of Jude and 2 Peter,” in *Reading 1–2 Peter and Jude: A Resource for Students*, eds. Eric F. Mason and Troy W. Martin, RBS 77 (Atlanta, GA: Society of Biblical Literature, 2014): 215–28.

dian, Cyprian, and Lactantius.²³ Origen's case is especially relevant, since he uses the book in his theological works such as the *Treatise on Principles*, but also in his exegetical works.²⁴ As Anette Yoshiko Reed, who thoroughly studied the myth, comments, it is not impossible that early Christians believed that some elements of the Enochian text were simply part of the biblical story.²⁵

In this respect, the same Anette Yoshiko Reed shows they did not differ fundamentally from other authors from Judaism of the period. Philo of Alexandria in his writing *On the Giants* and Flavius Josephus in *Jewish Antiquities* 1:73 seem to read a text from the LXX where angels would have replaced the sons of men in Gen 6:2.²⁶

Therefore, Jude illustrates well what Benjamin Sommer asserts and confirms our point of departure. The composition of Jude takes place thanks to written traditions, which are doubtless the result of an oral tradition. Consequently, the Emmaus episode is but a very general allegory explaining a much more complex process that could be extrapolated to the entire New Testament. In which book of the Jewish scriptural canon is there an expression of messianism similar to that of Jesus? Where is communicated the belief in the resurrection of the dead? Where is the description of the Last Judgment found? All these beliefs come from traditions that do not belong to the Moses and Prophets collection and are usually referred to as Second Temple literature. The epistle of Jude presents an interesting example because it explicitly claims to have drawn from this literature, but it is certainly not an isolated case.

2 Which are the criteria of inspiration or how to keep a text referring to an Apocrypha in the Canon

The epistle of Jude presents another interest. It provides a glimpse into the process of canonization, i.e., the criteria by which Churches could recognize that a given writing was inspired by God. In that respect, the end of the second century struck

²³ VanderKam, "Enochic Motives," 62–84; Reeves and Yoshiko-Reed, *Enoch*. See Barnabas 4:3; 16:5–6; 1 Clement 9–11; Clement of Alexandria, *Adumbrationes*, Jude 13–14; Irenaeus, *Adv. Hær.* 1.10.1; 4.16.2; 5.30.2; Origen, *Comm. Jo.* 6.42; *Contra Cels.* 5.52–55; *Princ.* 1.3.3; Tertullian, *Apologeticum* 22.3; *De Fem. Cult.* 1.2–3; *De idololatria* 4.2–3.

²⁴ VanderKam, "Enochic Motives," 54–9.

²⁵ Annette Yoshiko-Reed, *Fallen Angels and the History of Judaism and Christianity: The Reception of Enochic Literature* (Cambridge/New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 151.

²⁶ Yoshiko-Reed, *Fallen Angels*, 106.

a severe blow to the 24-verse letter. Many voices rose in the Jewish and Christian communities to distance themselves from the book of Enoch. This partial disapproval inevitably had a knock-on effect on Jude's letter: how could James' brother dare quote a text that was beginning to be rejected? Those wishing to retain it in the list of the Christian books were compelled to make explicit their reasons for doing so: their arguments show the criteria of inspiration at work.

2.1 The third and fourth centuries and the fading of Enoch's authority

The first evidence of a certain fading of Enoch's authority is found in Tertullian's *De Feminarum Cultu*. Tertullian wrote:

I am aware that the Book of Henoch which assigns this role to the angels is not accepted because it is not admitted into the Jewish Library (*armarium Iudaicum*). I suppose it is not accepted because they did not think that a book written before the flood could have survived that catastrophe which destroyed the whole world (. . .) But, since Henoch in this same book preached us our Lord, we must not reject anything at all which really pertains to us. Do we not read that every word of Scripture useful for edification is divinely inspired? As you very well know, it was afterwards rejected by the Jews for the same reason that prompted them to reject almost all the other portions which prophesied about Christ. Now, it is not at all surprising that they refused to accept certain Scriptures which spoke of Him when they were destined not to receive Him when He spoke to them Himself. Moreover, Enoch has in his favor the testimony of the apostle Jude.²⁷

Several details useful to our investigation emerge from this text. First of all, by evoking the *armarium Iudaicum*, Tertullian suggests that there is a kind of canon of the Jews in the making, which excluded the book of Enoch. The reason for rejecting the epistle is unexpected for a modern reader: a book attributed to Enoch could not survive the Flood. The argument seems naive, but it is based on a criterion that will play a significant role in later debates on inspiration: the authority of a book rests on its *auctoritas*, in both senses of the Latin term, that is, the fact that the book was indeed written by a given person (authorship) and that this person enjoyed an undeniable prestige (authority). Tertullian proposes a second explanation for the Jews' abandonment of the book: it would have prophesied about Christ. Of course,

²⁷ Tertullian, *De Feminarum Cultu* 1.3. Translation: Tertullian, *Disciplinary, Moral, and Ascetical Works*, trans. Rudolph Arbesmann, Fathers of the church 40 (New York: Fathers of the Church, 1959), 122. We correct the translation thanks to the critical edition: Tertullian, *La Toilette Des Femmes (De Cultu Feminarum)*, trans. Marie Turcan, Sources chrétiennes 173 (Paris: Cerf, 1970), 56–60.

Tertullian is talking about himself, not about these so-called Jews: he read in the “Son of Man” appearing as a vindicator in 1 En 46 the figure of Christ, something that the non-messianic communities of Judaism of his time certainly did not do. And finally, he uses the authority of Jude to preserve the authority of Enoch, which seems like a definitive way of settling all quarrels.²⁸ After this demonstration, he can freely invoke *1 Enoch*, and scholars can detect many allusions to the book in his work.²⁹

Let us stop for a moment on the second point of Tertullian’s reasoning, for it raises the question of the Parting of the Ways, i.e., the separation between Judaism and Christianity. Would not the use of 1 Enoch be one of those points on which Jews and Christians conflicted?³⁰ Indeed, in contrast to the Christian sources, the rabbinic documents make no reference to the Book of Enoch. Moreover, a passage in the Targum *Genesis Rabbah* seems to imply a strong rejection against the interpretation of *bene Elohim* as angels (as the Book of Enoch did):³¹

And the sons of God saw the daughters of men. R. Simeon b. Yohai called them ‘sons of judges’ R. Simeon b. Yohai cursed all who called them ‘sons of God’.³²

While Christians were the promoters of the book of Enoch, the rabbis were not. Rather than a process of self-definition between those who believe in the fall of the angels and those who do not, Annette Yoshiko Reed prefers to see here the result of two completely independent processes at work.³³ Indeed, the dismissal of Enoch in Judaism can be explained by the well-known rejection of apocalyptic aspirations after the Bar-Kokhba revolt and by the fact that the Talmud is almost exclusively interested in oral tradition and does not make use of this famous Second Temple literature. Taken together, these two reasons largely justify the removal of Enochian sources in the Talmudic literature. This has nothing to do with a polemic between communities.

In the Christian sources, the Enochian material disappeared as well. From the fourth century onwards, not only the cult of the patriarch, but also the popular theme of the fall of the angels, suffered a certain decline, even if this motif was still

²⁸ David R. Nienhuis, *Not by Paul Alone: The Formation of the Catholic Epistle Collection and the Christian Canon* (Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2011), 40.

²⁹ See *De virginibus velandis* 7, *De idololatria* 4.15. Nickelsburg, *1 Enoch*, 89.

³⁰ Lawrence VanBeek, “1 Enoch among Jews and Christians: A Fringe Connection?,” in *Christian-Jewish Relations Through the Centuries*, eds. Stanley E. Porter and Brook W.R. Pearson, JSNTsup 192 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2000): 93–115.

³¹ Philip S. Alexander, “The Targumim and Early Exegesis of ‘Sons of God’ in Genesis 6,” *JJS* 23 (1972): 60–71, esp. 62. Cited by Yoshiko-Reed, *Fallen Angels*, 137.

³² *Genesis Rabbah* 26.5. Translation from Yoshiko-Reed, *Fallen Angels*, 137.

³³ Yoshiko-Reed, *Fallen Angels*, 140–7.

important until the fourth century.³⁴ A very characteristic case of this marginalization is Lucifer of Cagliari (died in 370 B.C.). In his *De non conveniendo cum hæreticis* (On Not Coming Together with Heretics), written around 355, he rants about Arians and sermonizes on the necessity to separate from them. He equates them with Jude's opponents, whose epistle he quotes extensively. However, the cited verses (vv. 1–4, 5–8, 11–13, 17–19)³⁵ carefully avoid any reference to the book of Enoch. If Lucifer considered Jude as a canonical writing, he was careful *not* to endorse its use of an apocryphal book.

2.2 How to keep in the canon a writing that quotes a text without authority? The criteria of Inspiration in the fourth-seventh centuries and the primacy of the apostolic origin of the writing

How then to keep in the canon a scripture that cites a rejected book? Much more than for books that are not “problematic” such as the four gospels, Jude is a test-case or the criteria of legitimization during the centuries. The first to discuss Jude's entry into a canon in the making is Eusebius of Caesarea, who, in his *Ecclesiastical History* (3:25), classifies the epistle among the disputed texts (ἀντιλεγόμενα).

It is to be observed that its authenticity [of the Letter of James] is denied, since few of the ancients quote it, as is also the case with the Epistle called Jude's, which is itself one of the seven called Catholic; nevertheless we know that these letters have been used publicly with the rest in most churches.³⁶

Eusebius provides a first touchstone for canonicity: the universality of the reading of the text. In other words, a writing is inspired if it is received by all communities, this is the criterion of catholicity. This is based on two parameters: the prevalence of its usage among the ancients (οὐ πολλοὶ τῶν παλαιῶν) and the pervasiveness of its use in the churches. Why is Eusebius so concerned? The ancients in question are apparently the Christian writers who preceded Eusebius: very few of the Fathers quote the epistle of Jude. As for the consensus of the communities, Eusebius is content with “most of the churches” (ἐν πλείσταις ἐκκλησίαις). A geographical investigation shows that Jude is mostly attested in the Greek realm, and especially

³⁴ VanderKam, “Enochic Motives,” 100–1; Yoshiko-Reed, *Fallen Angels*, 190–232.

³⁵ Grünstäudl and Nicklas, “Searching for Evidence,” 219.

³⁶ Eusebius, *Eccl. Hist.* 2.23,25; translation: Kirsopp Lake, *The Ecclesiastical History*, vol. 1, LCL 153 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard Univ. Press, 1926), 179.

in Alexandria, but that its use is rarer in the Latin and Syriac world: this may justify Eusebius' hesitancy.³⁷

Jerome of Stridon provides another explanation:

Jude, the brother of James, left behind a brief epistle which is among the seven Catholic ones, because he alleges the testimony of the book of Enoch, which is apocryphal, the epistle is rejected by many. However, because of its antiquity and use, it has gained authority and is counted among the holy writings.³⁸

Another criterion is here at work: the content of the text. Citing a book now classified as *apocryphus* threatens to make Jude lose its place in the canon in certain Churches (and again, one thinks of the Eastern Churches) and calls into question the validity of its message. However, the Stridonian intends to keep the letter within the canon and counterattack with two additional criteria: its "antiquity," which no doubt alludes to the criterion of apostolicity, and the criterion of usage.

Jerome's quotation is very important, because it shows that a hierarchy of criteria is at work here, since apostolicity and usage take precedence over content. This hierarchy of criteria is confirmed by Priscillian. In his *Liber de fide et de apocryphis* (Book on the Faith and the Apocrypha), he defends his interest in visionary literature, which corresponds to his own ecstatic conceptions,³⁹ by the fact that even apostles like Jude, the Lord's brother, quote from 1 Enoch. If Jude and other canonical writings used apocryphal texts and traditions, the reading of these apocryphal texts cannot be censured. His argument is crystal clear: "either the witness of the condemned is accepted or the authority of the writer of the scriptures is not maintained."⁴⁰ This glorification of the apostolic origin should not come as a surprise. It is consistent with the construction, since the fourth century, of the apostolic age as a time of perfect orthodoxy, of perfect orthopraxy, an epoch when miracles

37 Nicholas J. Moore, "Is Enoch Also among the Prophets? The Impact of Jude's Citation of 1 Enoch on the Reception of Both Texts in the Early Church," *JTS* 64 (2013): 498–515.

38 *Judas, frater Iacobi, parvam quae de septem catholicis est epistolam reliquit. Et quia de libro Enoch, qui apocryphus est, assumit testimonium, a plerisque reicitur. Tamen auctoritatem vetustate iam et usu meruit et inter sanctas scripturas computatur.* Text in Ernest C. Richardson, *Hieronymus liber De viris illustribus. Gennadius liber De viris illustribus*, TUGAL 14.1 (Leipzig: J.C. Hinrichs, 1896), 9.

39 Andrew S. Jacobs, "The Disorder of Books: Priscillian's Canonical Defense of Apocrypha," *HTR* 93 (2000): 135–59.

40 Tract. 3.50: "... si extra canonem tota damnanda sunt aut qualiter vel damnatorum testimonium recipitur, vel in his quae scripta sunt scribentis auctoritas non tenetur." Quoted by Virginia Burrus, "Canonical References to Extra-Canonical 'Texts': Priscillian's Defense of the Apocrypha," in *Society of Biblical Literature Seminar Papers*, vol. 126, ed. David J. Lull (Atlanta, GA: Scholars Press, 1990): 60–7; citations on p. 61.

were commonplace, proof of God's exceptional favor toward the first generation of witnesses.⁴¹

The importance of this criterion is also observed in Augustine, who manages to find a solution that clears the character of James' brother of any complicity with apocrypha. It is worth quoting the text extensively:

We cannot deny that Enoch, the seventh from Adam, left some divine writings, for this is asserted by the Apostle Jude in his canonical epistle. But it is not without reason that these writings have no place in that canon of Scripture which was preserved in the temple of the Hebrew people by the diligence of successive priests; for their antiquity brought them under suspicion, and it was impossible to ascertain whether these were his genuine writings, and they were not brought forward as genuine by the persons who were found to have carefully preserved the canonical books by a successive transmission. So that the writings which are produced under his name, and which contain these fables about the giants, saying that their fathers were not men, are properly judged by prudent men to be not genuine; just as many writings are produced by heretics under the names both of other prophets, and, more recently, under the names of the apostles, all of which, after careful examination, have been set apart from canonical authority under the title of Apocrypha.⁴²

Augustine, who elsewhere needs the testimony of Enoch to establish the antiquity of revelation (Civ. Dei 18:37–38) cannot tackle the son of Yared head-on. He therefore relies on the testimony of Jude. This once again proves the hierarchy of criteria: apostolic origin takes precedence over content. However, he cannot overlook the issues of 1 Enoch. So, he makes a distinction between the patriarch and his writing. If the character is praiseworthy, the book is not. Indeed, echoing Tertullian's argument, Augustine assumes that the original volume is too old to have survived, and that the text being read in his time is forged. He identifies 1 Enoch as a pseudepigrapha to better dismiss it, while affirming that Jude never quoted the book, but the patriarch himself.

Eventually, it was Bede the Venerable who produced the synthesis that closed the case in the West for a thousand years.

But nevertheless we must know that the book of Enoch from which he took this is classed by the Church among the apocryphal scriptures,²² not because the sayings of so great a patriarch in any way can or ought to be thought worthy of rejection but because that book which is presented in his name appears not to have been really written by him but published by someone else under his name. For if it were really his, it would not be contrary to sound truth. But now because it contains many incredible things, such as the statement that the giants did not have human beings for fathers but angels,²³ it is deservedly evident to the learned that writ-

⁴¹ Régis Burnet, "La notion d'apostolicité dans les premiers siècles," *RSR* 103 (2015): 185–202.

⁴² Augustine, *City of God* 15.23. Augustine, *The City of God*, trans. Marcus Dods (New York: Modern Library, 1950), 514.

ings tainted by a lie are not those of a truthful man. Hence this very Letter of Jude, because it contains a witness from an apocryphal book, was rejected by a number of people from the earliest times. Nonetheless because of its authority and age and usefulness it has for long been counted among the holy scriptures, particularly because Jude took from an apocryphal book a witness which was not apocryphal and doubtful but out standing because of its true light and light-giving truth.⁴³

Bede makes a kind of synthesis of all the preceding arguments, some of which he quotes verbatim without giving their origin. He first makes the same distinction as Augustine between the patriarch and his writing, which is declared apocryphal by the crime of pseudonymy. Then he takes up Jerome's argument for the preservation of the epistle. His original contribution consists of a gloss on Jerome's term *usus*. If the epistle is in use in the churches, it is because it is useful, and if it is useful, it is because it is not contrary to the truth. Bede therefore ratifies the content of the quotation, not because of the criterion of patriarchal authenticity, but on behalf of a criterion of analogy of faith.

2.3 The evolution of the criteria of canonicity since Bede the Venerable

What has happened to the criteria of inspiration since the modern era? Did the Reformation reshuffle the deck? Surprisingly for the clichés, it was mainly on the Catholic side that criticism arose. Erasmus, in the successive editions of his *Novum Instrumentum omne*, appears more and more harsh for the epistle. In 1516, he limits himself to recall the doubts of Jerome⁴⁴: "Moreover, the quotation he makes comes from an apocryphal text of the Hebrews, and because of this the epistle itself has not failed to be suspected." But in the separate publication of his annotations to the *Novum Instrumentum omne* in 1527, he adds more clearly: "It seemed to many not to be very apostolic to quote from apocrypha."⁴⁵ The Dominican Thomas de Vio, Cardinal Cajetan, is much more incisive in his commentary of 1532. In his presentation of the epistle, after quoting Jerome's words, he proceeds with a somewhat impertinent "This is it" (*hæc ille*) and develops: "It appears from this that the

⁴³ Bede the Venerable, *The Commentary on the Seven Catholic Epistles*, trans. David Hurst, Cistercian Studies 82 (Kalamazoo, MI: Cistercian Publications, 1985), 249–50.

⁴⁴ *Porro locus quem hic citat Iudas sumptus est ex apocryphis Hebraeorum, unde & ipsa epistola non caruit suspitione*. Desiderius Erasmus, *Novum Instrumentum Omne* (Germaniæ Basileam [Basel]: Apud Inclytam [Froben], 1516), 670.

⁴⁵ *Quod quibusdam uideatur parum apostolicum quicquam ex apocryphis*. Desiderius Erasmus, *In Novum Testamentum Annotationes* (Rauracorum Basileam [Basel]: Apud Inclytam [Froben], 1527), 702.

authority of this letter seems weaker than those which are certainly part of the Holy Scriptures.”⁴⁶ In his commentary on the verses, he gives the substance of his thought: “Since it is much more permissible to quote an apocryphal text than poets, he derogates from the authority of Holy Scripture, since he describes the apocrypha as prophecy and pure prophecy. This is clearly shown by the words [Enoch] prophesied.”⁴⁷

Despite these prejudices, the epistle of Jude soon returned to the canonical sphere.⁴⁸ On the Protestant side, Luther comments on it. He explains in his *Enarrationes* of 1524 that the passage is nowhere to be found in the Scriptures, but that this is no reason to reject the epistle, just as one does not dismiss 2 Timothy for identifying the two magicians of Ex 7:10–12 as Jannes and Mambres, although neither of these names is found anywhere.⁴⁹ Calvin, for his part, glosses Bede by pointing out that the letter contains nothing that is not “accordant à la pureté de la doctrine apostolique” (consistent with the purity of apostolic doctrine).⁵⁰ And he even makes a fairly audacious hypothesis: “I rather think that this prophecy was kept and carried on from hand to hand without being written, than to say that it was taken from some apocryphal book.”⁵¹ If the book is apocryphal, the sentence is not. Eventually, Bullinger minted the most decisive defense. After returning to Bede’s reasoning that nothing can be found that runs counter to the Scriptures, and after giving the example of Paul who quotes Menander, Epimenides and Aratos in his letters, he concludes: “True piety despises nothing, however obscure and humble, but with discernment gathers gold from dung.”⁵² In other words, and to speak very

46 *Ex quibus apparet minoris esse autoritatis hanc epistolam iis quae sunt certe scripturae sacrae.* Thomas de Vio [Cajetan], *In Omnes D. Pauli et Aliorum Apostolorum Epistolas Commentarii*, vol. 5 (Lugduni [Lyon]: Prost, 1639), 399.

47 *Quoniam etsi citare apocrypha multo magis licet quam poëtas, auctoritati tamen sacrae scripturae derogat, vt apocrypha prophetia vt simpliciter & absolutem prophetia inducatur. Quod hic fieri clare apparet: dum absolutem dicitur; prophetiam autem.* De Vio [Cajetan], *Epistolas Commentarii*, 401.

48 Beth Langstaff, “The Book of Enoch and the Ascension of Moses in Reformation Europe: Early Sixteenth-Century Interpretations of Jude 9 and Jude 14–15,” *JSP* 23 (2013): 134–74.

49 *Hic locus nusquam in scriptura legitur; quae altera ratio est, quare Patrum aliqui hanc epistolam non recepereunt, quanquam hoc satis non sit, ad rejiciendum librum aliquem; cum et Paulus 2 Timo 3 duos adversarios, Iannem et Mambrem nominent, quorum tamen nomina in scripturis haud leguntur.* Martin Luther, *Enarrationes Martini Lutheri in Epistolas D. Petri Duas, et Iudae Unam* (Rauracorum Basileam [Basel]: Hervagius, 1524), 160.

50 Jean Calvin, *Commentaires de M. Iehan Calvin sur toutes les épistres de l’apostre S. Paul, & aussi sur l’épistre aux Hebreux: Item sur les épistres canoniques de S. Pierre, S. Iehan, S. Iaques & S. Iude, lesquelles sont aussi appelées catholiques* (Genève: Conrad Badius, 1556), 160.

51 Calvin, *Commentaires*, 166.

52 *Quod si vitio non vertitur Paulo citavit Menandri, Epimenidis et Arati testimonia, cur unus Iudas ab omnibus male audit quod quaedam citavit ex apocryphis. Solet vera pietas nihil asper-*

vulgarly, 1 Enoch is crap, but Jude's quotation is a nugget. On the Catholic side, another Dominican provided a scathing rebuttal to Cajetan: Lancelotto Politi, in religion Brother Ambrosius Catharinus (1484–1553). In his *Commentary on the General Epistle of Jude*, he violently attacks Cajetan and recalls all the grounds in favor of the canonicity of the epistle.⁵³ His rationale is threefold: Paul's use of non-canonical texts (as in Bullinger), the analogy of faith and the fact that the epistle in no way contradicts the rest of Scripture, and finally the fact that Jude claims Enoch prophesied does not imply that he is quoting the apocrypha, but the oral testimony of Enoch (Calvin's assertion). Ultimately, he puts forward a decisive reason: it is not the task of Scripture to prove Scripture, the Church proves it⁵⁴. Catharinus published his commentary in 1551, having been preparing it for about ten years. In this way, he adopted the dogmatic formulation of the Council of Trent (1546): the Church guarantees the text and is responsible for preserving the Vulgate, which is now the typical version of the Bible.

What can be drawn from this overview? Even if the arguments given between Catholics and Protestants may be slightly divergent, they are very consistent and converge on one point: the abandonment of the criterion of apostolicity. Instead, the criterion of analogy of faith and ecclesiastical usage (or the authority of the Church) was emphasized. In the middle of the eighteenth century, two centuries after the Reformation, and after so many struggles, two exegetes as different as the pietist Bengel and the abbot of Senones, Dom Calmet, arrived at the same point. Bengel writes about the combat of Michael on the body of Moses, which he identifies as apocrypha: "It matters not whether the apostle received the knowledge of this contention from revelation only, or from the tradition of the elders: it is sufficient that he writes true things, and even admitted to be true by the brethren."⁵⁵ Dom Calmet notes: "This book is regarded as apocryphal. But the apostle, instructed elsewhere either by tradition or by a particular revelation, was able to draw this passage from it, which is of an incontestable and divine truth."⁵⁶ This dismissal of

nari quantumvis sit obscurum et humile, sed cum iudicio ex stercore colligit aurum. Heinrich Bullinger, *In omnes Apostolicas epistolas, divi videlicet Pauli XIII. et VII. Canonicas, commentarii* (Zürich: apud Christophorum Froschouerum, 1537), 149–50.

⁵³ Patrick Preston, "Ambrosius Catharinus' Commentary on the General Epistle of St Jude," *Reformation & Renaissance Review* 4 (2002): 217–29.

⁵⁴ *Non oportet scriptura a scriptura probari, sed ab ecclesia.* Aurelius Ambrosius Catharinus, *Commentaria R. P. F. Ambrosii Catharini Politi in Omnes Divi Pauli, et Alias Septem Canonicas Epistolas* (Venetiis [Venezia]: in officina Erasmiana Vincentii Valgrisi, 1551), 545.

⁵⁵ Johann Albrecht Bengel, *Gnomon of the New Testament*, trans. William Fletcher (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1865), 165.

⁵⁶ "Ce livre passe pour apocryphe. Mais l'apôtre, instruit d'ailleurs ou par tradition, ou par une révélation particulière, en a pu tirer ce passage, qui est d'une vérité incontestable et divine."

the criterion of apostolic origin allowed doubts about the authorship of Judas to be expressed, notably by Eichhorn at the beginning of the nineteenth century,⁵⁷ without questioning its presence in the canon. Most present-day exegetes can therefore assume that the letter is pseudepigraphal, without this preventing them from commenting on it.⁵⁸

3 Conclusion: What justifies the reading of the Epistle of Jude even today?

The specific case of the epistle of Jude, which quotes a text that was authoritative in its time but ceased to be so afterwards, demonstrates two different aspects of the Scripture. First, as Benjamin Sommer said, Scripture is not generated by Scripture alone, but by what might be called a canonization of traditions. By explicitly quoting the book of Enoch, “Jude” reveals the open secret that not all the texts of the New Testament derived from the Law and the Prophets, as the Emmaus pericope claims, but also from the traditions of Second Temple Judaism. Secondly, the hierarchy of criteria used to justify the inspiration of a writing can change drastically in the course of time. While the Fathers of the Church favored apostolicity over catholicity and analogy of faith, these two latter criteria took precedence over apostolicity from Reformation onwards. This progressive weakening of apostolicity’s importance led to the questioning of Jude’s authorship by critical studies at the beginning of the nineteenth century. This gives rise to a final thought. What is the situation today? What justifies the reading of the epistle of Jude now? I think that, paradoxically, the criterion of apostolicity is making a big comeback. It should not be understood in its restricted sense of identification with an apostle, but rather as participation in a specific community from the Early Christianity. Ultimately, we still read the epistle of Jude, not because of its content, not because we still believe that the one who wrote it is the brother of James and therefore possibly the brother of the Lord; we read Jude because it provides a testimony to the life of a Christian community of Jewish origin in the first century of the common era. In other words,

Augustin Calmet, *Commentaire littéral sur tous les livres de l'Ancien et du Nouveau Testament: Les épîtres canoniques et l'Apocalypse* (Paris: Emery, 1726), 361.

57 Johann Gottfried Eichhorn, *Einleitung in Das Neue Testament*, vol. 3.1, 2nd ed. (Leipzig: Weidmann, 1820), 646–8. For a summary of the discussion in the early nineteenth century: Adam Jessien, *De Αὐθεντίᾳ Epistolae Judae. Commentatio Critica* (Lipsiæ [Leipzig]: J.A. Barthius, 1821).

58 Neyrey, *2 Peter; Jude*, 31; Donald P. Senior and Daniel J. Harrington, *1 Peter; Jude and 2 Peter*, SP 15 (Collegeville, MI: Liturgical Press, 2008), 176; Thurén, “Hey Jude!,” 464.

the epistle is canonical because it offers a historical documentation. And to substantiate this point, I would like to study four commentaries. I took them purposely from the Catholic world, because it is well known that it was given to conservatism at the beginning of the twentieth century and has the tendency to be more centralized. The evolution that emerges in this context could perfectly be transposed to all the branches of Protestantism, probably with slightly different chronologies.

The first one has a very explicit title, *Catholic Commentary of Scripture*, it received the *nihil obstat* and was covered by *imprimatur*. It dates from 1953 and was therefore written after the encyclical of Pius XII *Divino Afflante Spiritu*, which loosened the stranglehold of the anti-modernist condemnations; it presents the age-old position:

There is great probability, as St Jerome asserts above that Jude made use of the apocryphal Book of Henoch. This does not prove that Jude considered the contents of Henoch as inspired; nor does it indicate that he approved of every statement contained therein. Henoch was held in high esteem in the early Church, and it may have contained some genuine Jewish traditions.⁵⁹

This work was revised after the Council, in 1969, under the direction of one of the co-editors of the 1953 volume, Reginald Fuller, and it reads:

The prophecy of Enoch is not contained in the OT but is found almost verbatim in the apocryphal Book of Enoch, 1:9. This book was held in great esteem in the early Church. Jude simply cites the book as an authority which his readers would accept.⁶⁰

The difference is obvious: the reference to inspiration has disappeared. And what justifies Jude's quoting an apocryphal book is the acceptance of the audience.

The same assertion is made by another Catholic publication, the *Jerome Commentary* edited by the illustrious Raymond Brown, which was published in 1968. The explanation is the same: "Jude, however, quotes from the apocryphal Enoch (1:9), referring to it as a prophecy; he reflects the esteem in which this work was held in the early Church."⁶¹ The *Jerome* was also revised, in the 1990s.

The importance of Enoch lies in the content of his citation and its function in the argument (...) Jude even claims that Enoch was "prophesying" against these very heretics, and so the citation

⁵⁹ Bernard Orchard and Reginald Fuller, eds., *A Catholic Commentary on Holy Scripture* (London/New York: Nelson, 1953), 1191.

⁶⁰ Reginald Fuller, Luke Johnson, and Conleth Kearns, eds., *A New Catholic Commentary on Holy Scripture* (London/New York: Nelson, 1969), 1260.

⁶¹ Raymond Brown, Joseph Fitzmyer, and Roland Murphy, eds., *The Jerome Biblical Commentary*, vol. 2 (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1968), 380.

functions as one more traditional judgment against Jude's opponents, alongside the biblical examples of judgment in vv5–7,11.⁶²

The evolution is done: no need to justify the use of the apocryphal book anymore, but simply a description of the argumentation and of Jude's usage of the text.

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