

**Tommy Wasserman, *The Epistle of Jude: Its Text and Transmission*, Coniectanea Biblica New Testament Series 43, Stockholm (Almqvist & Wiksell) 2006. 369 pp + 16 plates**

- [1] It is well known that the smaller Catholic epistles and especially Jude have an extraordinary number of textual difficulties. This is due to the relatively small number of manuscripts and to the fact that the transmission of these writings differed significantly from those of the Gospels and the Pauline epistles. Especially since the publication of the famous Papyrus Bodmer (P<sup>72</sup>), a number of specialized text-critical studies on Jude have appeared. In addition to the two monographs by Albin (1962) and Landon (1996), Tommy Wasserman's Ph. D. dissertation, written under the supervision of Walter Übelacker and accepted at the University of Lund (Sweden) in 2006, is now the third extensive study focussed on the text of Jude. Already reacting to the publication of the fascicle on Jude in the new *Editio Critica Maior* (hereafter ECM), the study is a very important contribution not only to the establishment and discussion of the text of Jude but also to the exegesis and study of the early reception history of this writing.
- [2] Not being a specialist in textual criticism, I will focus chiefly on those aspects of the study which are also of interest for the general exegete and even more so for an interpreter and commentator on Jude. My own commentary, which is currently in preparation for the Theologischer Handkommentar series, will at numerous points benefit from the insights provided by Wasserman's work.
- [3] The study consists of three different parts. Part I ("Prolegomena", pp. 1-102) provides several chapters on the state of research, the important manuscripts P<sup>72</sup> and P<sup>78</sup>, the relationship between Jude and Second Peter and the harmonization in the textual tradition of both epistles. Part II (pp. 103-232) provides a new reconstruction and edition of the text of Jude, with an extensive apparatus compiled from the witness of many more manuscripts than the ECM's. Part III (pp. 233-339) provides a detailed textual or text-critical commentary. An extensive and well-structured bibliography, indexes, and a collection of sixteen plates with images of important manuscripts are added.
- [4] Whereas the assessment of the state of research in chap. 1 gives the reason for the study as a whole and especially the work presented in parts II and III, the investigations in ch. 2-5 are also important special studies on their respective subjects which are important for more than the purpose of reconstructing Jude's original text alone. This is especially true for the two chapters on P<sup>72</sup> and P<sup>78</sup> and for the discussion of the validity of the criteria for the relationship between Jude and Second Peter, where Wasserman provides additional arguments and enters a critical debate with the recent monograph by Anders Gerdmar (*Rethinking the Judaism-Hellenism Dichotomy: A Historiographical Case Study of Second Peter and Jude*, CBNTS 36, Stockholm 2001; cf. also my review in *TLZ* 128 [2003]: 393-395).
- [5] In his first chapter, Wasserman provides a brief account of the history of text-critical research on Jude, starting with Bernhard Weiss and including the fascicle of the ECM on Jude, assessing its method and achievements and already including parts of the beginning scholarly debate on that edition and its refined text-critical work. Quite frequently, but not uncritically, Wasserman is in agreement with the reasoning of the Institut für Neutestamentliche Textforschung in Münster; on the other hand, he states strong disagreement with the monograph of Landon who had tried to follow a method of 'radical eclecticism'. Wasserman finds stimulus for his own work in some shortcomings of the ECM: surprisingly for non-specialists, even

that edition does not present all extant readings in its critical apparatus, but only those which are attested in selected manuscripts. Thus, some of the extant manuscripts with additional variants are not included in the apparatus of the ECM. For this reason, Wasserman gives a revised critical text and a new and more extensive apparatus based on the collation of all extant Greek continuous text manuscripts that contain the epistle of Jude. However, he could only selectively use the lectionaries, and had to leave aside the Greek patristic and ancient versional evidence. Thus, even the evidence presented in this study is far from being complete, although it is much more comprehensive than the ECM. Wasserman presents one exemplary passage (pp. 27f.) where the ECM only notes three variants, whereas the study under review notes four other variants, summing up to seven. This may demonstrate that the differences are considerable, although not many of them will affect the reconstruction of the assumed earliest text of Jude, but rather the issues of the further transmission and reception of Jude.

- [6] The two chapters on  $\mathfrak{P}^{72}$  and  $\mathfrak{P}^{78}$  are valuable pieces on their own. In chap. 2, Wasserman collects all the available codicological information on the famous Bodmer Codex discussing issues relating to the sources of this collection of writings, the original sequence of its parts and the theological and liturgical tendencies of the scribe or scribes. Whereas NT scholars often simply focussed on  $\mathfrak{P}^{72}$  as a witness for Jude and First and Second Peter, this chapter is a plea for a comprehensive recognition of the manuscript and its complex history before anything is said about its text-critical value and the relevance of this witness for any decision in favor of particular readings. For text-critical specialists among the exegetes this is a matter of course, but the need to consider this detailed information is still not really appreciated by most of the non-specialists in this field.
- [7] The chapter on  $\mathfrak{P}^{78}$  takes up the debate on the original function of this manuscript. From the evidence adduced, Wasserman plausibly concludes that  $\mathfrak{P}^{78}$  was produced to serve as an amulet. However, while the argument pertaining to the usage of a particular codex must remain somewhat tenuous, Wasserman supports the assumption by reasoning from the contents of Jude. In particular, the quotation from Zech 3:2 “May the Lord rebuke you” in Jude 9 was a very common text in Jewish incantations, and more generally the mention of the figure of Michael could stimulate some kind of magical use. Furthermore, mention should be made of Jude 6 where it is said that the giants are “kept in eternal chains under darkness”. Such an idea could easily be thought to apply to any other threatening figures or demons. Thus, Wasserman’s investigation of the nature and function of the manuscript is not least a contribution to the issue of the early reception history of the epistle of Jude.
- [8] Such a more general benefit for the interpreter of Jude can also be seen in the thorough argument put forward in ch. 4, where Wasserman briefly addresses the question of the literary relationship between Second Peter and Jude. Although he is finally in agreement with the majority position stating a dependence of Second Peter on Jude (and not vice versa), he notes that in scholarship there are always dissenting voices, for various reasons. In particular, another Swedish dissertation, published in the same scholarly series as Wasserman’s work (the already mentioned study of Gerdmar) aimed to challenge the scholarly consensus which had been largely established by the work of an earlier Swedish scholar, Tord Fornberg, in his redaction-critical study of 2 Peter (*An Early Church in a Pluralistic Society: A Study on 2 Peter* [CBNT 9, Lund: Gleerup, 1977]). Fornberg and others (such as J. Neyrey and R. Bauckham) base their conclusions largely on explaining the logic and techniques of Second Peter’s use of the text of Jude, so they could establish good plausibility for Second Peter’s dependence on Jude. But the explanations are not always coherent, and the argument could be challenged on several points. Gerdmar’s attempt

to reverse the direction of usage was, however, severely criticized in scholarship, and Wasserman also charges him with an inadequate use of some of the criteria of literary dependency. But Wasserman has to acknowledge that the criteria commonly used (e.g., the more difficult reading, brevity, use or non-use of apocryphal sources and the degree of Hellenization or Hellenistic style) cannot provide certainty in the case of the literary relationship between Jude and Second Peter. The text-critical rules of *lectio difficilior* and *lectio brevior* are not applicable in the case of a rather self-confident redactional use of a source by a linguistically competent author (and this is true for both the author of Jude and of Second Peter). The use of apocryphal sources can only be assessed on the basis of preliminary assumptions related to a ‘canonical’ awareness of an author, which makes the argument circular and anachronistic as well. Finally, the analysis of the degree of Hellenization in language and style, as provided by Gerdmar, is untenable in view of the thorough analyses of language and style in Second Peter by Thomas J. Kraus (*Sprache, Stil und historischer Ort des zweiten Petrusbriefes* [WUNT II/136, Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2001]).

- [9] In view of the weakness of the commonly used criteria, Wasserman develops a few additional ones which are called ‘contextually defined’ (p. 81), i.e., they are more closely linked to the discernible redactional strategy and interests of the authors of, respectively, Jude or Second Peter. In 2 Pet 2:4-10, the sequence of biblical examples is just appropriate to the soteriological rule formulated in 2 Pet 2:9, so that an adoption of the examples from Jude, as far as they fit, together with the insertion of two new examples, is highly plausible. On the other hand, the omission of the very common example of the flood can hardly be conceived in view of Jude’s purpose to demonstrate the judgment on the ungodly from Scripture (p. 84). Other ‘contextually defined’ arguments can be adduced for the adoption of Enochic material in Jude 6 // 2 Pet 2:4 and for the charge of slandering in Jude 8b-9 // 2 Pet 2:10b-11. Most striking is, finally, the fact that in the ‘midrashic’ structure in Jude with the sequence of Biblical examples (vv. 5-7, 9, 11, 14-15) and application to the opponents (vv. 8, 10, 12-13, 16), the term οὔτοι has a unique structuring function whereas its use in Second Peter is much less defined and without any structuring function for the argument. So it is more plausible that the author of Second Peter adopted the οὔτοι in some verses, but not consistently, because he did not use that pronoun for structuring his description of the opponents in ch. 2. Well considered, all these parallels point clearly to a direction of adoption from Jude to Second Peter, as advocated by the majority view. In this chapter, Wasserman clearly manages to advance an exegetical argument which is, of course, important for text-critical assessment as well.
- [10] In the brief ch. 6, Wasserman investigates the mutual influences between the textual traditions of Jude and Second Peter. In contrast with, e.g., the Synoptic Gospels, such harmonizing influences are relatively infrequent, but one must take into account that there are not particularly many real verbal parallels. The author of Second Peter often phrases things differently, even when he uses Jude. Only the parallel between ἀγάπαις and ἀπάταις in Jude 12 // 2 Pet 2:13 stimulated harmonization in both directions in later manuscripts. Most interestingly, the difficult metaphor σπιλάδες (“cliffs”) in Jude 12 is not corrected into the easier polemical charge σπίλοι (“blots”) used in 2 Pet 2:13. Such an observation is relevant also for interpretation.
- [11] In part II the author provides the core of his achievements: a new reconstruction of the ‘initial text’ (as the author cautiously names it) of Jude which differs in a few details from the text of the ECM, and a list of variants which includes far more information than does the apparatus of that edition. Wasserman collated “practically all extant continuous text MSS” of Jude (p. 105), as well as a selection of lectionaries which is, however, much larger than that considered in the ECM. Thus, the total of manuscripts considered here is 560. As a side effect, Wasser-

man could identify two new manuscripts (cf. p. 105f.), the fact that MS 2866 is actually the same as MS 2483, and some errors in the ECM and other reference works. The annotated list of manuscripts included is given on pp. 106-117.

- [12] After defining his concept of ‘initial text’ (as a hypothetical, reconstructed text, not claimed to be an archetype or an ‘original text’), Wasserman explains his method which is said to be a “reasoned eclecticism” (p. 124) that tries to include all the available evidence, external and internal, in a balanced judgment. On pp. 125-6, the reconstructed text is given which differs only in five instances from the ECM: v. 5 κύριος instead of Ἰησοῦς, v. 13 ἀναφρίζοντα instead of ἐπαφρίζοντα, v. 15 πάντας τοὺς ἀσεβεῖς instead of πᾶσαν ψυχήν, v. 18 include instead of omit ὅτι and include instead of omit τοῦ (p. 126). Some more significant differences are given with regard to the indication that a passage calls for special consideration.
- [13] The apparatus to the new text (pp. 128-209) ends with an appendix indicating: a list of lacunae in the Greek manuscripts; a list of (obvious) errors in the Greek manuscripts, and – very importantly – a relatively extensive list of *errata* in the ECM of Jude (pp. 218-23) and a list of further differences which the author views not as *errata* but as different interpretations of the manuscript evidence.
- [14] Here, Wasserman’s work provides a clear advance in scholarship, regardless of whether his own text-critical decisions are more plausible than those in the 26th edition of Nestle-Aland or in the new ECM.
- [15] The commentary in part III discusses in great detail a large number of selected passages and variants. For indicating the degree of plausibility of the text-critical decisions, he introduces a new rating system that aims to invite the reader and user of the work “actively to engage with the evidence in order to reach independent conclusions” (p. 236). This is a quite valuable and refreshing approach to textual criticism, which is viewed by many exegetes as a mere work of specialists that has simply to be accepted; likewise, text-critical reference works often appear somewhat ‘esoteric’ to the non-specialist and thus evoke the impression to claim a kind of ‘standard text’ or a new ‘*textus receptus*’. In Jude, there is much reason to think differently, due to the immense difficulty of the text-critical problems. Therefore the approach chosen here points in a very laudable direction.
- [16] The rating system introduced points to the relationship between external and internal evidence. Thus the reader can see at first glance whether both kinds of evidence provide mutual support, whether they are balanced or point in different directions, or whether one outweighs the other.
- [17] The text-critical commentary itself, moreover, not only discusses the matter of the ‘initial’ text but also the variants which may be interesting for the history of textual transmission and interpretation. Thus, the commentary is more than a text-critical commentary, but in some way also points to the subsequent textual history.
- [18] In what follows, I can only comment on some of the most controversial text-critical problems in Jude.
- [19] On the *inscriptio*, having given the whole range of variants, Wasserman gives good reason for assuming that it was only introduced into the history of transmission when Jude was collected together with other Catholic epistles such as James (p. 240).

- [20] On the very difficult passage in Jude 5, he gives an extensive and lucid commentary. The text Wasserman finally chooses to be 'initial' is εἰδότας ὑμᾶς ἅπαξ πάντα ὅτι κύριος. This text differs from the ECM in its placement of ἅπαξ and in the choice of κύριος (without article) instead of Ἰησοῦς. Although the text chosen here is not attested by any extant Greek manuscript, both arguments are quite convincing – not only in the choice of κύριος over Ἰησοῦς but also regarding the position of ἅπαξ. Only stating a slightly better support for his reading (p. 260), Wasserman assumes that the transfer to the later position (after κύριος) might have been caused by the difficulty of the independent δεύτερον which is, however, imaginable for a stylistically competent author. Your reviewer frankly admits that Wasserman's lucid argument causes him to alter his previous decision made in the preparation of his commentary.
- [21] The complicated situation in v. 14, where influence of the text from *1 Enoch* 1:9 is reflected, is also lucidly discussed and described by a *stemma* of the variants (p. 300). Here Wasserman confirms the reading also chosen by the editors of the ECM (but there with hesitation).
- [22] Regarding v. 22-23, where we have one of the most corrupt passages of the NT, Wasserman disagrees with Osburn, Bauckham and others, who advocate the two-clause version as attested by  $\Psi^{72}$ , and tries to re-establish the three-clause version as attested by Codex Sinaiticus, mostly due to the external manuscript evidence. Here, I doubt whether the internal evidence is weighed adequately, and I would rather decide for the shorter two-clause version which was, then, expanded by insertion of a third verb, σῶζειν, since the meaning of the passage was obviously unclear or thought to be in need of some more precision. But in differing from the author's decision, I am simply doing what he intended, that his readers get independently engaged with the evidence in order to reach conclusions of their own.
- [23] In conclusion, I can only confirm that in most instances the reflections of the author are quite plausible, and he can be praised for having produced a new milestone in the thorny field of reconstructing the text of Jude.
- [24] Of course, the initial stimulus, the incompleteness of the evidence presented in the ECM, led him to the attempt to provide more complete evidence, and he did well in this. However, we should not forget that even the *extant* evidence is only a fragmentary part of the whole process of textual transmission of which many, especially most of the *early* witnesses, are lost. This is a problem for every reconstruction and every apparatus, and even the most detailed attempts of the Institut für Neutestamentliche Textforschung to provide a quantitative view of manuscript dependence, given in percentage of probability and in quasi-exact statistics, are limited in their value by the simple fact that the early witnesses are often lost and that the versional evidence as well as quotations from the Church Fathers are either not included at all or can only be considered with caution and many uncertainties, because of their own text-critical perplexities.
- [25] These limitations admitted, Wasserman's presentation of evidence as completely as possible is really laudable, and the caution and reason of the author's argument and the aim to encourage the readers to decide independently point in a direction in which textual criticism may get out of its 'esoteric' corner, and textual history can also become an important aid for exegesis.

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