

ANNALI

di storia dell'esegesi

34/2
2017

THE EPISTLE OF JAMES THEOLOGY, ETHICS AND RECEPTION

EDB

EDIZIONI DEHONIANE BOLOGNA

Contents

Mauro Pesce, <i>Dieci anni dopo la morte di Giuseppe Alberigo</i>	297
-------------------------------------------------------------------------	-----

Keywords: Giuseppe Alberigo, Catholic Church, Reform of the Church, History of Christianity, Faith and History.

Giuseppe Alberigo, <i>Vita attiva e vita contemplativa in un'esperienza cristiana del XVI secolo</i>	301
------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	-----

In an article published in 1974, the historian of the Church Giuseppe Alberigo, who died in 2006, reconstructs a debate between Tommaso Giustiniani and Gasparo Contarini. The debate, which took place a few years before the beginning of the Protestant Reformation, presupposes an acute perception of church decadence and the need for a profound reform. The characters involved in the debate had divided each other in face of life choices deemed necessary to meet the needs of the time. Giustiniani chose contemplative life, Contarini instead defended the primacy of conjugal life and action in the world. According to Giuseppe Alberigo, the Venetian story had a particular symbolic significance for the condition of Catholicism in the mid-twentieth century.

Keywords: Catholic Church, Reform of the Church, History of Christianity, Contemplative life, Layman in the Church.

The Epistle of James: Theology, Ethics and Reception

Tobias Nicklas, <i>Vorwort</i>	339
--------------------------------------	-----

Petr Mareček, <i>Die Person Jesu Christi im Jakobusbrief</i>	343
--------------------------------------------------------------------	-----

This paper focuses on the person of Jesus Christ in the Letter of James and is divided into three parts. In the first section attention is paid to Jas 1:1 and 2:1, where the name Jesus Christ appears. Secondly the texts with the Kyrios title, which is used to refer to Jesus Christ, are analyzed. Then there is a discussion of whether there are some other passages in the Letter of James that contain Christological utterances—possibly Jas 4:15 (“if the Lord wills it”) may be about Jesus Christ, although it cannot be proved. Lastly we find that the formulation about “the excellent name that was invoked over you” in Jas 2:7 presupposes baptism “in the name of Jesus”.

On the basis of the analysis of those texts of the Letter of James that refer to Jesus Christ, it is possible to conclude that the Letter of James, from the very first verse, is a theocentric and Christological text. In the Epistle to James, God and Jesus Christ are united even while maintaining their distinctiveness, as is emphasised by the intended inner connection of theol-

ogy and Christology. The lowliness of the crucified Jesus is totally absent from the Letter of James, whereas the risen and glorified Christ (Jas 2:1) is highlighted as he will come as the eschatological judge (Jas 5:9) at the end of time (Jas 5:7–8).

Keywords: Letter of James, Early Christianity, Jesus Christ, Christology, Eschatology.

Tobias Nicklas, *Großfamilie aus zwölf Stämmen.*
Die „Kirche“ im Jakobusbrief 363

The Epistle of James is a text which usually is not seen as interested in ecclesiological matters. In fact, the text is not concerned with ecclesiological ministries or the order of the community and does not talk a lot about rituals. It develops, however, important images of the *ekklêsia* (or the *synagoge*). It is connected to the twelve tribes of Israel in the diaspora and described as a family of brothers and sisters who have both God and Abraham as their father. The article discusses James's images of the *ekklêsia* and asks for their place in a landscape of early Christian thinking.

Keywords: Letter of James, Early Christianity, Ecclesiology, Twelve Tribes of Israel, Fictive Family.

Susanne Luther, *Von Feigenbäumen und Oliven.*
Die Rezeption, Transformation und Kreation
sprachethischer Traditionen im Jakobusbrief 381

The perspective of speech-ethics throws new light onto long-debated tradition-historical and introductory questions concerning the Epistle of James. Building upon the reception of Old Testament, Hellenistic Jewish, Greco-Roman as well as early Christian speech-ethical traditions, this contribution attempts to illuminate the tradition-historical background of the Epistle of James, which in turn allows for inferences concerning the author, the historical and theological location of the Epistle, its contribution to early Christian identity formation as well as its place within the speech-ethical discourse of early Christianity.

Keywords: Letter of James, Early Christianity, Speech-Ethics, Christian identity, Formation, Roman-Hellenistic Judaism.

Oda Wischmeyer, *Jak 3,13-18 vor dem Hintergrund*
von 1Kor 1,17-2,16. Frühchristliche Weisheitstheologie
und der Jakobusbrief 403

In this contribution the author argues that Jas 3:13–18 can be read against the background of dualistic Jewish wisdom theology in its specific reformulation by Paul in 1 Cor 1–2. Paul and the author of the Letter of James share the appraisal of the situation of their communities: misconceived wisdom cause discord, unrest and factions in the communities. While Paul strives for unity by a complex Christological reinterpretation of wisdom (wisdom of the cross) the author of the Letter of James puts an end to speculative and rhetorical wisdom by interpreting *Sophia* as virtue of peaceful coexistence within the communities.

Keywords: Letter of James, Early Christianity, Jewish Wisdom, Letters of Paul, Peaceful coexistence.

Ladislav Tichý, *Das Gebet im Jakobusbrief* 431

The contribution deals with the theme of prayer in the Letter of James. The first main part of the article examines the linguistic inventory of the three texts that explicitly speak about

prayer in the Letter of James (1:5–8; 4,1–3; 5,13–18). The second part tries to present the theological message of these explicit texts. Additionally, the sense and importance of other texts (3:8–10; 5:4; 5:19f.) that are also interpreted in connection with the theme of prayer (e.g. by A. Wypadło) is discussed. The article comes to the conclusion that according to the Letter of James the correct prayer (both in its form and in its goal) must be an essential part of the practice of life of all who believe in Christ. In this respect, there would be no conflict with the position of the apostle Paul.

Keywords: Letter of James, Early Christianity, Prayer, Paul of Tarsus, Practice of Life.

**Peter Wick, *Zwischen Parteilichkeit und Barmherzigkeit!*
Jak 2,1-13 und die elaborierte Ethik des Jakobusbriefes 443**

The text of Jas 2:1–13 begins with a warning against partiality and leads to a praise of mercy. Justice, the law and the commandment of love play a central role as well. Partiality and mercy (or grace) both exceed the framework of justice and the commandments. Interestingly enough, they both have the same root in the Hebrew Bible. For James partiality is unjust and mercy is more than just. God approves of privileging the poor. This is not unjust, because it compensates for the discrimination of the poor in this world. A person who keeps the Torah, avoids partiality and acts mercifully, thereby imitating God, influences God’s measure of judgement. God’s judgement on him will not only be just, but it will go beyond justice: It will be merciful.

Keywords: Letter of James, Early Christianity, Justice, Poverty, Hebrew Bible.

Artur Malina, «*I demoni credono e tremano*» (*Gc 2,19*) 457

The article deals with an example used in James’ treatment of faith and works. According to some commentators, the reference to the trembling of the demons (Jas 2:19) is placed at the center of the unit (Jas 2:14–26). Others, however, recognize that it is subordinated to a pattern of argumentation described by the ancient rhetors and named the *chreia*. This type of reasoning begins with a question, which is responded to by a main thesis, contrasted to an objection that is refuted with the help of various examples. The negative example of the demons, similarly to the positive examples of Abraham and Rahab, is persuasive if it is a representation of a real event. Therefore, we have another reason to assume that the readers of James were familiar with oral or written traditions of Jesus’ words and deeds.

Keywords: Letter of James, Early Christianity, Faith and Works, Demons, Chreia.

Jiří Mrázek, *Realisierter Glaube (Jak 2,14-26)* 469

The principal theme in the Epistle of James is not faith and works (2:14), but faith that can prove its worth in times of crisis (1:2). However, the condition for it to be able to prove its worth in this way is that we live in accordance with it (2:14–26). This is not a question of moralistic accumulation of “good deeds,” but of whether or not faith is the basis on which we make decisions in real life. The hypothetical objection in 2:18 takes James’ requirement of implementing our faith to the point of absurdity (in the final analysis, faith is not necessary, deeds are sufficient)—only for James to reject it: faith that is not used is of no help, but deeds on their own are also pointless and cannot be a substitute for faith in times of crisis. The examples that follow (Abraham and Rahab) show faith being used in decision-making.

Keywords: Letter of James, Early Christianity, Faith, Decision-Making, Abraham.

Kelsie Gayle Rodenbiker, <i>The Persistent Sufferer: The Exemplar of Job in the Letter of James</i>	479
-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	-----

This article is concerned with the use of Job to exemplify endurance in the Letter of James, the first of the seven so-called Catholic Epistles (Jas 5:11). The collective form of the Catholic Epistles along with their common use of positive and negative paradigmatic biblical characters are addressed, followed by the characterization of Job in James, LXX Job, and the *Testament of Job*. It is argued that James' paradigmatic use of Job as a figure who exemplifies endurance shows a more direct literary relationship to *TJob*, which portrays Job's willing engagement with Satan that results in his suffering, than LXX Job and the canonical Book of Job, in which Job is unaware of the heavenly conflict over his piety and characterized not by his endurance but primarily by his misery—even in his own words. The relationship of James to the Testament of Job highlights the value of the study of parabiblical literature alongside early Christian literature, even within a study that takes seriously the Catholic Epistles as a canonical collection.

Keywords: Letter of James, Early Christianity, Book of Job, Biblical Characters, Suffering.

Ryan D. Wettlaufer, <i>The Well Primed Scribe</i>	497
---------------------------------------------------------	-----

Lexical priming is the phenomenon wherein a reader, through repeated exposure, is conditioned to expect common word pairings. That is, when certain words often appear in proximity, the reader will develop a subconscious expectation to see one whenever they see the other. This expectation can often lead a reader to misread a subsequent word as the expected word: they think they see what they expected to see, even when its not really there. This paper will introduce the history and study of lexical priming, and then turn to the text of James to explore whether the phenomenon could have played a role in scribal variation.

Keywords: Letter of James, Early Christianity, Lexical Priming, Scribal Variation, Reader.

Christian Bemmerl, <i>Die frühe Rezeption des Jakobusbriefs und die Geschichte des neutestamentlichen Kanons</i>	513
------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	-----

The early reception history of the epistle of James continues to provide more questions than answers, but it also offers a new perspective on a recent debate. Scholars like David Trobisch have argued that the New Testament was published as a single book, put together by a single editor, by the end of the second century. Reception history of James shows that this is incorrect. There are no indisputable traces of the epistle before Origen. Furthermore, there is a geographical issue. The epistle is attested earlier in the Eastern Church than in the West. This is shown by a comparison of James with passages by Irenaeus of Lyon, Clement of Alexandria and Origen. The epistle of James demonstrates that the canonical status of texts that are now part of the New Testament varied from region to region and across time.

Keywords: Letter of James, Early Christianity, Irenaeus of Lyon, Clement of Alexandria, Origen.

Alicia J. Batten, <i>Early Anabaptist Interpretation of the Letter of James</i>	537
---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	-----

The Letter of James was popular among members of the early Anabaptist movement for a variety of reasons. The perceived parallels between verses in James and some of the teachings attributed to Jesus contributed to this popularity because of the import Anabaptists placed upon the example of Jesus. James' emphasis upon withstanding trials, enduring suffering, and keeping oneself unstained from the world resonated with the experiences of those Anabaptists who suffered martyrdom. Theologically, some Anabaptist leaders found support in James for their

stress upon the believer's free choice to witness to her or his theological commitments and to embody the power of the Holy Spirit working in an ongoing process of moral transformation.

Keywords: Letter of James, Early Christianity, Anabaptism, Sayings of Jesus, Martyrdom.

Early Christianity

Arianna Rotondo, *Uomini e donne nella prassi discepolare: diaconia e potere nell'unzione di Betania (Gv 12,1-8)* 553

This paper deals with the passage known as The Anointing at Bethany found in the Gospel of John 12:1-8. This pericope has been chosen as a case study to investigate if and, in case, how the gender relations can arise from the practice of *diakonia* through the dynamics of power. From a methodological point of view, this paper intends to integrate different categories of specific approaches. While the "gender pair" approach brings light on the narratological function of the gender relations, an attentive gaze on Jesus' interactions with women provides a heuristic perspective to rethink the story of "the Woman Who Anointed Jesus," specifically the Johannine version of the dinner at Bethany. As regards this point, this paper suggests that the Johannine version has had a huge part in the social memory of the proto-Christian groups, and that this version of the story has been preserved and recognised as a story deserving of being transmitted across time for its importance in the communitarian life.

Keywords: Gospel of John, Early Christianity, Anointing of Bethany, diakonia, Women Studies.

Rodrigo Laham Cohen, *La mirada atrevida Jesús en b Sanedrín 107b y la tópica adversus Iudaeos* 577

The aim of this paper is to analyze the allusions to Jesus in two parallel texts of the *Babylonian Talmud: Sanhedrin 107b* and *Sotah 47a*. Rather than attempting to re-enact the historical figure of Jesus – not possible from rabbinic evidence – the object will be to explore the nature of the character created by the rabbis and their reasons to picture Jesus in a specific way. The analysis of *b Sanhedrin 107b* and *b Sotah 47a* as well as the literature *adversus Iudaeos* within the Sassanid context suggests that the creation of an immoral Jesus in the *Talmud* served two purposes: to desacralize the Christian Messiah and to also counteract the attacks made by Christians on Jewish spirituality, as derived from the study of polemics and debates.

Keywords: Jesus, Rabbinic Literature, Babylonian Talmud, Sanhedrin, Sotah.

History of Religions

Luca Arcari, *Hellenismus e pluralismo religioso. Le ambiguità di un'associazione nella riflessione storico-religiosa tedesca tra Otto e Novecento* 603

With this essay, I intend to cast light on the importance of the academic construction of *Hellenismus*, a cultural product well-grounded in German *altertumswissenschaft* (since G. Droysen's seminal book), in W. Bousset's analysis of early Christianity as well as in G. Kittel's methodological assumptions grounding the *Theologisches Wörterbuch zum Neuen Testament* and the *Judenfrage querelle*. The concept of *Hellenismus*, in German historiographical (and theological) appropriation, emerges as a sort of functional *passpartout* for a the(ological) view of the parting of the ways between Judaism and Christianity. In this essay, it is my aim to analyse the finalistic vision emerging from the debate over the relationships between Hellenism

and the origins of Christianity in order to emphasize the so-called “Jewish problem” in various German socio-political and cultural contexts. Also according to such historiographical (and theological) debates, it clearly appears that “Jewish problem hung as a dark shadow over the theological and political life [...]. In the great project of shaping the German nation-state, a project that several leading theologians were involved in, the Jewish minority [...] was often regarded as a disturbing phenomenon” (A. Gerdmar).

Keywords: History of religions, Hellenismus, Walter Bousset, Early Christianity, Judaism.