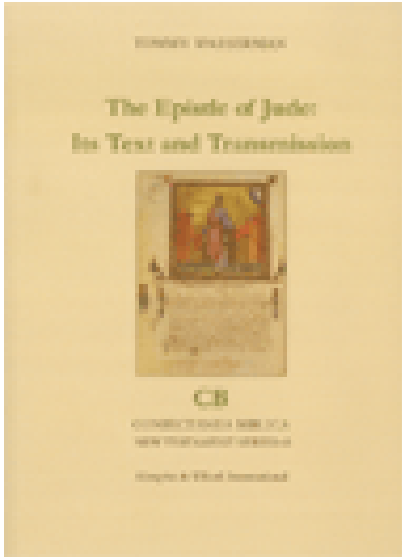


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Wasserman, Tommy

The Epistle of Jude: Its Text and Transmission

Coniectanea biblica, New Testament Series 43

Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell, 2006. Pp. xv + 368 + 16 plates. Paper. SEK 211.00. ISBN 9122021590.

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It has been argued often by scholars that decisions cannot be made about the New Testament text until all the evidence is available. All can be thankful that for one New Testament book the evidence is in, available, and can now be evaluated. The aim of Tommy Wasserman's *The Epistle of Jude: Its Text and Transmission* is "to include all extant evidence from the Greek manuscript tradition" (105). The study includes 560 manuscript witnesses.

The Epistle of Jude is divided into three parts. Part 1, "Prolegomena," consists of five chapters. Chapter 1 deals with the history of research on the Catholic Epistles in general and Jude in particular. Chapters 2 and 3 deal with special studies of the early papyri, P⁷² and P⁷⁸. Chapters 4 and 5 delve into the long-debated relationship between 2 Peter and Jude. As with most scholarship, Wasserman leans toward the priority of Jude. He uses what he calls three contextually defined criteria to make his case. The most convincing argument is the significance of the word or phrase οὗτοι/οὗτοι εἰσιν in Jude. For Wasserman, the words serve as an "indispensable structuring element for the discourse as a whole and likely originated from Jude" (98).

It is hard to dismiss Wasserman's arguments, but the fact remains that the relationship between Jude and 2 Peter is probably going to remain an open question. It is a fact that

the two letters rarely agree in exact words used, and much too often themes are developed in different ways. This reviewer believes the Synoptics are basically independent writings, using the same tradition stream. Perhaps the same can be said of these two letters. As Synoptic studies have proved, it is virtually impossible to settle the issue.

Part 2, “Editio,” comprises three chapters. In chapter 6 the author includes a list of the manuscripts used in the edition and a brief explanation of his aim. Several corrections and updated information for *Kurzgefasste Liste der griechischen Handschriften des Neuen Testaments* and *Text und Textwert* are found in the endnotes of the chapter. The study includes several manuscripts never examined at Münster and a couple of new manuscripts. Wasserman also discovered that MS 2866 is the same as MS 2483. Chapter 7 is a reconstruction of the “initial” text of Jude (Wasserman avoids terms such as *autograph* and *archetype*). When one compares his reconstructed text to *Editio Critica Maior*, there are only five differences:

- v. 5 κύριος [ECM: Ἰησοῦς]
- v. 13 ἀπαφρίζοντα [ECM: ἐπαφρίζοντα]
- v. 15 πάντα τοὺς ἀσεβεῖς [ECM: πᾶσαν ψυχὴν]
- v. 18 ὅτι² [ECM: omit]
- v. 18 τοῦ [ECM: omit]¹

Comparing Wasserman to NA²⁷, the major difference is in the difficult verse 5. Wasserman’s reconstructed text reads ὑμας ἅπαξ πάντα, ὅτι κύριος, while NA²⁷ reads [ὑμας] πάντα ὅτι [ὁ] κύριος ἅπαξ. Wasserman also differs from NA²⁷ at verses 13 and 15 above.

Chapter 8 consists of the author’s explanation of the critical apparatus, which basically follows the design of the *ECM*. The apparatus itself follows. This is the work that will endure and give text critics vital information on the manuscript evidence of Jude for years to come. Several appendices follow, including an errata list to the *ECM* volume of Jude.

Part 3, “Commentarius,” consists of Wasserman’s textual commentary. The purpose of this section is clear: “to give a detailed account for the reasons that led me to adopt certain variant readings” (234). Here Wasserman not only defends his own textual decisions but also debates text decisions made by others. Each section of the commentary begins with the text followed by the rating the author gives to the reading. The very effective and user-friendly rating system devised for this project clearly shows the reader what Wasserman’s view is of the external and internal evidence (see 236 for details). The author then fully

1. This fifth difference is left out of Wasserman’s list (126).

explains his text decision and enters into conversation with those who see the evidence in another way.

It is in this section that discussion and disagreement can take place. Since text criticism is both an art and a science, some will take the evidence presented and look at it differently. For example, in the very difficult verse 5, this reviewer agrees the second ὑμας is the more difficult reading and is likely original. There is also agreement that ἄπαξ probably modifies εἰδότηας and should be placed outside the ὅτι clause. There is disagreement, however, on the subject of ἀπόλεσεν. Although the external evidence supports [ὁ] Ἰησους, and it is clearly the most difficult reading, Wasserman adopts κύριος, primarily from internal considerations (262–66). As any reasoned eclectic knows, each will take the evidence and see it a bit differently.

Following the textual commentary, the author includes a helpful bibliography and three indices. Wasserman includes plates of P⁷², P⁷⁸, and 0316, along with transcriptions. Finally, there are descriptions of 1521 and 1799.

The book is mostly free from major errors.² A helpful errata list is available online from: <http://www.evangelicaltextualcriticism.com/documents/ErratalisttoTheEpistleofJude.pdf>. This list should be placed inside for further reference.

Wasserman has made available to the text critic a massive amount of manuscript evidence for the book of Jude. The manuscript evidence is exhaustive and the textual commentary thoughtful. Commentators and text critics must deal with Wasserman's evidence and textual conclusions in any future work on this little epistle. One may apply the same criteria and arrive at different conclusions, but no scholar can afford to dismiss Wasserman's thoughtful and measured text decisions.

2. Except the one mentioned in note 1.