Reading the Catholic epistles as a collection, with particular attention to their ethical motifs

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Abstract

This thesis evaluates a recent scholarly movement led by David Nienhuis, Robert Wall and Darian Lockett to interpret the Catholic Epistles as a collection and develops a new reading strategy to build on and extend the strategies provided by previous scholarship. In chapter 2, I develop a method of identifying resonances between passages (both verbal and conceptual) and placing those resonant passages into an interpretive network. This network can then be used to assess interpretive options in other resonant passages elsewhere in the collection.

In light of the relatively neglected status of the Catholic Epistles in the field of New Testament ethics, I selected a range of ethical motifs, in order to assess the hermeneutical utility of the collective approach. In addition to addressing this lacuna of scholarship, these motifs demonstrate different facets of the collective approach to the Catholic Epistles. That is, these chapters explore how the collective approach handles a prominent motif in Greco-Roman ethical discourse (mimesis), a contentious topic in scholarship on the Catholic Epistles (love) and an exhortation whose significance is only recognisable when the Catholic Epistles are approached as a collection (restoration of an errant believer).

Mimesis is a prominent topic in Greco-Roman ethical discourse and has recently been recognised by scholarship as a significant theme within 1 John. Chapter 3, therefore, demonstrates the heuristic ability of the collective approach, in so far as it uncovers an array of passages from the Catholic Epistles that relate to mimesis, as well as offering a unified framework in which the two prevailing methods of identifying mimetic material can cooperate. In this way, the collective approach contributes to mimetic studies by casting a wide net in its identification of mimetic material. Having traced the major contours of the network which emerges around the theme of imitation, this thesis then critically assesses and rejects a recent proposal that the *imitatio Christi* motif is present in the phrase τὴν πίστιν τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ in James 2:1.

Chapter 4 explores whether the collective approach might relieve the Johannine Epistles of the scholarly critique that their love is exclusively intra-communal as well as vague and impractical. Having developed a robust network of associated passages, surrounding the motif of love in the Catholic Epistles, I conclude that the network actually amplifies the intra-communal nature of love in the Johannine Epistles, and vice-versa, the

Johannine Epistles amplify intra-communal interpretive options present elsewhere in the collection. In terms of practical application though, love is related to a number of practical exhortations across the collection relating to prayer, care for the poor, favouritism towards the rich, etc. which concretise the otherwise abstract commands to love in the Johannine Epistles.

Chapter 5 explores the relatively underappreciated commands towards restoration of an errant believer that are found at the conclusion of a number of the Catholic Epistles. Previous scholarship has not provided a treatment of this motif that takes all three of these passages into account. In addition, I integrate a range of other passages into the network by means of verbal resonances. The integration of 1 Peter 5:10 is particularly significant in this regard, because the restoration from sin in this passage (and not exclusively from physical suffering) is amplified by the network, as it uses comparable terms for restoration from sin elsewhere in the collection. Through the inclusion of these additional passages, a minor corollary of the motif surfaces, namely, the need for believers to have ongoing preservation in their faith. Jude 24 and 1 John 5:18 both describe the believer's preservation from sin, although they may attribute it to different agents. Jude 24 clearly attributes the agency of preservation to God, and 1 John 5:18 potentially attributes the believer's preservation to the believer themselves or to the Father. I argue that the collection amplifies the former reading. Another interpretive possibility arises though when Jude 24 and 1 John 5:18 are treated in the context of the collection: that the reason why believers are kept "free from stumbling" (ἀπταίστους) is because the evil does not "touch" (ἅπτεται) them.

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Abbreviations

All abbreviations in this thesis follow the guidelines of the SBL Handbook of Style (2nd ed.), with the exception of the following:

AKIZU	Antike Kanonisierungsprozesse und Identitätsbildung in Zeiten des Umbruchs
ASE	Annali di storia dell'Esegesi
BTNT	Biblical Theology of the New Testament
CCE	Center for Christian Ethics
CCS	Cascade Companion Series
EBT	Explorations in Biblical Theology
EC	Early Christianity
EGGNT	Exegetical Guide to the Greek New Testament Series
FM	Faith and Mission
IJPT	International Journal of Philosophy and Theology
JTI	Journal of Theological Interpretation
NCBC	New Cambridge Bible Commentary Series
NTT	New Testament Theology
PJT	Pharos Journal of Theology
RRT	Reviews in Religion and Theology
SBJT	Southern Baptist Journal of Theology
SBLSS	Society of Biblical Literature Symposium Series
USSE	Uppsala Studies in Social Ethics
VeE	Verbum et Ecclesia
WEBC	Westminster Bible Companion Series
WUNT II	Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament 2
ZECNT	Zondervan Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament Series

1 Introduction

1.1 The Call to Read the Catholic Epistles as a Collection

A recent scholarly movement interprets the Catholic Epistles of the New Testament—James, 1-2 Peter, 1-3 John and Jude—as an epistolary collection, rather than as seven discrete writings or a group of four sub-corpora (e.g. James, the Petrine Epistles [or 1 Peter, with 2 Peter and Jude being treated together], the Johannine Epistles and Jude).[1] At the forefront of this movement is Darian Lockett, who has published both an account of the formation of the Catholic Epistle collection and a commentary that takes the collective status of the Catholic Epistles as its starting point.[2] Lockett concluded his 2017 volume with the hope "that this study will encourage future work in the Catholic Epistles which will specifically attend to the hermeneutical insights generated by reading the seven Catholic Epistles as a collection."[3] This is the point of departure for this thesis, which will advance the discussion of the collective approach by offering a method for performing such a reading, as well as presenting a range of insights that arise from the adoption of the collective approach.

The emergence of this collective approach to the Catholic Epistles coincides with a more general increase of scholarly interest in the Catholic Epistles. In 2004, John Kloppenborg and Robert Webb formed the Catholic Epistles group at SBL because the society had "not had a section devoted to the General letters for almost a decade (apart from the letters of John being considered as part of the Johannine literature)."[4] The increase in scholarly interest at SBL was recognised by Alicia J. Batten and John S. Kloppenborg in 2014:

> Within the past decade, the letters of James, Peter and Jude section of the Society of Biblical Literature has sought to bring

[1] For a fuller account of this scholarly movement, see: Darian R. Lockett, "Introduction", in *The Catholic Epistles: Critical Readings*, ed. D. R. Lockett (London: Bloomsbury, 2021), 6-7.
[2] Darian R. Lockett, *Letters from the Pillar Apostles: The Formation of the Catholic Epistles as a Canonical Collection* (Eugene: Pickwick, 2017); Darian R. Lockett, *Letters for the Church: Reading James, 1-2 Peter, 1-3 John, and Jude As Canon* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2021).
[3] Lockett, *Letters from the Pillar Apostles*, 239.
[4] John S. Kloppenborg and Robert L. Webb, "Reading James with New Eyes: An Introduction", in *Reading James with New Eyes: Methodological Reassessments of the Letter of James*, LNTS 342, eds. R. L. Webb and J. S. Kloppenborg (London: T&T Clark, 2007), 2.

> more attention to these texts, both through its sessions at the Annual Meetings, as well as its subsequent publications.[5]

In two volumes that emerged out of these sessions, the reason for such a resurgence in scholarly interest in these books is partly attributed to the development of new methodological approaches to New Testament studies. While the twentieth century began with the dominance of the historical-critical method, New Testament studies have recently witnessed a proliferation in the methodologies employed.[6] In a separate contribution, Lockett connects the development of the collective approach to the Catholic Epistles to this general increase in methodological approaches to the New Testament. Speaking of the development of the collective approach in concert with the application of new methods to the Catholic Epistles, he writes:

> Though these new methods have been applied to other New Testament texts, they have only more recently been applied to the Catholic Epistles. An interesting development in the critical study of these texts has appeared even more recently and is still in its infancy. To some degree coming full circle, a newer approach in interpreting these seven letters is to consider them as a canonical collection.[7]

While the collective approach is a relatively new approach to the interpretation of the Catholic Epistles, Lockett's description of this approach as "coming full circle" indicates that it is, from a chronological point of view, an interpretive reversion. That is, contemporary scholarship has until very recently ignored the collective status of the Catholic Epistles largely under the controlling influence of historical criticism, which privileges the individual points of origin of the separate epistles.

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[5] Alicia J. Batten and John S. Kloppenborg, "Introduction", in *James, 1 & 2 Peter and Early Jesus Traditions*, LNTS 478 (London: Bloomsbury, 2014), xiii.

The publications that Batten and Kloppenborg refer to are: Robert L. Webb and John S. Kloppenborg, eds., *Reading James with New Eyes: Methodological Reassessments of the Letter of James* (*LNTS 342*; London: T&T Clark, 2007); Robert L. Webb and Betsy Bauman-Martin, eds., *Reading First Peter with New Eyes: Methodological Reassessments of the Letter of First Peter* (*LNTS 364*; London: T&T Clark, 2007); Peter H. Davids and Robert L. Webb, eds., *Reading Jude with New Eyes: Methodological Reassessments of the Letter of Jude* (*LNTS 383*; London: T&T Clark, 2009); Robert L. Webb and Duane F. Watson, eds., *Reading Second Peter with New Eyes: Methodological Reassessments of the Letter of Second Peter* (*LNTS 382*; London: T&T Clark, 2010).

[6] Kloppenborg and Webb, "James with New Eyes", 1. They note that the following methods developed in the latter half of the 20th century and early 21st century: social-scientific criticism (including: sociology, cultural anthropology and ethnography), literary criticism, rhetorical criticism, socio-rhetorical criticism, reader-response criticism, feminist criticism, ideological criticism and post-colonial theory. Many of these methodological approaches are exemplified throughout the rest of Kloppenborg and Webb's volume.

[7] Lockett, "Introduction", 6.

This chapter begins with an overview of the reception of the Catholic Epistle collection in the early Church, focusing on Eusebius' *Ecclesiastical History* as the first instance of the collection's unambiguous appearance. However, despite the profuse coverage of this reception history in the existing literature, I contend that a clear articulation of the hermeneutical implications of approaching the Catholic Epistles as a collection has not yet been offered. This is the primary problem that this thesis addresses. This chapter will then conclude by defining the field in which this thesis seeks to make its hermeneutical contribution, specifically, the ethical teaching of these letters.

1.2 The Earliest Reception of the Catholic Epistle Collection

The earliest clear evidence of the reception of the Catholic Epistles as a collection is found in Eusebius' *Ecclesiastical History*.[8] Eusebius Pamphilus of Caesarea was the bishop of Caesarea Maritima in Palestine in the early 4th century CE, and he was a major participant in the canonization of the New Testament with a particular interest in the origins of its books. The *Ecclesiastical History* is especially valuable for its preservation of a vast array of otherwise lost traditions concerning early Christian writings. In two places, Eusebius reveals that his contemporaries received the Catholic Epistles as a collection: first, his narration of the martyrdom of James the Just (2.23.1-25, esp. 25), and second, his more systematic discussion of the documents that would come to make up the New Testament (3.25.1-7, esp. 2-3). In our analysis of these passages, it will become clear that despite his own misgivings about the authenticity of some of the Catholic Epistles, Eusebius' discussion was fundamentally shaped by the fact that his contemporaries did regard these letters as an accepted collection.

Drawing his narration of the martyrdom of James the Just to a close, Eusebius says:

> Such is also the account of James, of whom it is said is the author of the first of those named "Catholic Epistles" (τῶν ὀνομαζομένων καθολικῶν ἐπιστολῶν). But on the one hand it is known as spurious (νοθεύεται), at any rate not many of the ancients remembered it. Neither, that which is called Jude, which also is one of the seven called "Catholic" (μιᾶς καὶ αὐτῆς οὔσης τῶν ἑπτὰ λεγομένων καθολικῶν). Nevertheless, on the other

[8] For a more thorough survey of the reception of the Catholic Epistles as a collection, see: David R. Nienhuis, *Not by Paul Alone: The Formation of the Catholic Epistle Collection and the Christian Canon* (Waco: Baylor University Press, 2007), 29-97; Lockett, *Letters from the Pillar Apostles*, 59-136.

> hand, we know that these along with the rest, have been read in public in most churches (*Eccl. Hist.* 2.23.25).[9]

In this passage, the crucial element is Eusebius' statement that both James and Jude belong to the "Catholic Epistles." This may indicate that Eusebius conceived of the letters of James and Jude as members of a larger epistolary collection, called "the Catholic Epistles."[10] However, things are not so straightforward. Elsewhere in Eusebius' *Ecclesiastical History* and among his predecessors, the phrase "catholic epistle" is used largely as a genre designation, indicating that a document was written for a broad, general readership, rather than a specific audience (whether an individual or a community).[11]

This seems to be the most basic meaning of the phrase in early Christianity. Clement of Alexandria referred to the letter sent out from the Jerusalem council in the New Testament book of Acts (cf. Acts 15:23-29) as "the catholic epistle of all the apostles" (*Strom.* 4.15, τὴν ἐπιστολὴν τὴν καθολικὴ τῶν ἀποστόλων ἁπάντων).[12] According to Acts, while this letter was initially composed for believers in northern Palestine (cf. Acts 15:23, 30, 41), it was distributed to a much wider audience (Acts 16:4). Perhaps Clement's designation of the Jerusalem Letter as a "catholic epistle" (Strom. 4.15) is an acknowledgement of this wider distribution.

Similarly, Origen of Alexandria uses the phrase "catholic epistle" in relation to the Epistle of Barnabas (*Cels.* 1.63), calling it "the catholic epistle of Barnabas" (τῇ Βαρνάβα καθολικῇ ἐπιστολῇ).[13] Ferdinand-Rupert Prostmeier argues that the *Epistle of Barnabas* is a "brieflich gerahmten Traktat" ("a tractate framed as a letter"), by which he means a general treatise that has been framed as a piece of correspondence.[14] The opening

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[9] This is my translation of the Greek text presented in Bardy's 1953 Sources Chrétiennes edition of Eusebius. G. Bardy, *Eusèbe de Césarée. Histoire ecclésiastique, 3 vols., Sources chrétiennes* 31 (Paris: Éditions du Cerf, 1952).

[10] See the works of Lockett and David Nienhuis: Lockett, *Letters from the Pillar Apostles*, 65-71; Nienhuis, *Not by Paul Alone*, 63-70.

[11] Benjamin A. Edsall, "Community Letters", in *Brill Encyclopedia of Early Christianity Online*, eds. D. G. Hunter, P. J. J. van Geest and B. Jan Lietaert Peerbolte (Brill, 2018).

This was the contention of Philip Schaff, who argued that the term "catholic" in Eusebius' phrase "the first of those named catholic epistles" "is used in the sense of 'general,' to denote that the epistles are encyclical letters addressed to no particular persons or congregations." Eusebius Pamphilus, *Ecclesiastical History*, Ante-Nicene Fathers 2, Vol. 1, Book 2, n. 296.

[12] This is the Greek text of: L. Früchtel, O. Stählin, and U. Treu, *Clemens Alexandrinus*, vol. 2, 3rd ed. (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 1960).

[13] Ed. Paul Koetschau, *Origenes Werke* (Leipzig: Hinrichs, 1899).

[14] F. R. Prostmeier, *Der Barnabasbrief* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1999), 88-89. Prostmeier suggests that "Epistulare Rahmung, schriftstellerische Impetus, universale Adresse, Autoritätsanspruch und

and closing of Barnabas is one of the key markers for Prostmeier that it is a catholic letter, rather than an occasional letter, with a specific addressee, or set of addressees. The treatise is addressed to "sons and daughters" (υἱοὶ καὶ θυγατέρες, Barn. 1:1) and closes with "Farewell, children of love and peace" (Barn. 21:9), rather than the personal greetings that are so typical of ancient letters.[15]

These references from Clement and Origen demonstrate that the phrase "catholic epistle" was often used in Early Christianity as a genre designation, to signal that a letter had a broad, general audience.[16] However, there are a number of elements of Eusebius' discussion in 2.23.25 that resist classifying his usage of the phrase 'Catholic Epistles' as a genre designation and suggest a more technical usage.[17]

First, Eusebius indicates that the collection to which James belongs has a title by which it was known. James belongs with "those *named* 'Catholic Epistles'" (τῶν **ὀνομαζομένων** καθολικῶν ἐπιστολῶν, emphasis added), while Jude is among "the seven *called* 'Catholic'" (τῶν ἑπτὰ **λεγομένων** καθολικῶν, emphasis added). That is to say, it is not just that the letters of James and Jude were classified as Catholic Epistles, in terms of their genre, but they were members of a group of letters collectively known as "the Catholic Epistles." Eusebius' use of the middle voice in both present participles ὀνομαζομένων and λεγομένων suggests that, whether or not Eusebius himself conceived

didaktische Emphase sowie intensive Zitierung und Auslegung der Schrift kennzeichnen den Barn als brieflich gerahmten Traktat." ("Epistolary framing, literary impetus, universal address, claim to authority and didactic emphasis, as well as the intensive quotation and interpretation of Scripture, characterise Barnabas as a tractate framed as a letter.")

Edsall also suggests that the content of the Epistle of Barnabas evinces a generality that lends itself to the designation "catholic epistle." He says, "Rather than addressing issues in a particular community, *Barnabas* casts a very wide net." Edsall, "Community Letters".

[15] Hans-Josef Klauck, *Ancient Letters and the New Testament: A Guide to Context and Exegesis* (Waco: Baylor University Press, 2006), 17-25.

[16] Another usage of the phrase "catholic epistle" emerged in the context of early Christianity. Namely, the practice of referring to 1 Peter and 1 John as the "Catholic Epistle" *par excellence.* Such usages can be found in Origen's description of 1 Peter, preserved in *Eccl. Hist.* 6.25.5, and Dionysius' description of 1 John, preserved in *Eccl. Hist.* 7.25.7-8, 10. This usage is also somewhat present in the bizarre situation of the Montanist Themiso (cf. *Eccl. Hist.* 5.18.5), who wrote, "in imitation of the apostle, a certain catholic epistle" (μιμούμενος τὸν ἀπόστολον, καθολικήν τινα ἐπιστολήν).

Eusebius uses the phrase in a peculiar way in *Ecclesiastical History* 4.23, in Eusebius' description of the catholic letter collection of Dionysius of Corinth. This usage is peculiar, because the vast majority of Dionysius' letters would resist the description "catholic epistle," due to their contextually specific content. Regardless though, perhaps as a by-product of their compilation and publication as a collection, it seems that they were viewed as being somewhat universal in nature.

[17] Lockett categorises Eusebius' usage of the phrase 'Catholic Epistle' as a technical term (a *Terminus Technicus*), however, he does not explain fully why Eusebius' usage should be reckoned as a technical term, and not the more regular genre designation. Lockett, *Letters from the Pillar Apostles*, 65.

of these letters as a collection, he expected that they were generally accepted as such by his predecessors and contemporaries.[18]

Second, Eusebius enumerates the number of letters within the collection. He writes, "Jude, which also is one of the seven called catholic" (μιᾶς καὶ αὐτης ὕσης τῶν ἑπτὰ λεγομένωμ καθολικῶν, *Hist. Eccl.* 2.23.25). The number seven is a significant clue that this is not a mere designation of genre. Eusebius knows of at least eleven documents that he, or at least his contemporaries, called a "catholic epistle." [19] Therefore, it is not as though Eusebius is thinking of all the "catholic epistles" of which he is aware and saying that Jude is one of those, because Eusebius knows of more than seven "catholic epistles." Therefore, Eusebius' limitation of the "Catholic Epistles" to "seven" in 2.23.25 suggests that he has a specific set of seven "Catholic Epistles" in mind, that is, a fixed collection to which Jude belongs.

Moreover, Eusebius says that James is "the first of the so-called catholic epistles" (Ἰάκωβον, οὗ ἡ πρώτη τῶν ὀνομαζομένων καθολικῶν ἐπιστολῶν εἶναι λέγεται). Eusebius does not explain in what sense James is the "first",[20] but it is plausible that Eusebius is suggesting that James is the first catholic epistle because that is the arrangement of the collection of which James is a member.[21] In other words, in Eusebius' seven-member collection called "the Catholic Epistles," that includes James and Jude, the epistle of James was the leading letter.[22] This reference to the arrangement of the collection might

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[18] Codex Alexandrinus, dating from the 5th century (i.e. post-Eusebius), further corroborates the observation that "The Catholic Epistles" was beginning to function as the title of the Catholic Epistle collection. Both the contents page of the codex ($V_1.F_4.$), as well as the colophon following the Epistle of Jude ($V_4. F_{84}$), are witnesses to the existence, title and number of the collection. W. Andrew Smith concludes that: "The catholic epistles were conceived of as a separate subunit at the time of the codex's production." (p. 73)

See: W. Andrew Smith, *A Study of the Gospels in Codex Alexandrinus: Codicology, Palaeography, and Scribal Hands* (Leiden: Brill, 2014), 64, 67.

[19] Including: The letter from the Jerusalem Council of Acts 15 (if that can rightly be viewed as a real letter), the Epistle of Barnabas, Dionysius' seven-letter (or eight, if we include the letter to Chrysophora) collection, Themiso's counterfeited catholic epistle, 1 Peter and 1 John.

[20] It is unlikely that Eusebius conceived of the Epistle of James as the first catholic epistle composed chronologically. Eusebius was familiar with Clement's *Stromateis* (cf. *Hist. Eccl.* 3.29.1; 3.30.2; 5.11.2; 6.6; 6.13.1-2, 4-5; 6.24.3) in which the Council of Jerusalem's letter from Acts 15 is called a "catholic epistle" (τὴν ἐπιστολὴν τὴν καθολικὴν, Strom. 4.15). In light of that, it would be difficult to maintain that Eusebius conceives of James as the first ever catholic epistle written.

[21] There are a number of manuscripts of James (dating from earlier than Eusebius through to the century after Eusebius) that indicate by their pagination that the Epistle of James was the first document in a collection that could have included the other catholic epistles. These manuscripts include: $\mathfrak{P}^{23}$, $\mathfrak{P}^{100}$, 0173, 0166 and 048.

[22] Roughly contemporaneous to Eusebius are the major codices Sinaiticus (א) and Alexandrinus (A), as well as $\mathfrak{P}^{23}$ and $\mathfrak{P}^{100}$. Major codices א and A both contain the full seven-fold Catholic Epistle collection, with

also explain the presence of Jude, the final member of the collection, in 2.23.25.[23] Eusebius' language here suggests that the Catholic Epistles were, by his time, a fixed collection that had garnered enough popularity that they could be referred to by their title alone.

In the second passage (Eccl. Hist. 3.25), Eusebius presents his account of the reception of various documents from early Christianity. The relevant portions of the passage are presented here in full:

> Well then, we must set in the first place the holy quaternion of the Gospels; which are followed by the book of the Acts of the Apostles. After this we must reckon the epistles of Paul; following which we must pronounce genuine the extant former epistle of John, and likewise the epistle of Peter. After these we must place, if it really seem right, the Apocalypse of John, the views that have been held as to which we shall set forth at the proper time. These, then [are to be placed] among the acknowledged writings (καὶ ταῦτα μὲν ἐν ὁμολογουμένοις). But of those which are disputed (τῶν δ' ἀντιλεγομένων), nevertheless familiar to the majority, there is extant the epistle of James, as it is called; and that of Jude; and the second epistle of Peter; and the second and third of John, so named, whether they belong to the

an identical arrangement (James, 1-2 Peter, 1-3 John and Jude). However, the collection itself is placed differently within the two codices: in Sinaiticus, the Catholic Epistles come after the Pauline Epistles; while, in Alexandrinus, the Catholic Epistles precede the Pauline Epistles. The different placement of the collection, with an identical internal arrangement is evidence that the seven texts were conceived of as a collection.

Papyri 23 and 100 are both scraps of parchment containing early portions of James. These papyrus fragments contain pagination that indicate that James was the first text in the manuscript to which these papyri belonged (assuming that there were more texts in the manuscript than just the Epistle of James).

[23] John Painter (followed by Darian Lockett) argues that it is significant that the only other letter from the Catholic Epistle corpus that Eusebius discusses in Eccl. Hist. 2.23 is the final epistle in the collection, Jude. While Eusebius does not state this, the epistle of Jude claims to be written by the brother of James and, in the final arrangement of the collection, stands as the bookend to James. In Painter's mind, this "would explain why Eusebius, when he names James as the first of the seven CE, also names Jude, and no other from the collection. To name the first and the last was to identify this collection." John Painter, "The Johannine Epistles as Catholic Epistles", in *The Catholic Epistles and Apostolic Tradition: A New Perspective on James to Jude*, eds. K.-W. Niebuhr and R. W. Wall (Waco: Baylor University Press, 2009), 458, n. 11.

Whether Painter has overstated his case here or not, the fact remains that if Eusebius was searching for another document within the same collection, that shared a "disputed" classification with James, then he had four choices before him (2 Peter, 2 John, 3 John or Jude), and his choice of Jude might therefore be significant. In light of this, Lockett concludes that Eusebius' appending of Jude to his initial discussion of James is a further indicator that he has the entire collection in mind. He says: "If Painter is correct then it seems like that the tradition of a Catholic Epistle collection starting with James, including 1–2 Peter, 1–3 John, and finally concluding with Jude was already a received collection that was recognized by Eusebius' audience with the mere reference to the first and last letters of the collection." Lockett, *Letters from the Pillar Apostles*, 67.

> evangelist or perhaps to some other of the same name as he. (*Hist. Eccl.* 3.25.1-3)[24]

Eusebius here lists all seven of the letters that came to be included in the Catholic Epistle collection. However, unlike his earlier mention of James and Jude, discussed above, he does not use the phrase "Catholic Epistles" to indicate that he understood these letters as an epistolary collection. Indeed, rather than establish the Catholic Epistle collection alongside the other major collections of the New Testament (i.e. the Gospels and Pauline Epistles, which respectively are described as "the holy quaternion of the Gospels" and "the epistles of Paul"),[25] Eusebius breaks up the collection, classifying 1 Peter and 1 John as 'Accepted' (ὁμολογουμένος) works, while classifying James, Jude, 2 Peter and 2-3 John as 'Disputed'[26] (ἀντιλεγομένος) works.

Eusebius signalled back in 2.23.25 that the status of James and Jude was not universally acknowledged, describing them as νόθος ("spurious"), rather than as ἀντιλεγόμενα as in the present discussion. Bart Ehrman has noted that the former "term refers to a child born out of wedlock", and he has argued that, when it is used in reference to a literary work, it has strong connotations of forgery.[27] According to Ehrman, it "carries with it all the negative connotations of our term *bastard*."[28]

Immediately after the discussion of the five ἀντιλεγόμενα (James, Jude, 2 Peter and 2-3 John) in *Eccl. Hist.* 3.25.4-5, Eusebius categorises the Acts of Paul, the Shepherd of Hermas, the Apocalypse of Peter, the Epistle of Barnabas and the Didache as ἐν τοῖς νόθοις ("among the bastards"). The absence of James and Jude in Eusebius' list of νόθα works, especially considering his earlier discussion of them with that language in 2.23.25, has caused scholars to doubt the precision with which Eusebius employed these terms. Some have argued that Eusebius does use these terms with care, but that the ἀντιλεγόμενα

[24] This is my translation of the Greek text presented in Bardy's 1953 Sources Chrétiennes edition of Eusebius. G. Bardy, *Eusèbe de Césarée. Histoire ecclésiastique, 3 vols., Sources chrétiennes* 31 (Paris: Éditions du Cerf, 1952).

[25] These other collections were seemingly so well known that Eusebius did not even deem it necessary to review their contents.

[26] I have adopted the most traditional translation of the word ἀντιλεγομένων here, "Disputed". However, this term has attracted a reasonable amount of scholarly interest, and so a fuller discussion of the term is presented below.

[27] Bart D. Ehrman, *Forgery and Counterforgery: The Use of Literary Deceit in Early Christian Polemics* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012), 32.

[28] Ehrman, *Forgery and Counterforgery*, 32, emphasis original. He goes on to say, "A literary work is 'illegitimate' if it does not actually belong to the person named as its author, just as a child is illegitimate if its real father is not known."

and the νόθα are equivalent to one another, or one is a subset of the other.[29] Others argue that the ἀντιλεγόμενα and the νόθα do indeed constitute two distinct categories, and therefore, Eusebius' presentation of the canon of the New Testament in 3.25 should be understood as having a four-fold division: Accepted, Disputed, Spurious and Rejected.[30]

Regardless, it is worth realising that the letters that Eusebius classifies as ἀντιλεγόμενα are the leftovers of the Catholic Epistle collection that were not classified among the ὁμολογόυμενα. This fact is observed by Nienhuis as well, who explains that it is the cause for "the complexity of [Eusebius'] categorisation."[31]

> It was the status of the [catholic epistles] in Eusebius' day that required the existence of a 'disputed' category at all. Eusebius *himself* may have believed the 'disputed' and the 'illegitimate' [or 'spurious'] were in fact one group, but he could not classify them as one because the five ἀντιλεγόμενα texts included in the [catholic epistles] had achieved a higher level of authority because of their use in the churches.[32]

In other words, Nienhuis suggests that Eusebius' categorisation system has been designed to cater specifically for the five documents in the Catholic Epistle collection whose status was uncertain, i.e. the ἀντιλεγόμενα documents.[33]

Therefore, even though Eusebius' canon list in 3.25 does not employ the phrase "Catholic Epistles" or hint towards the fact that 1 Peter, 1 John and the ἀντιλεγόμενα form a larger collection, it still offers a significant witness to the general reception of the Catholic Epistle collection. Although Eusebius himself may not have accepted the individual members of the Catholic Epistle collection as genuine,[34] it does seem that he

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[29] Everett R. Kalin, "The New Testament Canon of Eusebius", in *The Canon Debate*, eds. L. M. McDonald and J. A. Sanders (Peabody: Hendrickson, 2002), 392-397.

[30] Nienhuis, *Not by Paul Alone*, 63-68; Bruce M. Metzger, *The Canon of the New Testament: Its Origin, Development, and Significance* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1987), 201-207.

Additionally, Metzger argues that the cause of Eusebius' confusing categorisation is that in writing the Ecclesiastical History, we are presented with both "Eusebius the historian and Eusebius the Churchman." Metzger, *The Canon of the New Testament*, 204. In other words, for Metzger, Eusebius, as a good historian, was bound to describe the contested status of James, Jude, 2 Peter and 2-3 John. However, as a churchman, he had received them as members of a seven-fold epistolary collection, which includes unquestionably accepted and highly revered texts such as 1 Peter and 1 John, and so he finds himself quite unwilling to classify these other works as anything other than accepted.

[31] Nienhuis, *Not by Paul Alone*, 68.

[32] Nienhuis, *Not by Paul Alone*, 68.

[33] Lockett follows Nienhuis in this suggestion. Lockett, *Letters from the Pillar Apostles*, 69.

[34] In a previous generation, Mayor observed that Eusebius himself had no qualms with James, while being very clear that James was a disputed work amongst his predecessors and contemporaries (2.23.25; 3.25.3). "He recognises it as an authority (Eccl. Theo. 2.25, 3.2), quotes James 4:11 as Scripture (Comm. Pss. P.

had to consider the fact that these letters were being accepted as a collection in his sources and by his contemporaries. Eusebius' acknowledgement of the 'disputed' letters (James, Jude, 2 Peter and 2-3 John) is almost begrudging and comes as the result of the status of the collection.

1.3 Articulation of the Problem: The Hermeneutics of the Collection

The existing literature on the Catholic Epistle collection provides more extensive accounts for the formation of the collection, as will be detailed in chapter 2, all of which arrive at the same conclusion, namely, that Eusebius of Caesarea represents the definitive arrival point of the Catholic Epistles as a collection.[35] However, it is one thing to explore the historical formation of the Catholic Epistle collection, while it is quite another to explore its hermeneutical significance. A criticism by Shane Gormley from 2019 in a review of Darian Lockett's *Letters from the Pillar Apostles* aptly states:

> While Lockett's investigation of the value of these texts for the early church is impressive and convincing, readers may justly wonder what implications this study offers for interpretation. Clearly the Catholic Epistles 'were received and functioned as a discrete collection' (p. xvi). He claims – fitting well within the broader ilk of canonical criticism – that this collection is 'an important hermeneutical context for interpreting these letters' (p. 90). Chapter 6 provides some insight into the benefits of this 'hermeneutical context', but the interpretive payout is generally left for readers to infer on their own. Reading James may help us read 1 Peter better; but how? James and Jude may have been perceived as suitable bookends for the collection; but what insight does that provide for our understanding of the letters positioned between them? That said, Lockett's work provides a solid framework for further investigation of these and other questions.[36]

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648 Montf) and in another place quotes James 5:13 as spoken by the holy Apostle (Comm. Pss. P. 247)." Joseph B. Mayor, *Epistle of St. James* (London: Macmillan, 1910), lxvii.

Bart Ehrman too thinks that Eusebius accepted James (and Jude, for that matter) as genuine. Commenting on 2.23.25, but taking Eusebius' discussion in 3.25 into consideration, he says, "Are these books genuinely by the ascribed authors? Or are they νόθα? On balance, Eusebius thinks the former." Ehrman, *Forgery and Counterforgery*, 89.

[35] David R. Nienhuis and Robert W. Wall, *Reading the Epistles of James, Peter, John & Jude as Scripture: The Shaping & Shape of a Canonical Collection* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2013), 63-70; Nienhuis and Wall, *Reading the Epistles*, 27-31; Lockett, *Letters from the Pillar Apostles*, 65-71.

[36] Shane Patrick Gormley, "Letters from the Pillar Apostles: The Formation of the Catholic Epistles as a Canonical Collection", *RRT* 26, no. 1 (2019): 110-111.

Lockett did attempt to address these hermeneutical issues in his follow up book *Letters for the Church* in 2021.[37] But, as we will show in chapter 2, there is much work remaining to be done for the robust collective interpretation of the Catholic Epistles. In other words, while there is a current call to interpret the Catholic Epistles as a collection, the existing scholarly models are ill-equipped to answer it.

The purpose of this project is two-fold. First, we will explore a number of interpretive principles that might govern a collective reading of the Catholic Epistles. Second, by presenting a number of thematic case studies, we will demonstrate these interpretive principles in practice, exemplifying the ability of the collective approach to generate new insights into these texts. These insights are both productive and critical in nature. These insights are productive in the sense that the collective approach alerts the reader to the potential of drawing connections between passages, and even recognising new areas of enquiry. They are also critical in the sense that the collective approach offers a method of evaluating and extending existing scholarly paradigms. In this way, the case studies aim to showcase the generative capabilities of the collective approach.

The case studies are thematic explorations of the Catholic Epistles' teaching on a range of ethical motifs in the collection. Ethics has been chosen as the area of enquiry for two reasons. First, for the pragmatic reason of scope, analysing the ethics of the Catholic Epistles relieves this thesis of the burden of providing a collective reading of every facet of the Catholic Epistles. But, more importantly, it has the potential to make new contributions regarding the Catholic Epistles in the field of ethics, where they have been recognised by scholarship, but largely overlooked.

1.4 The Ethics of the Catholic Epistles

Richard Hays' 1996 work, *The Moral Vision of the New Testament*, has become an influential and important work on New Testament ethics.[38] After describing the ethics

[37] See the more thorough review of Lockett in Chapter 2.

[38] Richard B. Hays, *The Moral Vision of the New Testament: A Contemporary Introduction to New Testament Ethics* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1996). The importance of Hays' work is testified to by the fact that the 1997 IBR meeting in San Francisco held a panel discussion, focused on Hays' volume. Lengthy reviews were presented by Douglas Moo and Judith Gundry-Volf, and both were responded to by Hays, after which, according to Craig A. Evans, an enthusiastic discussion ensued. The reviews of Moo and Gundry-Volf, and Hays' response to both of them, can be found in: *BBR* 9 (1999), 271-296.

of Paul, Jesus and Revelation, Hays observes that the Catholic Epistles are among the most potentially useful documents in the New Testament for "doing ethics." [39] He goes on to explain the features that make the Catholic Epistles particularly well suited to the task of ethical reflection:

> The New Testament is, after all, not a collection of general treatises on ethics. Its major texts are narratives (the Gospels and Acts), pastorals letters to specific congregations (the Pauline letters), and a richly symbolic apocalyptic vision (Revelation); only the Catholic Epistles take the form of general moral wisdom for the church at large.[40]

Given Hays' statement that the Catholic Epistles are the New Testament texts which most resemble "general treatises on ethics,"[41] one might expect his presentation of *The Moral Vision of the New Testament* to include at least a chapter exploring their "moral wisdom." However, any such treatment is missing, with James, 1-2 Peter and Jude being absent from Hays' description entirely, while the Johannine Epistles are incorporated into Hay's discussion of John's Gospel, and so do not receive thorough treatment.[42]

Hays' marginalisation of the Catholic Epistles is noteworthy for another reason, in addition to his observation that the Catholic Epistles are particularly qualified for the task of ethical analysis. Within the book, Hays had already developed a method for analysing the ethical content of an epistle, and an epistolary collection at that, namely, the Pauline Epistles. Hays could have applied his approach to analysing the ethical material in the Pauline Epistles (which involved: identifying the ethical norms, warrants and enablements contained in the texts) to the Catholic Epistles, in order to explicate their "general moral wisdom." Consequently, readers curious about the "moral wisdom" of these letters are left unsatisfied.[43]

Douglas J. Moo, "A Review of Richard B. Hays, "The Moral Vision of the New Testament"", *BBR* 9 (1999): 271-276; Judith Gundry-Volf, "Putting the "Moral Vision of the New Testament" into Focus: A Review", *BBR* 9 (1999): 277-287; Richard B. Hays, "The Gospel, Narrative, and Culture: A Response to Douglas J. Moo and Judith Gundry-Volf", *BBR* 9 (1999): 289-296.

[39] Hays, *Moral Vision*, 190.

[40] Hays, *Moral Vision*, 191.

[41] Hays, *Moral Vision*, 191.

[42] Hays treats the Gospel of John with the Epistles of John due to the scholarly consensus that both the Gospel and Epistles emerged from a shared tradition. Furthermore, Hays states that he is going to focus on the Gospel of John rather than the Epistles, he writes, "Although we shall focus primarily on the Gospel of John, evidence from the Epistles will be drawn into the discussion at pertinent points." Hays, *Moral Vision*, 140.

[43] A more thorough review of the relevant literature in the field of New Testament ethics is presented in chapter 2.

As we will see in Chapter 2, Hays' side-lining of the Catholic Epistles is representative of much of the literature on New Testament ethics. But, by applying the collective approach to the Catholic Epistles, and offering a number of thematic case studies in the ethics of these letters, this thesis will begin to fill this lacuna.

1.5 A Sketch of the Argument

As discussed above, the Catholic Epistles recommend themselves in terms of the analysis of their ethics, although they are largely neglected. Therefore, it is the goal of this work to fill this deficiency in current scholarship, by means of the collective approach. This new approach to the Catholic Epistles, that is, conceiving of them as a collection, has yet to be adopted in the study of the ethical teaching of these epistles.

Chapter 2 will present a more thorough history of scholarship concerning both, the presence of the Catholic Epistle collection in the study of New Testament Ethics (§2.1), and the existing models of conceiving of the Catholic Epistles as a collection (§2.2). In light of these existing scholarly frameworks, this thesis then lays out three principles for interpreting the Catholic Epistles as an epistolary collection: (1) the identification of "resonances" between the letters in the collection, (2) the network of resonances that emerges across the collection, as a whole, rather than sequentially, and (3) the interpretive effect (i.e. amplification and/or dampening of particular interpretive options) of this network of resonances. This chapter concludes with a case study, which offers an example of a collective reading of the opponents of the Catholic Epistles, exemplifying the hermeneutical principles described in practice. These principles will guide our analytical discussions of the ethical motifs of the Catholic Epistle collection in chapters 3-5.

Chapter 3 will consider one of the most prevalent ethical motifs in Greco-Roman society, namely, *mimesis*, or the imitation of an ethical exemplar. Imitation is present throughout the Catholic Epistles, which employ a rich variety of exemplars while also using a range of vocabulary to signal the presence of mimetic teaching. The conclusion of this chapter considers Russell Pregeant's suggestion that James 2:1 is an instance of the *imitatio Christi* motif, in light of the collection's chief ways of presenting mimetic teaching. In other words, we will consider whether the collection's mimetic teaching

would amplify or dampen a mimetic interpretation of James 2:1, demonstrating the evaluative capabilities of the collective approach.

Chapter 4 will discuss one of the most important ethical motifs in the Catholic Epistles, namely, love. While love is an important motif of these letters, the intra-communal nature of the love described has been problematic for contemporary scholarship. This has proven particularly the case with the Johannine Epistles. This chapter will examine what contribution the collective approach makes to the discussion, especially considering whether or not the nature of love elsewhere in the collection might amplify or dampen the intra-communal nature of the love in the Johannine Epistles.

Chapter 5 will outline the Catholic Epistle collection's teaching on the restoration of the errant believer. This is not normally viewed as a major ethical motif of these individual letters. However, when read as a collection, it does emerge as a significant theme. The contours of this relatively under-appreciated motif are explored in this chapter, exemplifying the generative capabilities of the collective approach.

In the introduction to his 2017 volume, Lockett identified the Catholic Epistles as "one of the final frontiers of New Testament studies."[44] Little has changed in the years since Lockett's publication, with the collective approach remaining a largely untapped approach to these underappreciated letters. This thesis maps out a set of hermeneutical principles that govern a collective approach, uncovering a number of strengths and weaknesses along the way. These principles, governing the reading of documents in collections, are not specific to the Catholic Epistles but should prove fruitful in the interpretation of other literary collections (i.e. the Minor Prophets of the Old Testament, or the Pauline Epistle collection).

[44] Lockett, *Letters from the Pillar Apostles*, xiii.

2 History of Scholarship and Methodology

2.1 Introduction

In the previous chapter, we articulated the way in which this thesis is a response to Darian Lockett's recent call to "attend to the hermeneutical insights generated by reading the seven Catholic Epistles as a collection."[1] It is the goal of this thesis to identify principles that govern collective readings of texts and, more broadly, to assess the potential benefits or dangers that are offered by the collective approach. Consequently, it is not our goal to establish that the Catholic Epistles were conceived of as a literary collection at some point in their historical reception, or to explore the potential motivating factors of this collective reception. These facts of reception history were briefly overviewed in the previous chapter and received significant attention in the previous literature. Therefore, one of the primary concerns of this chapter is identification of key contributions and limitations of the existing scholarship that considers the collective framework of the Catholic Epistles (§2.2).

The arena, so to speak, that has been chosen for this thesis to demonstrate the benefits, or dangers, of the collective approach is the ethics of the Catholic Epistles. In the previous chapter, we noted that the Catholic Epistle collection has not received treatment in the influential work of Richard Hays on the ethics of the New Testament ethics, despite being identified as possessing traits that render it particularly useful for such a task. Picking up where chapter 1 left off, therefore, the first section of this chapter will demonstrate that the Catholic Epistles are neglected within the wider literature on New Testament ethics, with the exception of the studies that adopt a differentiated approach.

This project uses this recent development in the interpretation of the Catholic Epistles (the collective approach) to begin to fill the lacuna of the Catholic Epistles in terms of their ethics. This chapter will conclude by commenting on the method adopted in the current work. Before doing so, it is necessary for us to outline the state of the field in terms of the inclusion of the Catholic Epistles in studies of the ethics of the New Testament.

[1] Lockett, *Letters from the Pillar Apostles*, 239.

2.2 The Catholic Epistles in New Testament Ethics

The literature on the ethics of the New Testament is vast and formidable.[2] Our review here will not attempt to be exhaustive in examining every work in the field. We will focus on the broader approaches that have been used to analyse the ethics of the Catholic Epistles. Broadly speaking, there are two approaches to studying the ethics of the New Testament: synthetic studies and differentiated studies (which include authorial and diachronic differentiation).[3]

2.2.1 Synthetic Approaches

In the first approach, which we described above as the 'synthetic' approach, the ethical teaching of the various New Testament documents is drawn together into a unified New Testament ethic. This approach is synthetic in as much as the reader is responsible for providing the categories of analysis and integrating as much material from the texts of the New Testament as is possible. According to Frank Matera, this inevitably results in the "mut[ing] of individual voices of the New Testament."[4] As we will demonstrate below, the most commonly muted voices from the New Testament are those of the Catholic Epistles. We will survey the work of three scholars who approach the task of New Testament ethics synthetically: Richard Longenecker, Frank Matera and Richard Burridge.

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[2] For a more comprehensive review of the literature from 1982 until 2009, see: Friedrich Wilhelm Horn, "Ethik des Neuen Testaments 1982-1992", *TRu* 60, no. 1 (1995): 32-86; Friedrich Wilhelm Horn, "Ethik des Neuen Testaments 1993-2009: Teil I", *TRu* 76, no. 1 (2011): 1-36; Friedrich Wilhelm Horn, "Ethik des Neuen Testaments 1993-2009: Teil II", *TRu* 76, no. 2 (2011): 180-221.

[3] Frank Matera has a somewhat similar taxonomy of studies in New Testament ethics, except that he terms the two approaches "Diachronic" and "Synchronic." For various reasons, the terms "Differentiated" and "Synthetic" are preferred in this study. See: Frank J. Matera, *New Testament Ethics: The Legacies of Jesus and Paul* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1996), 2.

Richard Hays' contribution in this regard is notable, for he argues that both differentiation and synthesis are necessary components of the task of New Testament ethics. He differentiates the different ethical visions of the New Testament in Part 1 of his book (treating Paul, Ephesians, 1 Timothy, Mark, Matthew, Luke-Acts, the Johannine Gospel and Epistles, the Historical Jesus and Revelation), before synthesising them together in Part 2 (under the headings "Cross, Community and New Creation"). The absence of the Catholic Epistles from his analysis has been discussed in §1.4 above.

[4] Matera, *New Testament Ethics*, 5.

2.2.1.1 Richard Longenecker (1984)

The Catholic Epistles are largely neglected in Richard N. Longenecker's 1983 volume on the social ethics of the New Testament. His work derives its structure from Galatians 3:28 ("There is neither Jew nor Greek, neither slave nor free, neither male nor female…").[5] In this way, after standard introductory material (Chs. 1-2), he launches into a three-fold discussion of the cultural ("neither Jew nor Greek", Ch. 3), social ("neither slave nor free", Ch. 4) and sexual ("neither male nor female", Ch. 5) mandates of the Gospel. Longenecker attempts to outline how the New Testament might inform our understanding on these various social and ethical issues.

Longenecker devotes the chapter on social mandates to the question of slavery and freedom,[6] and the chapter on sexual mandates to the status of women.[7] The Catholic Epistle of 1 Peter should be relevant to both of these discussions, because both topics are evoked in the *Haustafel* (the "Household Code") of 2:18-3:7. Here is not the place to explore this passage in detail; however, we note that this passage contains pertinent teaching on both of these topics. In relation to slavery, 1 Peter exhorts slaves to endure "unjust suffering" (2:19), even at the hands of "harsh" masters (v. 18). In relation to the status of women, the epistle calls upon wives to submit to their husbands (3:7), calling them "the weaker vessel" (v. 7a).

One might expect, therefore, that these passages would feature to some degree in either (if not both) of his discussions of the New Testament's teaching on the topics of slavery and the status of women. Longenecker states in his introduction that he does not intend his book to exclude any books of the New Testament, but rather that his study will incorporate:

> The twenty-seven books of our New Testament, which were brought together by the early Church, to be the authoritative expression of the Christian religion, with their diverse treatments serving to enhance the fullness of the revelation that came in Jesus Christ.[8]

Yet despite this emphasis upon the entire New Testament, 1 Peter does not appear in either of Longenecker's chapters. He excluded the Catholic Epistle of 1 Peter, despite its

[5] Richard N. Longenecker, *New Testament Social Ethics for Today* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1984).
[6] Longenecker, *Social Ethics*, 48.
[7] Longenecker, *Social Ethics*, 70.
[8] Longenecker, *Social Ethics*, xi-xii.

contribution to the New Testament's social ethics on slavery and women. Similar critiques could be levelled regarding the input of all seven of the Catholic Epistles in Longenecker's volume. It is less a volume informed by the "twenty-seven books of our New Testament," than one informed by Jesus and Paul, as is the case in Frank Matera's volume, to which we turn.

2.2.1.2 Frank Matera (1996)

Frank Matera's 1996 work *New Testament Ethics* similarly overlooks the Catholic Epistles.[9] The exclusion of the Catholic Epistles is so fundamental to the book that it is signalled in the sub-title: "*New Testament Ethics: The Legacies of Jesus and Paul."* In this book, Matera describes the ethical teaching of Jesus, mediated through the Evangelists (chapters 1-4), and the ethical teaching of Paul, contained in the undisputed Pauline epistles (chapters 5-9) and mediated through the deutero-Pauline epistles (chapters 10-11). Description of the ethics of Acts, Hebrews, the Catholic Epistles and Revelation are all missing from Matera's presentation of *New Testament Ethics*.

However, it is not as though the omission of the Catholic Epistles is some gross oversight on Matera's part; rather it is a conscious exclusion from his work. His study self-consciously "does not deal with every writing in the New Testament and, to that extent, it is not a comprehensive study of New Testament ethics."[10] He offers two brief reasons, one practical and the other theoretical, for the limitation of his study to Jesus and Paul. He explains:

> On the one hand, by limiting this work to the legacies of Jesus and Paul, I have obviously excused myself from dealing with a number of daunting New Testament writings. On the other hand, this decision has enabled me to bring a certain unity to this project by grounding it in the persons of Jesus and Paul.[11]

In other words, Matera considers the ethical teaching of the Catholic Epistles (as well as the other New Testament writings) as presenting some degree of difficulty, both in terms of their interpretation, and also in terms of integrating their ethics with that of Jesus and Paul, which is a key element of providing a synthesis of the New Testament's ethical teaching.

[9] Matera, *New Testament Ethics*.
[10] Matera, *New Testament Ethics*, 8.
[11] Matera, *New Testament Ethics*, 8.

2.2.1.3 Richard Burridge (2007)

Coming into the 21st century, Richard Burridge's book *Imitating Jesus: An Inclusive Approach to New Testament Ethics*, reinforces the neglected status of the Catholic Epistles within the field. The focal point of his synthetic treatment of New Testament ethics is the person of Jesus (especially Jesus' inclusive attitude towards marginal people), and the consequent imitation of him.[12] He argues that the *imitatio Christi* motif is the central element of the ethical teaching of Paul (chapter 3)[13] and the Gospels (chapters 4-7).[14] But the Catholic Epistles are absent from his study.

However, the *imitatio Christi* motif appears repeatedly in the Catholic Epistles, as this thesis will demonstrate in chapter 3. According to Wolfgang Schrage, the *imitatio Christi* motif is particularly present in 1 Peter (2:21, 23; 4:19) and 1 John (3:3; 4:10-11, 17).[15] Later scholars go even further. Bennema's 2017 monograph *Mimesis in the Johannine Literature* is dedicated to discussing the mimetic (Imitation) passages in the Gospel and Epistles of John. He argues that Imitation is "intrinsic to Johannine ethics."[16] Russell Pregeant even argues that the *imitatio Christi* motif is present in James (2:1).[17]

While the Catholic Epistles may not have directly contributed to Burridge's efforts to establish that the ethics of the New Testament are inclusivist (see the discussion of intra-communal love in chapter 4), the significant amount of *imitatio Christi* material in the Catholic Epistles should have led Burridge to consider these texts as well. Indeed, Burridge's study of New Testament ethics itself would have been more inclusive had these often-overlooked voices been included. But Burridge's omission of the Catholic Epistles demonstrates once again that in studies of New Testament ethics, the Apostle

[12] Chapter 2 of Burridge's book covers "Jesus Ethical Teaching" and "Jesus Ethical Example", which prepares the reader for chapters 3-7 which examines the New Testament's utilisation of the *Imitatio Christi* motif. Richard A. Burridge, *Imitating Jesus: An Inclusive Approach to New Testament Ethics* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2007).
[13] Burridge, *Imitating Jesus*, 81-154.
[14] Burridge, *Imitating Jesus*, 155-346..
[15] Wolfgang Schrage, *The Ethics of the New Testament*, trans. D. E. Green (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1988), 272-273, 308.
[16] Cornelis Bennema, *Mimesis in the Johannine Literature: A Study in Johannine Ethics*, LNTS 498 (London: Bloomsbury, 2017), 26.
[17] Russell Pregeant, *Knowing Truth, Doing Good: Engaging New Testament Ethics* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2008), 290-292.

Paul and the Gospels are the preferred areas of inquiry. The Catholic Epistles, on the other hand, are disfavoured and often excluded.[18]

2.2.2 Differentiated Approaches

Differentiated studies "assume that the New Testament is a collection of diverse writings composed by different authors for varying circumstances."[19] Consequently, the goal of this approach is to "hear the many and diverse voices of the New Testament,"[20] that is, to differentiate between the ethics present within each of the New Testament texts. Wolfgang Schrage, one of the more prominent scholars to have adopted this approach, explains the importance of differentiating between the texts of the New Testament as follows:

> The proper methodology is to see that each individual voice is heard, so that the various early Christian models are not forced into a single mould or submerged into an imaginary New Testament ethics.[21]

The majority of scholars who adopt this approach choose to differentiate the texts of the New Testament on the basis of their putative authorship (see §2.1.2.2 below), but one of the other criteria that has been used to differentiate between the texts of the New Testament is their presumed date of composition.

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[18] Other works which similarly exclude the Catholic Epistles from their discussion of New Testament ethics, include: Anderson Scott, *New Testament Ethics: An Introduction*, The Hulsean Lectures (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1942); Waldo Beach and H. Richard Niebuhr, *Christian Ethics: Sources of the Living Tradition* (New York: Ronald, 1955); Charles E. Raven, *St Paul and the Gospel of Jesus: A Study of the Basis for Christian Ethics* (London: SCM, 1961); E. C. Hoskyns and Noel Davey, *Crucifixion-Resurrection: The Pattern of the Theology and Ethics of the New Testament*, ed. G. S. Wakefield (London: SPCK, 1981); Wayne Meeks, *The Moral World of the First Christians* (London: SPCK, 1986); J. L. Houlden, *Ethics and the New Testament* (London: T&T Clark, 1992).

[19] Matera, *New Testament Ethics*, 2.
Matera calls this approach "Diachronic," however, as there are a number of studies that are not specifically concerned with tracing the development of traditional ideas, the label "differentiated" has been adopted in this study.

[20] Matera, *New Testament Ethics*, 2.

[21] Schrage, *Ethics*, 3.

2.2.2.1 Diachronic Differentiation (Willi Marxsen)

Willi Marxsen explicitly focuses on the diachronic development of ethics within the New Testament.[22] He identifies the "beginning" of Christian ethics in the teaching of the historical Jesus (which is distinct from that of the Evangelists who stand behind the Gospels) and the earliest Christian documents, i.e. "Paul's letters, since they just happen to be the oldest documents that still exist."[23] Marxsen's larger goal is to evaluate the "success" of the development of the ethical "approach" in the later texts of the New Testament (i.e. Matthew's Gospel, the Johannine Gospel and Letters, Colossians, 2 Thessalonians, the Pastoral Epistles, Hebrews, James and 1 Peter). He says, "We should speak here of successful development and failed developments in which the 'approach' was continued."[24] Marxsen's primary focus is on the diachronic development of the later New Testament documents, namely, whether or not they continued/developed the approach of the earlier period.

For example, Marxsen's discussion of James is largely concerned with how the author of James engages with Paul's discussion of faith and works in Romans 3.[25] Concerning James 2:14-26, he says:

> It concerns the question of faith and works, a problem that, as far as we know, was first formulated in this way by Paul. Thus the author is writing in the post-Pauline period and seems to be polemizing against Paul.[26]

Similarly, Marxsen's discussion of 1 Peter is dominated by questions concerning the *Haustafel* in 1 Peter 2:13–3:7. Namely, comparisons between 1 Peter's household code and others from Greco-Roman ethical discourse, especially those contained within Ephesians and Colossians.[27]

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[22] Consequently, Marxsen identifies the first problem that his study must solve as a chronological one. Speaking about the composition of later New Testament documents, Marxsen says, "They did not start over again each time but in their talk referred to talk of God by predecessors. Hence, they understood themselves as people living in a tradition. But where did this tradition begin?" Marxsen then considers the "New Testament scriptures in chronological order." Marxsen acknowledges that his approach is largely based on conjectural reconstructions of the dating of the New Testament texts. He says, "If we want to go back to that beginning, we must depend on reconstructions." Willi Marxsen, *New Testament Foundations for Christian Ethics*, trans. O. C. Dean Jr (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1993), 23-26.
[23] Marxsen, *Foundations for Ethics*, 24.
[24] Marxsen, *Foundations for Ethics*, 228.
[25] Marxsen, *Foundations for Ethics*, 261-263.
[26] Marxsen, *Foundations for Ethics*, 261.
[27] Marxsen, *Foundations for Ethics*, 267-270.

All of that to say, within the broader stream of differentiated approaches to New Testament ethics, Marxsen's study explicitly focuses upon how the ethics of the New Testament developed diachronically. He acknowledges the complex tradition history that stands behind the texts of the New Testament, and thus, attempt to trace the trajectory of ethical teaching within early Christianity in a diachronic fashion.[28]

2.2.2.2 Authorial Differentiation (Sanders, Schrage and Pregeant)

While Willi Marxsen practices one variety of differentiation (diachronic), the vast majority of all recent studies which explore the ethical teaching of the New Testament differentiate between the texts of the New Testament on the basis of their assumed authorship. Some notable scholars who practice this approach include: Jack Sanders,[29] Wolfgang Schrage,[30] and more recently, Russell Pregeant.[31]

These scholars pay careful attention to the diverse historical contexts surrounding the composition of the New Testament texts. This awareness concerning the historical context of these documents generally leads these scholars to group together the texts within the New Testament that seem to share some factor/s of their compositional context (i.e. shared authorship). For example, in these studies, the Johannine Epistles are often treated alongside the Gospel of John, under the assumption that all four documents originated from the pen of the same author, or at least emerged from the same community (thus, is viewed under the umbrella of "Johannine Literature"). Other such compositional connections within the Catholic Epistles or between the Catholic Epistles and other portions of the New Testament are catalogued below (forming almost sub-corpora or sub-collections within the collection:

[28] In the next section we will categorise Jack Sanders' work as an example of authorial differentiation, however, note that it is organised diachronically. He says, "This study precedes chronologically from the teachings of Jesus to the Synoptic Gospels, followed by analyses of Paul, the post-Pauline tradition, the Johannine literature, and the later works in the New Testament." Jack T. Sanders, *Ethics in the New Testament: Change and Development* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1975), xii.
[29] Sanders, *Ethics*.
[30] Schrage, *Ethics*.
[31] Pregeant, *Knowing Truth, Doing Good*.

	All Seven Catholic Epistles present?	1 Peter treated with the Deutero-Pauline Letters?[32]	2 Peter and Jude treated together?[33]	2 Peter (and Jude) treated in relation to 1 Peter?[34]	Johannine Epistles treated with the Gospel of John?	Selection of Catholic Epistles treated as generic group?	Catholic Epistles treated as collection?
Sanders	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓[35]	
Schrage	✓	✓	✓	✓[36]	✓		
Pregeant	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓[37]	

Figure 1 - Sub-Collections within Scholars who favour Authorial Differentiation

Up until this point, we have limited our review to works that attempt to cover the ethics of the entire New Testament. However, such ambitious projects (covering the entirety of the New Testament) are becoming less frequent. The majority of recent works on the ethics of the New Testament treat much smaller divisions of texts, normally in accordance with the key features of the above authorial differentiation. In the case of the Catholic Epistles, most studies focus on material from individual texts in the collection,

[32] 1 Peter is included amongst the Deutero-Pauline letters, not because it is thought to have been composed by Paul, but because it has been observed that the language and theology of 1 Peter is similar to that of Paul.

[33] 2 Peter and Jude are treated together because of the significant verbal overlap between the two, which has led scholars to propose some level and direction of literary dependence.

[34] While it might seem intuitive to treat 1 Peter with 2 Peter (given their titles both in English bibles and in the manuscript tradition, cf. 2 Peter 3:1), 2 Peter finds itself being treated in relation to Jude more often, rather than 1 Peter.

[35] Sanders dubs this group of letters "The Later Epistles." Sanders, *Ethics*, 101.

[36] The treatment in Schrage is cursory at best, with both 2 Peter and Jude being covered together in a single paragraph. Schrage, *Ethics*, 278.

[37] Pregeant dubs this group of letters "The Post-Pauline Writings." Pregeant, *Knowing Truth, Doing Good*, 263.

for example: the ethics of James,[38] 1 Peter[39] or the Johannine Epistles,[40] as well as other combinations of texts that seem authorially appropriate.[41]

[38] Donald E. Gowan, "Wisdom and Endurance in James", *HBT* 15, no. 2 (1993): 145-153; T. B. Maston, "Ethical dimensions of James", *SwJT* 43, no. 1 (2000): 25-42; David Hutchinson Edgar, "The use of the love-command and the Shema' in the Epistle of James", *PIBA* 23 (2000): 9-22; Ron Julian, "A perfect work: trials and sanctification in the book of James", *SBJT* 4, no. 3 (2000): 40-50; Darian Lockett, "Structure or communicative strategy?: the 'two ways' motif in James' theological instruction", *Neot* 42, no. 2 (2008): 269-287; Mariam Kamell Kovalishyn, "James 1:27 and the church's call to mission and morals", *Crux* 46, no. 4 (2010): 15-22; Mariam Kamell Kovalishyn, "The implications of grace for the ethics of James", *Bib* 92, no. 2 (2011): 274-287; Michael D. Fiorello, "The ethical implication of holiness in James 2", *JETS* 55, no. 3 (2012): 557-572; Patrick J. Hartin, "The Letter of James: its Vision, Ethics and Ethos", in *Identity, Ethics and Ethos in the New Testament*, BZNW, ed. J. G. v. d. Watt (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2012), 445-472; Kobus Kok, "A comparison between James and Philodemus on moral exhortation, communal confession and correctio fraterna", *HvTSt* 69, no. 1 (2013): 1-8; Karl-Wilhelm Niebuhr, "Ethics and Anthropology in the Letter of James: An Outline", in *Early Christian Ethics in Interaction with Jewish and Greco-Roman Contexts*, 17, eds. J. W. van Henten and J. Verheyden (Leiden: Brill, 2013), 223-242; Kelsie G Rodenbiker, "The persistent sufferer: the exemplar of Job in the Letter of James", *ASE* 34, no. 2 (2017): 479-496.

[39] Willem Cornelis van Unnik, "Teaching of good works in 1 Peter", *NTS* 1, no. 2 (1954): 92-110; David L. Balch, *Let Wives be Submissive: The Domestic Code in 1 Peter*, SBLMS 26 (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1981); Gordon E. Kirk, "Endurance in suffering in 1 Peter", *BSac* 138, no. 549 (1981): 46-56; Robert Lee Richardson, "From 'subjection to authority' to 'mutual submission': the ethic of subordination in 1 Peter", *FM* 4, no. 2 (1987): 70-80; Bruce W. Winter, "'Seek the welfare of the city': social ethics according to 1 Peter", *Them* 13, no. 3 (1988): 91-94; Martin Evang, "Ek kardias allēlous agapēsate ektenōs: zum Verständnis der Aufforderung und ihrer Begründungen in 1 Petr 1:22f", *ZNW* 80, no. 1-2 (1989): 111-123; Gene L. Green, "The use of the Old Testament for Christian ethics in 1 Peter", *TynBul* 41, no. 2 (1990): 276-289; Lauri Thurén, *Argument and Theology in 1 Peter: The Origins of Christian Paraenesis*, JSNTSup 114, ed. S. Porter (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1995); Steven Richard Bechtler, *Following in His Steps: Suffering, Community, and Christology in 1 Peter*, SBLDS 162, 162 (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1998); J. de Waal Dryden, *Theology and Ethics in 1 Peter: Paraenetic Strategies for Christian Character Formation*, WUNT II 209 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2006); John H. Elliott, *Conflict, Comunity and Honor: 1 Peter in Social-Scientific Perspective*, CCS (Eugene: Cascade, 2007); Torrey Seland, "Resident aliens in mission: missional practices in the emerging church of 1 Peter", *BBR* 19, no. 4 (2009): 565-589; Runar M. Thorsteinsson, *Roman Christianity and Roman stoicism a comparative study of ancient morality* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010); Fika J. van Rensburg, "A Code of Conduct for Children of God who suffer unjustly. Identity, Ethics and Ethos in 1 Peter", in *Identity, Ethics and Ethos in the New Testament*, BZNW, ed. G. v. d. Watt Jan (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2012), 473-510; David G. Horrell, "Between Conformity and Resistance: Beyond the Balch-Elliott Debate towards a post-colonial reading of First Peter", in *Becoming Christian: Essays on 1 Peter and the Making of Christian Identity*, LNTS 364 (London: Bloomsbury, 2013), 211-238; Nancy Pardee, "Be holy, for I am holy: Paraenesis in 1 Peter", in *Reading 1-2 Peter and Jude: A Resource for Students*, RBS 77, eds. E. F. Mason and T. W. Martin (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2014), 113-134; David J. Downs, "'Love covers a multitude of sins': redemptive almsgiving in I Peter 4:8 and its early Christian reception", *JTS* 65, no. 2 (2014): 489-514; Clifford A. Barbarick, "'You shall be holy, for I am holy': theosis in 1 Peter", *JTI* 9, no. 2 (2015): 287-297; Sandra Glahn, "Weaker Vessels and Calling Husbands 'Lord': Was Peter Insulting Wives?", *BSac* 174, no. 693 (2017): 60-76.

[40] Two major edited volumes on ethics in the Johannine Literature have been published in recent years: Jan Van Der Watt and Ruben Zimmermann (eds.), *Rethinking the Ethics of John: Implicit Ethics in the Johannine Writings*, WUNT, 291 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2012); Sherri Brown and Christopher W. Skinner (eds.), *Johannine Ethics: The Moral World of the Gospel and Epistles of John* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2017).

A number of studies within these volumes concern the ethics of the Johannine Epistles, including: Udo Schnelle, "Ethical Theology in 1 John", in *Rethinking the Ethics of John: Implicit Ethics in the Johannine Writings*, WUNT, 291, eds. J. Van Der Watt and R. Zimmermann (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2012), 321-339; Jeffrey E. Brickle, "Transacting Virtue in a Disrupted Community: the Negotiation of Ethics in the

This array of scholarship on the Catholic Epistles has contributed greatly to our understanding of the ethical teaching of these letters. In many cases, this scholarship forms the background for the exegetical studies that follow in chapters 3-5, and so will receive further engagement there. But for now, we note that these studies inherently seek to approach the ethics of the Catholic Epistles in a discrete, rather than a collective, manner.

2.2.3 Conclusion

In the literature on New Testament ethics, the Catholic Epistles have not been approached as a collection. On one hand, when the synthetic approach is adopted, the Catholic Epistles are routinely omitted (as evidenced by Longenecker, Matera and Burridge). On the other hand, when the Catholic Epistles are included in the conversation (because a differentiated approach is adopted, which requires the systematic discussion

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First Epistle of John", in *Rethinking the Ethics of John: Implicit Ethics in the Johannine Writings*, WUNT, 291, eds. J. Van Der Watt and R. Zimmermann (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2012), 340-349; Tom Thatcher, "Cain the Jew, the AntiChrist: Collective Memory and the Johannine Ethic of Loving and Hating", in *Rethinking the Ethics of John: Implicit Ethics in the Johannine Writings*, WUNT, 291, eds. J. Van Der Watt and R. Zimmermann (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2012), 350-373.

Other contributions to the field of Johannine Ethics, focusing on 1-3 John include: Jan Van Der Watt, "Ethics in First John: A Literary and Socioscientific Perspective", *CBQ* 61, no. 3 (1999): 491-511; Dirk G. van der Merwe, "'A matter of having Fellowship': Ethics in the Johannine Epistles", in *Identity, Ethics and Ethos in the New Testament*, BZNW, ed. G. v. d. Watt Jan (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2012), 535-564; Jan Van Der Watt, "On Ethics in 1 John", in *Communities in Dispute: Current Scholarship on the Johannine Epistles*, ECL, 13, eds. R. A. Culpepper and P. N. Anderson (Atlanta: SBL, 2014), 197-222; William R. G. Loader, "The Significance of 2:15-17 for understanding the Ethics of 1 John", in *Communities in Dispute: Current Scholarship on the Johannine Epistles*, ECL, 13, eds. R. A. Culpepper and P. N. Anderson (Atlanta: SBL, 2014), 223-235; David Rensberger, "Completed Love: 1 John 4:11-18 and the Mission of the New Testament Church", in *Communities in Dispute: Current Scholarship on the Johannine Epistles*, ECL, 13, eds. R. A. Culpepper and P. N. Anderson (Atlanta: SBL, 2014), 237-271; Jan van der Watt, "The ethical implications of 2 John 10-11", *VeE* 36, no. 1 (2015): 1-7; Jan Van Der Watt, "The Ethos of being like Jesus: Imitation in 1 John", in *Ethos und Theologie im Neuen Testament: Festschrift für Michael Wolter*, eds. J. Flebbe and M. Konradt (Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 2016), 415-440; Jan Van Der Watt, "Reciprocity, Mimesis and Ethics in 1 John", in *Erzählung und Briefe im Johanneischen Kreis*, WUNT, 420, eds. U. Poplutz and J. Frey (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2016), 257-276; Cornelis Bennema, "Virtue Ethics and the Johannine Writings", in *Johannine Ethics: The Moral World of the Gospel and Epistles of John*, eds. S. Brown and C. W. Skinner (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2017), 261-281; Bennema, *Mimesis*; Mavis Leung, "Ethics and Imitatio Christi in 1 John: A Jewish Perspective", *TynBul* 69, no. 1 (2018): 111-131; Alicia D. Myers, "Remember the Greatest: Remaining in Love and Casting out Fear in 1 John", *RevExp* 115 (2018): 50-61.

[41] J. Daryl Charles, *Virtue Amidst Vice: The Catalog of Virtues in 2 Peter 1*, JSNTSup 150 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1999); J. Daryl Charles, "The language and logic of virtue in 2 Peter 1:5-7", *BBR* 8 (1998): 55-73; Francois P. Viljoen, "Faithful Christian living amidst scoffers of the Judgment Day: Ethics and ethos in Jude and 2 Peter", in *Identity, Ethics and Ethos in the New Testament*, BZNW, ed. J. Van Der Watt (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2012), 511-533; Elritia Le Roux, *Ethics in 1 Peter: The Imitatio Christi and the Ethics of Suffering in 1 Peter and the Gospel of Mark - A Comparative Study* (Eugene: Wipf & Stock, 2018).

of the individual documents of the New Testament) the Catholic Epistles are viewed as just that, independent documents. Whether the differentiation is on the basis of the date of composition or the authorship of the texts, the Catholic Epistles are not conceived of as a collection. But, as we saw at the conclusion of chapter 1, there is a recent scholarly movement to treat the Catholic Epistles as a collection. We will review this recent movement of scholarship now, with a particular focus on the hermeneutical features of the various proposals, to see how such models might pave the way for our collective reading of the ethics of the Catholic Epistles.

2.3 The Collective Approach to the Catholic Epistle Collection

With the publication of David Nienhuis' 2007 monograph *Not by Paul Alone*,[42] a growing group of scholars have begun to explore the Catholic Epistles as a canonical collection. Most of these scholars focus on either presenting various strands of evidence concerning the historical formation of the Catholic Epistle collection, investigating the motivating factors for the formation of the collection, or exploring the intra-canonical impact of the collection (normally, vis-à-vis the Pauline Epistle collection). Consequently, while there may be a burgeoning interest in the Catholic Epistles as a collection, scholars have not yet satisfactorily articulated how such a reading of the Catholic Epistle collection itself works in practice.

2.3.1 David Nienhuis (2007)

In his 2007 work, Nienhuis seeks to reconstruct the historical origins of the Epistle of James. Nienhuis describes "the complete lack of early attestation before the *terminus ad quem* provided by Origen in the early third century" as a "formidable difficulty" for "those who want to secure an early date."[43] On this basis, Nienhuis hypothesises that James "is a pseudepigraph of the second century."[44] In chapter 2, he further supports this claim by demonstrating how the portrait of the author, James, which emerges from the text largely matches traditions associated with James in the late first and second centuries. Nienhuis suggests that the pseudepigrapher behind James did not only reflect second

[42] Nienhuis, *Not by Paul Alone*.
[43] Nienhuis, *Not by Paul Alone*, 101.
[44] Nienhuis, *Not by Paul Alone*, 100.

century traditions about James circulating in the second century but he also consciously composed his letter to be a "frontispiece" for a burgeoning Catholic Epistle collection. He says:

> Without James, the NT letters would include a Pauline collection, a Petrine collection linked with Jude, a Johannine collection, and a receding list of semi-authoritative letters headed by *Barnabas* and *1 Clement*. By adding James to that group, the Petrine and Johannine collections are merged under a Pillars of Jerusalem rubric, one that would act as a theological counterweight to the Pauline collection and provide a meaningful category by which these may be differentiated from other available letters, so that the apostolic letter collection might be closed. [45]

Thus, Nienhuis argues that the Epistle of James is a second-century pseudepigraphon, consciously composed to be the leading letter of the Catholic Epistle collection.[46] For Nienhuis, then, the composition of James represents the final stage of the development of the Catholic Epistle collection, and indeed, the New Testament canon as a whole.[47] We will not rehearse Nienhuis' historical reconstruction of the development of the Catholic Epistle collection or his evidence for the second century dating of the Epistle of James,[48] because our interest lies largely in the hermeneutical principles that emerge as a result of Nienhuis' work.

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[45] Nienhuis, *Not by Paul Alone*, 89-90.
[46] Nienhuis, *Not by Paul Alone*, 163-164.
[47] Nienhuis, *Not by Paul Alone*, 237-238.
[48] Nienhuis presents two strands of evidence for his hypothesis that James is a second-century document. In Chapter 1, Nienhuis presents the reception history of the Catholic Epistle collection and especially the Epistle of James. Within the reception history, Nienhuis reviews the testimony of the patristic fathers regarding their knowledge of the various Catholic Epistles, and especially James, the manuscript tradition and the canon lists of the early church. Nienhuis' review of the patristic sources involves considering Irenaeus, Tertullian, Hippolytus, Cyprian, the Muratorian Fragment, Clement of Alexandria, Origen and Eusebius of Caesarea, whose *Ecclesiastical History* represents "the 'Arrival' of the Catholic Epistle Collection." (p. 68) Nienhuis' discussion of Eusebius' predecessors involves consideration of the texts that the author knew and used approvingly (especially whether the author was aware of the Epistle of James), as well as the traditions concerning the attributed authors of the Catholic Epistles circulated in the patristic sources. This survey of the historical development of the Catholic Epistle collection has become the standard treatment, whose underlying principles have been followed by other significant works in the field: Nienhuis and Wall, *Reading the Epistles*, Ch. 2; Lockett, *Letters from the Pillar Apostles*, 59-90; Wolfgang Grünstäudl, "The Wait is Worth it: The Catholic Epistles and the Formation of the New Testament", in *The Catholic Epistles: Critical Readings*, ed. D. Lockett, trans. A. Obrist and D. Lockett (London: T&T Clark, 2021), 9; this is a translated version of Grünstäudl's original article: Wolfgang Grünstäudl, "Was lange währt ...: Die Katholischen Briefe und die Formung des neutestamentlichen Kanons", *EC* 7, no. 1 (2016).

In Chapter 2, Nienhuis presents the traditions that developed into the second century concerning the historical figure of James the Just, the attributed author of the text. Nienhuis then explains how these traditions correspond to features within the text of James. This corroborates Nienhuis' hypothesis that James is a pseudepigraphical work composed in the second century.

In the final analytical chapter of his work, Nienhuis explored the ways in which the pseudepigrapher who composed James consciously linked it to the rest of the Catholic Epistles, as well as the other major epistolary collection within the canon to which the completed Catholic Epistle collection was to be appended (i.e. the Pauline Epistle collection). Nienhuis identifies a number of textual links between James and 1 Peter;[49] James and 1 John,[50] as well as James and the Pauline Epistle collection (esp. Romans, the leading letter of that collection).[51] Nienhuis argues that these textual links represent the author's conscious efforts to connect his work at the textual level to the existing epistolary collection (both Pauline and Catholic), among which he intended his work to be received.

Nienhuis distinguishes his conception of these literary parallels from that of the scholarly majority as follows:

> Though the majority of contemporary scholars account for these similarities on the basis of their supposed common appeal to hypothetical "traditional source materials," a second-century origin for the letter of James allows for an alternate explanation: our author may have intentionally alluded to and/or echoed these letters in order to enable the acceptance of his own into their increasingly restricted company.[52]

In addition to supporting the inclusion of the Epistle of James among the "increasingly restricted company" of the Catholic Epistles, Nienhuis argues that James "can be read as a text that was designed to *introduce* the other apostolic letters, in order to orient their subsequent reception."[53] Nienhuis offers the exhortations towards prayer for the wayward in James 5:19-20 and 1 John 5:16 as an example of this kind of redactional reading. He says:

> There is, however, one way in which the author of James diverged from the parallel text in 1 John. Where both make it clear that believers can affect another's status before God, 1 John draws a limit to the communal concern: "There is a sin which is unto death; I do not say that one is to pray for that" (5:16). He probably has in mind here the "children of the devil" (3:10); since "they are of the world" (4:5) and "the whole world is in the power of the evil one" (5:19), these should not be the focus of communal

[49] Nienhuis, *Not by Paul Alone*, 225-226.
[50] Nienhuis, *Not by Paul Alone*, 226-227.
[51] Nienhuis, *Not by Paul Alone*, 227-231.
[52] Nienhuis, *Not by Paul Alone*, 164.
[53] Nienhuis, *Not by Paul Alone*, 164.

> prayer. The author of James, by contrast, will not allow believers to think that errant siblings are to be left alone.[54]

In other words, the author of James had the text of 1 John on hand when he was composing James 5:19-20, and he was working to both connect his text with 1 John, but also to guide how recipients of the collection might read the exhortation found at the conclusion of 1 John.

Nienhuis calls these textual connections that he observes "allusions", "parallels" and "echoes."[55] The use of terms like "allusions" and "parallels" reinforces Nienhuis' argument that the hypothetical author of James was consciously composing his letter with the other Catholic Epistles and the Pauline Epistle collection in view. In this sense, the interpretation of the Catholic Epistle collection, first and foremost involves the interpretation of James, as represented below:

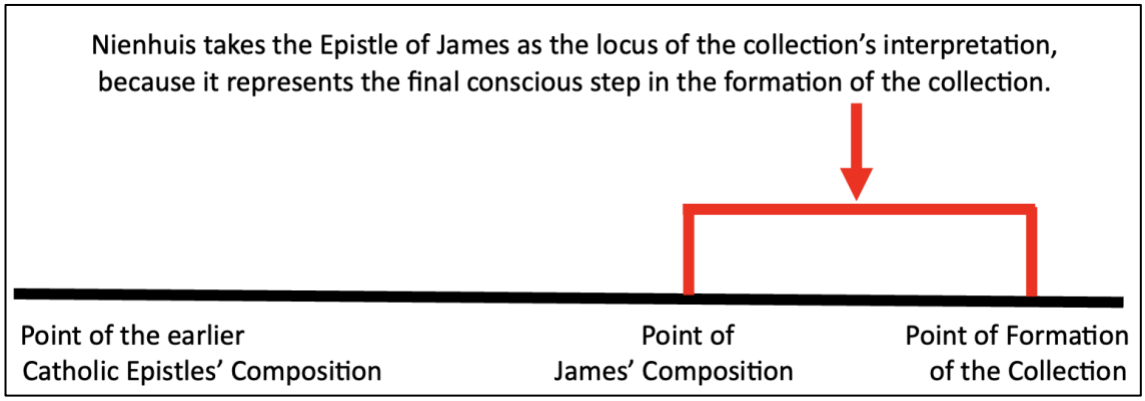

Figure 2 - Nienhuis' Approach to Interpreting the Catholic Epistles

However, Nienhuis' use of these terms (i.e., "allusions", "parallels" and "echoes") also highlights a key limitation of Nienhuis' thesis: the textual parallels must have James as the central junction from which hermeneutical insights can arise. In other words, Nienhuis can observe how the author of James has chosen to mould the reader's interpretation of 1 Peter or 1 John, but his approach is unable to account for parallels that may exist within the collection independent of James (for example, parallels between 1 Peter and 1 John). The parallels identified by Nienhuis can provide a basis for productive exegetical observations (which have continued to lay the groundwork for others);[56] however, his framework of James as a consciously composed leading letter for the collection, does not allow for a robustly collective reading of the Catholic Epistles to emerge. His account

[54] Nienhuis, *Not by Paul Alone*, 203.
[55] These are Nienhuis' preferred terms for the textual connections he observes.
[56] See: Lockett, *Letters from the Pillar Apostles*, 188-230.

remains entirely within standard historical-critical approaches, which privilege arguments about the originating context, literary dependence, and linear historical development of a text.

While Nienhuis' approach marks the beginning of a new wave of scholarship that considers the implications of approaching the Catholic Epistles as a collection, his work itself is in practice a conceptual continuation of Marxsen's diachronic differentiation model. Marxsen was particularly interested in how later documents adopted or rejected the ethical material of the earlier traditions and texts that they received. Nienhuis is particularly interested in how the pseudepigrapher behind the Epistle of James adapts (especially the adoption and/or rejection) the material from the other Catholic Epistles, and how that material is utilised to frame James as the "frontispiece" of the Catholic Epistle collection.

2.3.2 David Nienhuis and Robert Wall (2013)

Nienhuis and Wall's co-authored volume continues many of the same threads from Nienhuis' previous publication. Here, however they elevate the importance of the ratification of the canon of the New Testament in the fourth century for the proper interpretation of the Catholic Epistles.

> Unlike most modern treatments of the Catholic Epistles, which gather interpreters around their respective, reconstructive points of composition, this book targets their formation and final form as a discrete canonical collection. We contend that this is their *real* point of origin as Scripture.[57]

Repeating this point, they say, "Our project places significant historical interest in the *canonization* of biblical texts (and not their *composition*) as their real 'point of origin' as the church's Scripture."[58]

The below graphic visually represents Nienhuis and Wall's approach to interpreting of the Catholic Epistles:

[57] Nienhuis and Wall, *Reading the Epistles*, 9 (emphasis original).
[58] Nienhuis and Wall, *Reading the Epistles*, 11 (emphasis original).

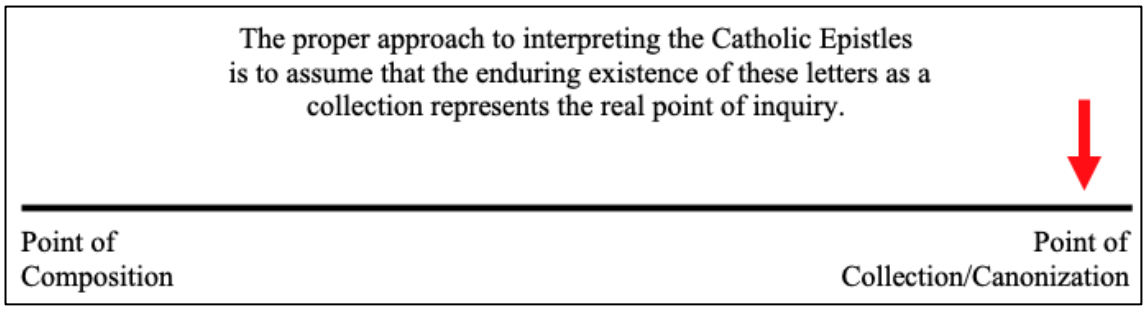

Figure 3 - Nienhuis and Wall's Approach to Interpreting the Catholic Epistles

In this way, Nienhuis and Wall distinguish their approach to the Catholic Epistles from that of the majority of historical critical scholarship, which views the point of composition as the crucial moment in which the texts are vested with interpretive meaning, instead favouring the point of collection and canonization as the moment of interpretive significance. Nienhuis and Wall theorise that the primary concern operative in the formation of the Catholic Epistle collection was the correct interpretation of the Pauline Epistle collection, against "his many heretical champions" (i.e. Marcion).[59] In the conclusion of their narration of the formation of the collection, they write:

> By the time the CE collection arrived in the late third century, it is highly unlikely that a seven-letter collection titled "catholic" would have simple connoted a "general address." The ancients would have likely received these letters as a kind of whole and complete apostolic witness from the earliest church; as the last piece of the NT canon to be formed, it would have been received as a legitimate completion of the canon, both aesthetically and doctrinally; and, given the pervasive concern about protecting a right, "catholic" reading of Paul against his many heretical champions, they would have received this collection as a kind of unifying safeguard against the many aspects of Paul's letters that are "hard to understand, which the ignorant and unstable twist to their own destruction, as they do the other Scriptures" (2 Pet. 3:16).[60]

Nienhuis and Wall argue that the Catholic Epistle collection was formed into a canonical collection to facilitate an orthodox interpretation of another portion of the NT canon which was already in circulation, the Pauline Epistle collection.[61] In this sense,

[59] Nienhuis and Wall, *Reading the Epistles*, 38-39.
[60] Nienhuis and Wall, *Reading the Epistles*, 38-39.
[61] A number of other scholars also consider the implications of the Catholic Epistle collection as a counterpoint to the Pauline Epistle collection. For a general discussion, see: Karl-Wilhelm Niebuhr, "Exegese im Kanonischen Zusammenhang Überlegungen zur Theologischen Relevanz der Gestalt des Neutestamentlichen Kanons", in *The Biblical Canons*, BETL, eds. J. D. Auwers and H. J. De Jonge

Nienhuis and Wall's conception of the Catholic Epistle collection is more structural and functional than literary. Nienhuis and Wall indicate the importance of this structural level for their work when they discuss the "aesthetic excellence of the collection."[62] The aesthetic excellence of the collection "is evinced by several properties inherent in its final redaction that would seem to suggest its theological coherence and anticipated use within the biblical canon."[63] The key features of the Catholic Epistle collection are thus identified:

1. 2 Peter 3:15-16 – which consciously discusses the Pauline Epistle collection.
2. James 2:22-23 – which offers an alternative reading of Abraham (cf. Gen 15:6) compared to Romans (4:3) and Galatians (3:6).
3. 2 Peter 3:1-2 – which attempts to explicitly link 2 Peter with 1 Peter.
4. 2 Peter 1:16-21 and 1 John 1:1-3 – both of which attempt to use apostolic witness to correct false teaching.
5. The unity and coherence of the Johannine Epistles.
6. The placement of Jesus (and its doxology) at the end of the Collection.
7. Jude and James as the literary *inclusio* of the Collection.

In light of this evidence for the precise shaping of the Catholic Epistles as an epistolary collection, Nienhuis and Wall "intend to move beyond the current discussion of these epistles as individual (and independent) compositions to the constructive proposal of reading them together as a coherent literary whole."[64] They even hint at the kind of reading they hope to achieve when they say:

> The markers of canonical shaping provided in this chapter and the preceding chapter recommend a reading strategy that considers intertextual allusions within the collection as instances of theological magnification… Our more basic point is this: the

(Leuven: Leuven University Press, 2003), 557-584, esp. 570-578.. A number of other studies focus largely on the intra-canonical dialogue between the Pauline letter collection and the Catholic letter collection (sometimes mediated by Acts), rather than the intra-textual connections that exist within the Catholic Epistle collection itself. See: Grünstäudl, "The Wait is Worth it", 71-94; translated from Grünstaüdl's previous work: Grünstäudl, "Was lange währt ...: Die Katholischen Briefe und die Formung des neutestamentlichen Kanons"; Karl-Wilhelm Niebuhr, "James in the Minds of the Recipients: A Letter from Jerusalem", in *The Catholic Epistles and Apostolic Tradition: A New Perspective on James to Jude*, eds. K.-W. Niebuhr and R. W. Wall (Waco: Baylor University Press, 2009), 51-52; Painter, "James as the First Catholic Epistle", 245-247.

Gregory Goswell has a similar intra-canonical focus, but distinguishes his work from the hypotheses of Nienhuis and Trobisch, saying, "The Greek manuscript tradition treats Acts and the Catholic Epistles as one canonical unit and these letters were not appended to the Pauline Corpus as their primary canonical conversation partner." (Greg Goswell, "The Early Readership Of The Catholic Epistles", *JGRChJ* 13 (2017), 136; see also: Greg Goswell, "The Johannine Corpus And The Unity Of The New Testament Canon", *JETS* 61, no. 4 (2018): 724-729; Greg Goswell, "The Place Of The Book Of Acts In Reading The NT", *JETS* 59, no. 1 (2016): 77-80.

[62] Nienhuis and Wall, *Reading the Epistles*, 43-48.

[63] Nienhuis and Wall, *Reading the Epistles*, 43-44.

[64] Nienhuis and Wall, *Reading the Epistles*, 68.

> robust intertextual allusions within this collection — linguistic and thematic — commend a unified reading strategy. In both the commentaries on each letter and in our final chapter the theological importance of this unity will be explored.[65]

In practice however, what Nienhuis and Wall provide in the second section of their book is a set of largely traditional commentaries on the seven Catholic Epistles. Each begins with a discussion of authorship (albeit from a canonical rather than historical point of view), date and provenance, and reception into the canon, before presenting a verse-by-verse analysis of each letter and a summary of the major theological themes of each letter. Even though Nienhuis and Wall claim that there are "robust intertextual allusions within this collection" that will be explored in their commentaries, even some of the more obvious parallels are overlooked. For example, in discussions designed to demonstrate the futility of faith without works (James 2:14-26) and confession without love (1 John 3:11-18), both James and 1 John offer the same illustration, namely, that of a brother or sister who is in need and are turned away (James 2:15-16; 1 John 3:17), though the commentaries on James and 1 John do not highlight this resonance.[66]

Additionally, Nienhuis and Wall's language of "allusions" between letters in the collection suggests a kind of literary or historical priority by which a later letter refers to an earlier one. By contrast, the language used in the present argument is that of "resonances," because it captures the way in which these static texts can exist in dynamic relationships, and thus can mutually interpret one another, without committing to a framework of priority within the collection's composition or formation.

Nienhuis and Wall have rightly observed that the Catholic Epistles are rich in inter-textual connections and that these inter-textual connections have the effect of magnifying certain concepts. However, within Nienhuis and Wall's emphasis upon the final canonical shape of the Catholic Epistle collection marked by theological coherence and unity, it is not clear whether there is room for observing dissonance among the Catholic Epistles. For example, Nienhuis and Wall observe that the exhortations to restore the wayward at the end of James (5:19-20) and Jude (22-23) are similar. But, they gloss over the fact that their own analyses uncover that the scope of the exhortations are

[65] Nienhuis and Wall, *Reading the Epistles*, 68-69, emphasis original.
[66] Other examples could be added here, as in the case of the resonances concerning the salvation of the wayward believer in James 5:19-20, Jude 22-23 and 1 John 5:16. See further comments below in chapter 6.

different, with James directing his readers to restore believers and Jude towards the intruders (i.e. non-believers).[67] Within a canonical framework that requires coherence Nienhuis and Wall must somehow harmonise the differences of these exhortations, a problem which only would have been compounded had 1 John 5:16 and its prohibition against praying for those who "have committed the sin unto death" been included in the discussion. The requisite coherence of the collection potentially prevents Nienhuis and Wall from acknowledging the distinct contributions of the individual passages that are connected through the inter-textual allusions they observe.

Nienhuis and Wall's work parallels the synthetic approach to New Testament ethics outlined above in §2.1.1. In the works of Longenecker, Matera and Burridge, we saw a consistent privileging of Jesus and Paul in the analysis of the New Testament's ethical teaching. Nienhuis and Wall obviously do not privilege the Pauline Epistles over and above the Catholic Epistles, including the former and excluding the latter. However, they still maintain a central, even formative, role for the Pauline Epistles in that they suggest that the Catholic Epistle collection was formed in response to the interpretive challenges of the Pauline Epistle collection. Therefore, their reading of the Catholic Epistle collection continues to be governed to a certain degree by the Pauline Epistle collection. Thus, it seems that although Nienhuis and Wall are working to break new hermeneutical ground in their collective approach to the Catholic Epistles, they nonetheless remain within old patterns of scholarship.

2.3.3 Darian Lockett's Framework (2017) and Commentary (2021)

The most thorough work on the Catholic Epistle collection to date comes from Darian Lockett, who has written two monographs on the topic. In his first, *Letters from the Pillar Apostles,* Lockett attempted to establish that "it is both historically and hermeneutically plausible to receive the Catholic Epistles as a canonically significant collection."[68] Our interest is primarily in the "hermeneutical plausibility" and potential of Lockett's framework. Consequently, we do not have space to review comprehensively

[67] Nienhuis and Wall twice states that the object of the restoration in James 5 is "believers." At one point, they say: "These sinners are lapsed believers who have 'wandered from the truth' of God's work (cf. 1:18, 21)." Conversely though, regarding the object of the restoration in Jude 22-23, Nienhuis and Wall insist that it is towards "the intruders" that the readers must "extend mercy." Nienhuis and Wall, *Reading the Epistles*, 87, 236-237. See further comments in chapter 5.
[68] Lockett, *Letters from the Pillar Apostles*, 58.

the details of how Lockett attempts to establish the "historical … plausibility of receiving the Catholic Epistles as a canonically significant collection."[69] Nonetheless, a brief sketch of Lockett's historical work will be offered here because, unlike his predecessors who separate the composition, reception and collection/canonization of these texts, Lockett understands the historical process from composition to collection as an organic whole.

After tracing the reception history of the Catholic Epistles as a collection among patristic witnesses and within the manuscript tradition,[70] Lockett argues that the status of the Catholic Epistles as a collection in Eusebius and the major codices is not the result of a creative genius in the fourth century, but rather the recognition of the collective status of these letters in the minds of the tradents.[71] Lockett then seeks to demonstrate that the texts of the Catholic Epistles themselves contain compositional evidence that suggested to the tradents "that these particular texts should be collected, arranged, and read together."[72] As such, Lockett argues that:

> There is an organic quality in the entire canonical process whereby early decisions of composition and redaction, and later decisions of compilation, collection, and arrangement are both understood as in direct relationship to *the logic of the texts themselves* and are therefore significant for interpretation.[73]

Similarly:

> Such compilational activity was often completed in light of the received *logic of the texts themselves*.[74]

In other words, for Lockett, the process of collection and canonization does not represent the imposition of a foreign framework upon these texts, but is instead the "organic" end of their journey, which began at composition. Therefore, for Lockett, "the process of editing, collecting, and arranging of these seven texts is neither anachronistic to their

[69] Lockett, *Letters from the Pillar Apostles*, 58.
[70] Lockett, *Letters from the Pillar Apostles*, 80-86. Peter Davids also explores the reception history of the Catholic Epistles along these lines: Peter H. Davids, "The Catholic Epistles as a Canonical Janus: A New Testament Glimpse into Old and New Testament Canon Formation", *BBR* 19, no. 3 (2009): 411-415.
[71] Lockett, *Letters from the Pillar Apostles*, 90-136. He considers such paratextual features as: arrangement, titles (super- and sub-scripted), Nomina Sacra and chapter divisions.
[72] Lockett, *Letters from the Pillar Apostles*, 137. The compositional evidence that he discusses includes: the shared use of traditional material across the collection, catchwords that exist between the seams of contiguous letters in the collection, framing devices that exist at the beginning and end of the first and last letters of the collection (James and Jude) and an assortment of themes that are shared across the Catholic Epistle collection.
[73] Lockett, *Letters from the Pillar Apostles*, 45, emphasis added.
[74] Lockett, *Letters from the Pillar Apostles*, 57, emphasis added.

meaning nor antagonistic to their very composition."[75] In this way, unlike Nienhuis and Wall who identify the locus of interpretive focus at the point of collection, Lockett maintains that the points of composition and collection possess a kind of organic unity, such that the formation of the Catholic Epistle collection can be regarded as "not antithetical or anachronistic to the 'original' meaning of these texts."[76] This can be visually represented as below:

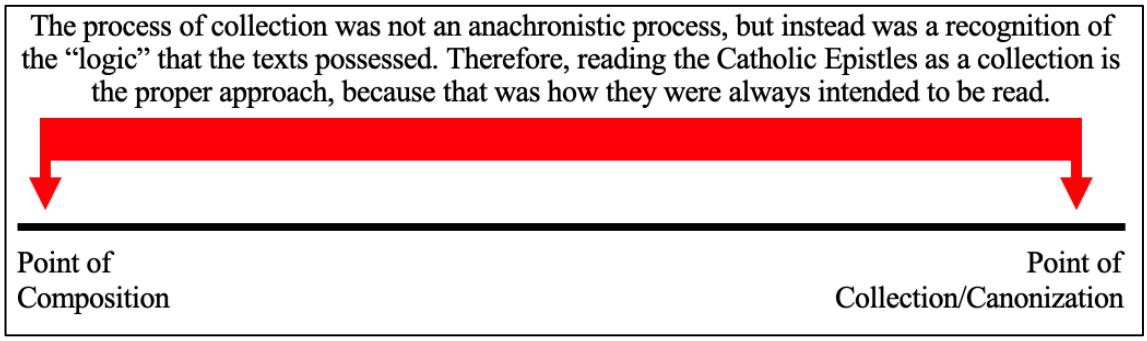

Figure 4 - Lockett's Approach to Interpreting the Catholic Epistles

Lockett's works remain the most comprehensive in the field to date. He has both supplied a historical framework for their origin as a collection and has recognised the importance of reading them as a collection. While various details of his historical framework can be questioned,[77] our chief concern is the hermeneutical implications of his approach.

Lockett concludes his book by expressing his hope that:

[75] Lockett, *Letters from the Pillar Apostles*, xvi.
[76] Lockett, *Letters from the Pillar Apostles*, 137.
[77] For example: whether it is historically responsible to consider the "catchwords between contiguous letters in the collection" or the "inclusios between the beginning and ending of James and Jude" as evidence that the letters indicate collection consciousness.

Lockett's argument requires that the tradents of these texts recognised the catchwords between the texts, before the texts have even been arranged together. Similarly, he requires, that the tradents observed the inclusios between James and Jude, cognizant of the fact that these documents would become the bookends of the collection, before any such collection had been formed.

Consider the following situation: an individual in the third century reads 1 Peter in 𝔓[72] and James in 𝔓[23]. Based on their discrete exposure to both of these books, I suggest that the reader is unlikely to notice the catchwords at the end of James which correspond to the catchwords at the beginning of 1 Peter. Without foreknowledge of the arrangement of the Catholic Epistle collection, this particular reader would not even know where the seams of the collection are located. Should they be looking for catchwords at the end of James and the beginning of 1 Peter? Or the end of 1 Peter and the beginning of James? Without knowing which books are contiguous with one another and the arrangement of the collection, it is highly unlikely that they would notice catchwords between two initially discrete books, and conclude that such catchwords are evidence that the books should be understood as members of an epistolary collection. Lockett seems to be putting the cart in front of the horse here, so to speak.

> this study will encourage future work in the Catholic Epistles which will attend to the hermeneutical insights generated by reading the seven Catholic Epistles as a collection.[78]

In other words, for Lockett, "reading the seven Catholic Epistles as a collection" should be a productive endeavour that is capable of generating new hermeneutical insights into the Catholic Epistles that are inaccessible to other modes of interpretation.

Despite Lockett's fundamental insights on the importance of reading the Catholic Epistles as a collection, Lockett's emphasis on the historical origins of this collection, that it was formed as a result of the tradents of the texts recognising and complying with the internal logic of the individual texts, suggests that approaching these texts from the perspective of the collection is unlikely to generate any new hermeneutical insights not already evident separately. In other words, from this perspective of compositional and collective unity, a collective reading of the Catholic Epistles would only ever be able to reaffirm the original logic of the individual texts, which can already be drawn out from a discrete reading of the Catholic Epistles. This seems to be a limitation that Lockett encountered when writing his commentary on the Catholic Epistles as a collection.

In 2021, Lockett published *Letters for the Church,* the first contemporary commentary on the Catholic Epistles to approach them explicitly as a collection. In the introduction to this volume, Lockett details the contribution of his commentary as follows:

> The purpose of this book is to introduce the context and content of the Catholic Epistles while, at the same time, *emphasizing how all seven letters are connected to each other as they stand in the New Testament canon.* While there are other books that introduce these letters, they usually include more than just the Catholic Epistles (typically also treating Hebrews and sometimes Revelation). *Furthermore, other introductions do not focus on how the Catholic Epistles were received as a coherent collection in this particular order*. This misses a key theological concern, namely, that *these letters are not merely one-off writings to disconnected communities, but rather they are a coherent collection of Christian texts that have a unified vision of God and his work in the world through Jesus Christ.*[79]

[78] Lockett, *Letters from the Pillar Apostles,* 239. See also: Darian Lockett, ""Necessary but Not Sufficient": The Role of History in the Interpretation of James as Christian Scripture", in *Explorations in Interdisciplinary Reading: Theological, Exegetical, and Reception-Historical Perspectives*, eds. R. F. Castleman, D. R. Lockett and S. O. Presley (Eugene: Wipf & Stock, 2017), 88.
[79] Lockett, *Letters for the Church*, 6, emphasis added.

While this approach to the task of writing a commentary promises to be a distinct development from a standard historical-critical approach, the net results are not in practice appreciably different. Lockett's analysis of the Catholic Epistles begins with considerations of Occasion and Setting (under which he treats such historical topics as: Authorship, Audience, Genre), Structure, Outline and then concludes with a passage-by-passage analysis of the book. To be sure, Lockett has a number of features designed to highlight the collective nature of the material. Each chapter, for example, begins with an outline of the links between the current book and its neighbours within the collection;[80] contains a selection of textboxes on key verbal and conceptual connections between the letters (i.e. the use of "Diaspora" in James 1:1 and 1 Peter 1:1, etc.).[81] Even so, the commentary itself largely proceeds within the bounds of a standard historical-critical enquiry.[82]

In the conclusion, Lockett traces a handful of themes across the collection (the Love Command, enduring trial, God and the World as incompatible allegiances, faith and works, protecting the Church from false teaching).[83] It is here that Lockett's commentary makes its most distinctive contribution, as he collates (quite comprehensively) the teaching of the full Catholic Epistle collection on each of the topics in one place. However, Lockett's discussions in this chapter proceed in a largely differentiated manner. For example, his presentation of "The Love Command" in the Catholic Epistles, presents a very thorough description of the 'love' content of each of the Catholic Epistles, one at a time.[84] That is, the teaching of each Catholic Epistle is presented relatively individually and independently of the others. As an example, consider the following quote:

> Rather than loving any neighbour generally, the consistent instruction throughout 1 Peter is to love "brothers," or better, "the family of believers" (NRSV). The command to love one another

[80] See: Lockett, *Letters for the Church*, 51-52, 96-98, 123-124, 170-172, 186-187.
[81] See: Lockett, *Letters for the Church*, 19, 28, 33, 40, 42, 64, 105, 108, 115, 138, 141, 151, 195, 209.
[82] A key example of the historical-critical orientation of Lockett's commentary is his discussion of the historical relationship between 2 Peter 2:4-6 and Jude 6-7, as well as 2 Peter 2:15 and Jude 11. He claims that "The author has used material from Jude 6-8 to construct his argument." Lockett, *Letters for the Church*, 111, 113.
[83] Lockett, *Letters for the Church*, 212-224. On this point, Lockett's work is more sophisticated than Nienhuis and Wall, as it allows the interpretive differences between the Catholic Epistles to stand as points of contrast, rather than requiring coherence and unity (see the discussion of love and the reclamation of the wandering soul on pp. 215-216).
[84] Lockett, *Letters for the Church*, 212-216. Each of the Catholic Epistles is treated individually: James (p. 212-213), 1 Peter (p. 213-214), 2 Peter (214-215), the Johannine Epistles (p. 215) and finally, Jude (p. 215-216).

> is also found in 1 Peter 3:8; 4:8. Such love has in view fellow members of the community, who, for 1 Peter, are likely facing suffering and hardship due to their commitment to following in Christ's footsteps (1 Pet 2:21-23). Love specifically for fellow believers is stressed in 1 Peter rather than love for the neighbour generally due to this specific context of suffering in 1 Peter.[85]

On the whole, our analysis of 1 Peter's teaching on love corresponds very closely to Lockett's analysis. However, note that this analysis concentrating on love in 1 Peter does not provide a good occasion or method to evaluate how the use of the actual term "neighbour" in James 2:8 and 4:12 might influence how a reader of the Catholic Epistles as a hermeneutically significant collection might understand the intra-communal scope of love in 1 Peter. Nor does it furnish new insights on the way in which the intra-communal scope of love in 1 Peter interacts with the likewise intra-communal scope of love in the Johannine Epistles. Lockett's analysis is comprehensive in its coverage of love in the Catholic Epistle collection, but the differentiated focus on individual letters is not well-suited to bring out the insights that could be obtained from a robustly collective reading of the material.

Indeed, this fact is acknowledged by Lockett himself when he concludes his book by saying, "The insights offered throughout this book, especially in the commentary section, do not depend on reading the Catholic Epistles together."[86] So, while Lockett set out to write a collective commentary on the Catholic Epistles and innovated new commentary features for it, his framework for the continuity between the individual discrete context of the Catholic Epistles and the context provided by the collection appears to limit the productivity of his reading strategy.

Intrinsic to Lockett's framework for the formation of the Catholic Epistle collection is the assumption that the collective approach unearths what the individual texts already communicate on their own. The collection is, after all, the result of "the original logic of the texts." Thus, Lockett's commentary, although aimed at breaking new hermeneutical ground, recapitulates traditional and differentiated methods of criticism. In this sense, Lockett's work conceptually parallels that of the scholars who approach the ethics of the Catholic Epistles and differentiate them from the New Testament and from one another by means of their authorship. Both Lockett and these other scholars are

[85] Lockett, *Letters for the Church*, 214.
[86] Lockett, *Letters for the Church*, 224.

occupied with uncovering the "original logic of the texts," although Lockett understands this "original logic" to have led to their reception as a canonically significant collection.

2.3.4 Conclusion

Recently, scholarship has taken interest in the Catholic Epistles as a collection. While a variety of proposals concerning the formation of the collection have been presented (as surveyed above), a robust reading highlighting the intra-textual resonances that exist across the whole collection has yet to be offered. The existing scholarship, which has in some cases laboured to disentangle itself from the existing models of interpretation (particularly historical criticism), has not resulted in the emergence of significantly new modes of reading the Catholic Epistles, when compared to that of previous scholarship. The works of Nienhuis, Nienhuis and Wall, and Lockett can all be coordinated with the approaches to New Testament ethics, identified in §2.1: diachronic or authorial differentiation and synthetic readings.

This thesis intends to demonstrate that reading the Catholic Epistles as a collection does generate new hermeneutical insights into the Catholic Epistles. The collection highlights new contexts within which to read individual passages, providing new avenues of interpretive possibility, while also offering a method by which competing interpretations of a passage might be assessed. This thesis will demonstrate the productivity of adopting a collective approach to the Catholic Epistles by means of exploring a range of ethical motifs within the collection. Given that the existing scholarly frameworks do not largely offer new hermeneutical insights into the Catholic Epistles, before we can begin exploring the ethical motifs of this collection, we need to outline a reading strategy that approaches the Catholic Epistles as a collection.

2.4 The Approach of the Current Work

Having outlined the movement to consider the Catholic Epistles as a collection and established the lack of hermeneutical insights produced by the existing frameworks, we turn now to consider the hermeneutical principles that are operative in our collective reading. The reading strategy outlined in this section will prove central to our exploration of the ethics of the Catholic Epistle collection in the following chapters of this dissertation. This section will begin by outlining the three principles that govern my

reading strategy. First, we will consider the most basic building block of my collective approach, the resonances (both verbal and conceptual) that exist between the Catholic Epistles. Second, we will discuss the role of the arrangement of the collection and, unlike the majority of scholars, we will argue that the arrangement of the collection is not determinative for the ongoing interpretation of the Catholic Epistles. Finally, we will discuss the manner in which the resonances form an interpretive web, which we are calling a "network of associations," in which certain interpretive options are amplified or dampened. This chapter will conclude with an example of this kind of collective reading, namely, an exploration of the identity of the various opponents of the Catholic Epistles. This example is helpful because it is a relatively minor theme (which permits an adequate exploration in this brief chapter) as well as allowing us to clearly articulate the differences between our approach and the kinds of interpretation allowed by the existing scholarly paradigms.

2.4.1 Principle 1: The Identification of Resonances

The most fundamental hermeneutical principle that governs our collective reading of the Catholic Epistles concerns the identification of resonances that exist within the collection. Resonances are the building blocks of our collective reading, so to speak. They mark the points of contact between the texts, where the interpreter can explore the interpretive productivity of the collective approach.

Whereas other scholars have tended to use language like "allusion" in reference to the literary links that exist within the collection, and have tended to engage in criticism that seeks to explain the origin of these connections by means of some form of literary dependence or priority, we have eschewed terminology that implies literary dependence in favour of the language of "resonance." This language allows the literary connections between the various Catholic Epistles to exist in dynamic relationship with one another, without committing to any historical reconstruction of their composition. The language of "resonance" is also helpful for its aural component, upon which our third hermeneutical principle will build when we discuss "amplification" and "dampening." We differentiate between two kinds of resonances: verbal and conceptual.

2.4.1.1 Verbal Resonances

Verbal resonances are where two passages exhibit verbal overlap. For example, in chapter 4, we will explore the ethical motif of love in the Catholic Epistle collection. Two key passages in our analysis will be James 2:5-13 and 2 Peter 1:5-11. While these passages may seem to overlap minimally on first blush (the former concerning the chief law within the Mosaic Law, while the latter contains a virtue list followed by a general exhortation to godly conduct), verbally there are in fact numerous points of contact.[87]

James 2:5, 8, 10	2 Peter 1:5, 7, 10-11
[5]ἀκούσατε, ἀδελφοί μου ἀγαπητοί· οὐχ ὁ θεὸς **ἐξελέξατο** τοὺς πτωχοὺς τῷ κόσμῳ **πλουσίους** ἐν **πίστει** καὶ κληρονόμους τῆς **βασιλείας** ἧς ἐπηγγείλατο τοῖς **ἀγαπῶσιν** αὐτόν; … [8]Εἰ μέντοι νόμον τελεῖτε **βασιλικὸν** κατὰ τὴν γραφήν· **ἀγαπήσεις** τὸν πλησίον σου ὡς σεαυτόν, καλῶς **ποιεῖτε**· … [10]ὅστις γὰρ ὅλον τὸν νόμον τηρήσῃ, **πταίσῃ** δὲ ἐν ἑνί, γέγονεν πάντων ἔνοχος.	[5]καὶ αὐτὸ τοῦτο δὲ σπουδὴν πᾶσαν παρεισενέγκαντες ἐπιχορηγήσατε ἐν τῇ **πίστει** ὑμῶν τὴν ἀρετήν, ἐν δὲ τῇ ἀρετῇ τὴν γνῶσιν… [7]ἐν δὲ τῇ φιλαδελφίᾳ τὴν **ἀγάπην**… [10]διὸ μᾶλλον, ἀδελφοί, σπουδάσατε βεβαίαν ὑμῶν τὴν κλῆσιν καὶ **ἐκλογὴν ποιεῖσθαι**· ταῦτα γὰρ **ποιοῦντες** οὐ μὴ **πταίσητέ** ποτε. [11]οὕτως γὰρ **πλουσίως** ἐπιχορηγηθήσεται ὑμῖν ἡ εἴσοδος εἰς τὴν αἰώνιον **βασιλείαν** τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν καὶ σωτῆρος Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ.
[5]Listen, my beloved brothers; has not God elected those who are in the world to be rich in faith and heirs of the kingdom which he promised to those who love him? … [8]If you really fulfil the royal law according to the Scripture; "Love your neighbour as yourself," you are doing well… [10]For, whoever keeps the whole law, but falls at one point, has become guilty of it all.	[5]And for this same reason, also exerting every effort supplement your faith with virtue, and virtue with… [7]and brotherly love with love… [10]Therefore, all the more, brothers, be diligent to make certain your calling and election; for, if you do these things, you will never ever fall… [11]For thus entrance into the eternal kingdom of our lord and saviour Jesus Christ will be richly supplemented to you.

Figure 5 - Verbal Resonances between James 2:5-13 and 2 Peter 1:5-11

Within the collective approach, we propose, the assortment of verbal resonances present here, and discussed in more detail below, substantiates the possibility that the texts can be read as mutually informative. These verbal resonances prompt the interpreter to see the potential conceptual similarities between the two passages. Namely, as we shall examine in more depth in chapter 4, both passages emphasise the primacy of love for the reader in various ways, and both passages critique a kind of "faith" that is without "love" (cf. James 2:1, 5 and 2 Peter 1:5-7).

Attending to the conceptual similarities between the passages prevents our collective reading from being merely proof texting (i.e. two passages share a few cognate terms, therefore we will interpret them together). Consequently, our discussions in chapters 3-5 begin with a brief explanation of each passage, exploring its context and the way in which the current passage employs the present motif. By describing the main

[87] These resonances will receive fuller treatment in §4.3.1.1.

conceptual thrust of the passage, before exploring the various verbal resonances that it shares with other passages in the collection, we safeguard the approach from turning into an elaborate form of proof-texting, i.e. highlighting verbal resonances that share no level of conceptual overlap.

2.4.1.2 Conceptual Resonances

In some instances, there are passages within the Catholic Epistle collection which are conceptually similar but contain few or no verbal overlaps. A good example of this is James 2:15-16 and 1 John 3:17.[88]

James 2:15-16	1 John 3:17
[15]ἐὰν ἀδελφὸς ἢ ἀδελφὴ γυμνοὶ ὑπάρχωσιν καὶ λειπόμενοι ὦσιν τῆς ἐφημέρου τροφῆς, [16]εἴπῃ δέ τις αὐτοῖς ἐξ ὑμῶν· ὑπάγετε ἐν εἰρήνῃ, θερμαίνεσθε καὶ χορτάζεσθε, μὴ δῶτε δὲ αὐτοῖς τὰ ἐπιτήδεια τοῦ σώματος, τί τὸ ὄφελος;	[17]ὃς δ’ ἂν ἔχῃ τὸν βίον τοῦ κόσμου καὶ θεωρῇ τὸν ἀδελφὸν αὐτοῦ χρείαν ἔχοντα καὶ κλείσῃ τὰ σπλάγχνα αὐτοῦ ἀπ’ αὐτοῦ, πῶς ἡ ἀγάπη τοῦ θεοῦ μένει ἐν αὐτῷ;
[15]If a brother or sister is naked and they are lacking daily food, [16]and someone from you says to them; “Go in peace, be warmed and be filled,” but you do not give to them the things needed for the body, what good is that?	[17]But whoever has the goods of the world and sees his brother having need and closes his heart from him, how can the love of God remain in him?

Figure 6 - Illustrations of Love in 1 John 3:17 and James 2:15-16

In both passages, the futility of faith/confession without action is demonstrated by means of an illustration concerning a fellow believer (“brother or sister” and “brother”) who, although in financial destitution and need, is turned away. Both passages also conclude by posing a rhetorical question designed to further emphasise the futility of faith without works (James) and confession without love (1 John). However, while clearly occupying the same conceptual space, these passages share no significant verbal resonances with one another. In this case, we shall argue that these passages are conceptually resonant, despite a lack of shared terminology.

2.4.2 Principle 2: The Arrangement of the Collection

2.4.2.1 Sequential Reading

For Nienhuis, Nienhuis and Wall, and Lockett, the arrangement of the Catholic Epistles in antiquity (and especially the consistency of that arrangement) preserved in manuscripts and the post-Eusebian canon lists is a key indicator of the reception of the

[88] These passages will receive fuller treatment in §4.4.3.

collection.[89] But, for these scholars (and others performing collective readings on other portions of the Bible),[90] the arrangement of a collection is more than simply a line of evidence indicating its reception as a collection, it also represents a potential method for generating insights into the collection.[91]

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[89] See the presentation of the post-Eusebian Canon Lists in: Lockett, *Letters from the Pillar Apostles*, 69-71.

[90] Timothy Stone's recent monograph on the Megilloth is concerned with identifying the different arrangements that the Megilloth had throughout their reception, in order to uncover the function that the individual documents were performing in the minds of their readers. Timothy J. Stone, *The Compilational History of the Megilloth: Canon, Contoured Intertextuality and Meaning in the Writings* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2013).

A number of the contributions (see those by David L. Petersen, Marvin A. Sweeney, Barry A. Jones and John D. W. Watts) to the landmark work *Reading and Hearing the Book of the Twelve*, a collection of essays on the collection of the Minor Prophets of the Old Testament, are concerned with how the arrangement of the books in the collection impacts their interpretation. James D. Nogalski and Marvin A. Sweeney, eds., *Reading and Hearing the Book of the Twelve* (vol. 15 of *SBLSS*; Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2000).

Brevard Childs' *The Church's Guide to Reading Paul* is concerned with the arrangement of the Pauline collection, contending that Romans serves an introductory function for the collection, while the Pastoral Epistles serve as the collection's conclusion. Brevard S. Childs, *The Church's Guide for Reading Paul: The Canonical Shaping of the Pauline Corpus* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2008).

[91] Three scholars (Painter, Nienhuis and Wall) have attended to the arrangement of the Catholic Epistles recently in part 3 (chapters 8-10) of the 2009 volume: Karl-Wilhelm Niebuhr and Robert W. Wall, eds., *The Catholic Epistles and Apostolic Tradition: A New Perspective on James to Jude* (Waco: Baylor University Press, 2009).

Painter's discussion of the arrangement of the Catholic Epistles is very brief, noting that, unlike the Pauline Epistles, the Catholic Epistles have not been arranged by length. If they had been arranged by length, then the Catholic Epistles would look very different: 1 John (2,137 words, probably with its entourage of 2 and 3 John), James (1,749 words) and 1 Peter (1,678 words, probably with its entourage of 2 Peter and Jude). As such, Painter recognises that the arrangement of the Catholic Epistles followed a different principle, namely, it was conformed to the identification of "the pillar apostles named in Galatians 2:9." Despite this observation, Painter does not offer any hermeneutical principles on reading the collection within its current arrangement. Painter, "James as the First Catholic Epistles", 161-163.

Nienhuis suggests that James was a second-century, pseudepigraphical work, composed in order to introduce a burgeoning 'Pillars' collection (already populated by the Johannine and Petrine sub-collections). He says, "Add the letter of James to the broader collection, and a 'logic' is created that infuses it with a particular interpretive strategy." In this way, Nienhuis views the Epistle of James as crucial for interpreting the Catholic Epistle collection, because it was intentionally designed to act as a literary anchor between the various parts of the collection. According to Nienhuis, this explains why there are so many literary and thematic connections between James and 1 Peter, James and 1 John, as well as James and Jude, but not between the other various members of the collection (1 Peter and 1 John, for example). David R. Nienhuis, "The Letter of James as a Canon-Conscious Pseudepigraph", in *The Catholic Epistles and Apostolic Tradition: A New Perspective on James to Jude*, eds. K.-W. Niebuhr and R. W. Wall (Waco: Baylor University Press, 2009), 183-200.

Wall's contribution is similar to that of Nienhuis, however, it is more literary and theological in nature. He suggests that James functions as the *frontispiece* of the Catholic Epistle collection, such that James "introduces a set of themes [sic.] that organize a 'unifying theology of the CE'."[91] For our purposes, it is again crucial to recognise that Wall's observations do not extend beyond consideration of the placement of James at the front of the collection. Robert W. Wall, "A Unifying Theology of the Catholic Epistles: A Canonical Approach", in *The Catholic Epistles and Apostolic Tradition: A New Perspective on James to Jude*, eds. K.-W. Niebuhr and R. W. Wall (Waco: Baylor University Press, 2009), 13-40.

The Catholic Epistles are arranged: James, 1-2 Peter, 1-3 John and Jude. As articulated earlier, one of the limitations of Nienhuis' framework of the formation of the Catholic Epistle collection is that the productivity of his collective approach must move from the other Catholic Epistles to James, and not vice-versa, and certainly not within the collection (apart from James). Therefore, in Nienhuis' articulation of the collection, while the placement of James at the front of the collection is emphasised, the actual arrangement of the rest of the collection is not a significant hermeneutical factor.

Similarly, Robert Wall, has argued that James has a degree of priority on the basis of its placement at the beginning of the collection.[92] This is echoed in Nienhuis and Wall's co-authored volume, when they say:

> The 'priority' of James is, to a significant extent, the semiosis of its placement at the front of the final edition of a canonical collection. It is the first of the Catholic Epistles read, if they are read in sequence, and so sets into play a range of orienting concerns that are glossed by the succession of epistles.[93]

But, unlike Nienhuis' earlier volume, for Nienhuis and Wall, the importance of the collection's arrangement extends far beyond just the placement of James at the head of the collection. Indeed, they make seven observations based on the arrangement of the Catholic Epistles:

1) When James and 1 Peter are read alongside one another, they expose the two external threats that the readers face from the world: first, worldly seduction to sin (James), and second, persecution from hostile neighbours (1 Peter).
2) Similarly, the Petrine epistles, when read alongside one another, highlight the two main causes of apostasy: the external threat of persecution (1 Peter) and the internal threat of false teaching (2 Peter).
3) The Johannine Epistles seem to be plagued by the same internal threat as 2 Peter, namely, false teaching. However, the nature of the proponents of the false teaching is different between 2 Peter and 1 John. In 2 Peter the opponents still seem to be within the community (2 Peter 2:13), however, in 1 John the opponents have departed from the community (1 John 2:19).
4) Following 2 Peter's insistence on the author's eye-witness testimony (2 Peter 1:16-18, cf. 1 Peter 5:1), 1 John opens with a declaration from the author of his own experience with the bodily Jesus (1 John 1:1-3).

[92] Wall, "The Priority of James", 153-160.
[93] Nienhuis and Wall, *Reading the Epistles*, 252. Nienhuis and Wall share this interpretive move with Brevard Childs, who suggests that Romans functions similarly within the Pauline Corpus. Childs, *Church's Guide for Paul*, 65-69.

5) Having read 1 John, 2 and 3 John can be seen as the epitomising of its love discourse, "not only to clarify the core themes but to elaborate them in practical ways." 2 and 3 John articulate one possible practical expression of the more esoteric teaching of 1 John, namely, the practice of hospitality.
6) Jude continues the thread of responding to internal threats to the community that was begun in 2 Peter and continued in the Johannine Epistles.
7) Jude's doxology functions as a conclusion to the collection.[94]

Clearly, as noted in our review of their work above, Nienhuis and Wall's work represents a potentially fruitful attempt to utilise the collective status of the Catholic Epistles to generate exegetical insights into the collection. However, their contribution is limited in so much as their exploration of the collection is restricted to reading the letters in their current arrangement, that is, a sequential reading of the letters.

2.4.2.2 Resonant Network

The assumption of Nienhuis and Wall's insistence on the interpretive "priority" of James and the hermeneutical payoff of the arrangement of the collection,[95] is that it requires that the reader has never encountered any of these texts previously, and that they read them sequentially and within a short enough timeframe that they might experience the hermeneutical priority of James. However, such a set of hypothetical requirements could only hold true for a reader's initial exposure to the collection. Upon consecutive readings of the collection or even of individual letters within the collection, the hermeneutical priority of James diminishes. Even on a sequential reading of the Catholic Epistles, passages arranged later in the collection will inevitably retroactively shape one's understanding of earlier material. This renders a strictly sequential interpretation too uni-directional.

I propose that as a reader becomes more and more familiar with the context of the collection, that is, upon consecutive readings of the collection or even of individual letters within the collection, they will recognise resonances that exist throughout the collection. These resonances will be less based upon the priority of James and the arrangement of the collection, and more on the basis of their growing familiarity with the Catholic

[94] Nienhuis and Wall, *Reading the Epistles*, 252-257
[95] This assumption is explicitly stated by Nienhuis and Wall, who say: "It is the first of the Catholic Epistles read, *if they are read in sequence*, and so sets into play a range of orienting concerns that are glossed by the succession of epistles." (p. 252, emphasis added)

Epistles. Consequently, these resonances exist together in a complex, multi-directional manner. Indeed, the resonances flow from one passage to another in such a way that they form a web or a network of associations around the same conceptual motifs and affirmed by a set of verbal resonances. As this network arises from the resonances between passages within the Catholic Epistle collection, we can say that the network is both within the texts and generated by the reader. Once the reader has begun to comprehend the contours of the network, it can then be used to navigate competing interpretive possibilities, i.e. amplifying or dampening certain interpretive possibilities for a particular passage.

2.4.3 Principle 3: Hermeneutical Amplification/Dampening

As the reader recognises the resonances within the collection, and generates a network of associated passages around the motif under investigation (i.e. mimesis, love, restoration, or any other motif), the developing network can then be applied to contentious interpretive issues. For example, in chapter 3, we will explore the ethical motif of mimesis (i.e. imitation). At the conclusion of that chapter we will evaluate Russell Pregeant's recent suggestion that James 2:1 is an example of the *imitatio Christi* motif, by examining whether the Catholic Epistle collection amplifies or dampens such an interpretive possibility.

This is where the collective approach makes its most distinct contribution to our hermeneutics of the Catholic Epistles. Rather than simply analysing whether the *imitatio Christi* motif might be present in James 2:1 on the basis of the grammar of the text, or the internal logic of James as a whole, the collective approach generates a new network of associated passages within which James 2:1 can be read. The interpretive options (that the phrase πίστιν τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ is either a subjective genitive or an objective genitive) have both surfaced within traditional forms of historical and grammatical criticism. Therefore, the collective approach represents a new perspective, which can act as a new criterion by which the presence of the *imitatio Christi* motif can be analysed. If the network of associated passages in the collection communicates mimetic teaching by means of the subjective genitive, without any other indicators of mimesis, then the mimetic reading of James 2:1 would be amplified. However, if the

collection seems to communicate mimetic teaching in other ways, then the mimetic reading of James 2:1 would be dampened.

In addition to providing a new evaluative context in which the Catholic Epistles can be read, the collective approach is also able to recognise the prominence of a motif within the collection in a manner that traditional methods of reading are prone to overlook. For example, the reader of James may encounter 5:19-20 as the idiosyncratic conclusion of the letter. However, when read as a member of the Catholic Epistle collection, the similarly idiosyncratic conclusions of 1 John (5:14-16) and Jude (22-23) are caught up as points of resonance with James 5:19-20. In this way, rather than observing that three independent early Christian documents conclude with an exhortation towards restoring the wayward, we can make the observation that three of the seven Catholic Epistles conclude with the same kind of exhortation. Moreover, once the significance of the ethical motif is recognised for the collection, other related forms of the motif can be detected in the collection. In the case of restoration of an errant believer, the collection does not only exhort the readers to pursue wayward believers (James 5:19-20; 1 John 5:14-16; Jude 22-23), the motif reverberates in two other ways throughout the collection. First, in terms of the assurance that the collection provides to the readers that God is committed to their preservation (James 5:14-16; 1 Peter 5:10; 1 John 5:18; Jude 24-25), and second, in terms of the exhortation to the readers to preserve themselves (James 1:16; 1 Peter; 2 Peter 3:17-18; 1 John 5:18; 2 John 8; Jude 20-21). These reverberations of the motif throughout the collection, further elevate the prominence of the motif of the restoration of a wayward believer, by supplementing the resonances with the reverberations, which enriches the network of associated passages.

2.4.4 Case Study: The Opponents in the Catholic Epistle Collection

Throughout our explication of the hermeneutical principles that govern our collective reading of the Catholic Epistles we have offered numerous examples to illustrate the hermeneutical principles under discussion. Here we present a more thorough example, a case study in collective reading, namely, an exploration of the opponents found throughout the Catholic Epistle collection.

Jude denounces his opponents in an extended (and colourful) manner in the central section of his letter (vv. 4-19). However, despite the space dedicated to decrying his

opponents, the exact nature of their moral failings/false teachings remains difficult to determine.[96] One of the possible sources of the difficulty in identifying the nature of the moral failings and false teachings, according to Robinson, arises from the fact that the content of Jude's critique is filled with examples pulled from Jewish traditions (i.e. the Exodus from Egypt [v. 5], the Watchers tradition [v. 6], the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah [v. 7], "The way of Cain… Balaam's error and … Korah's rebellion" [v. 11]).[97]

However, within the context of the collection, the reader's understanding of Jude's opponents will inevitably be amplified by resonant descriptions of opponents found elsewhere in the collection. There is a rich array of resonances between the denunciation of Jude's opponents (vv. 4-19) and that of 2 Peter (2:1–3:7), which lace the passages together,[98] as outlined below:

Opponents	Jude	2 Peter
Their certain condemnation	οἱ **πάλαι** προγεγραμμένοι εἰς τοῦτο **τὸ κρίμα**. They were long ago designated for this judgement. (v. 4)	**τὸ κρίμα ἔκπαλαι** οὐκ ἀργεῖ. The judgement from long ago is not idle. (2:3)
Comparison with the Angels/ Watchers	**ἀγγέλους** τε τοὺς μὴ **τηρήσαντας** τὴν ἑαυτῶν ἀρχὴν ἀλλ' ἀπολιπόντας τὸ ἴδιον οἰκητήριον **εἰς κρίσιν** μεγάλης ἡμέρας δεσμοῖς ἀϊδίοις ὑπὸ **ζόφον τετήρηκεν**. And angels who did not keep their own authority but left their own places, he has kept for the judgement of the great day in eternal chains under gloom. (v. 6)	Εἰ γὰρ ὁ θεὸς **ἀγγέλων** ἁμαρτησάντων οὐκ ἐφείσατο ἀλλὰ σειραῖς **ζόφου** ταρταρώσας παρέδωκεν **εἰς κρίσιν τηρουμένους**. For if God did not spare angels after they sinned, but delivered them into chains of gloom, casting them into Tartarus, keeping them for judgement. (2:4)
Comparison with Sodom and Gomorrah	ὡς **Σόδομα καὶ Γόμορρα** καὶ αἱ περὶ αὐτὰς **πόλεις**. As Sodom and Gomorrah and the cities around them. (v. 7)	καὶ **πόλεις Σοδόμων καὶ Γομόρρας**. and the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah. (2:6)
Their Blasphemy	**δόξας** δὲ **βλασφημοῦσιν**. And they blaspheme the glorious ones. (v. 8)	**δόξας** οὐ τρέμουσιν **βλασφημοῦντες**. They do not tremble as they blaspheme the glorious ones. (2:10)

[96] Jude's descriptions of the opponents in verses 12-13 are largely metaphorical (i.e. they are "hidden reefs… shepherds feeding themselves; waterless clouds, swept along by the winds; fruitless trees in late autumn, twice deed, uprooted; wild waves of the sea, casting up the foam of their own shame; wandering stars for whom the gloom of utter darkness has been reserved." [Jude 12-13, cf. vv. 16, 19]), and consequently, while they clearly demonstrate Jude's opinion of the false teachers, they are not quite as clear in terms of identifying their behaviour or doctrine.

[97] A. Robinson, *Jude on the Attack: A Comparative Analysis of the Epistle of Jude, Jewish Judgement Oracles, and Greco-Roman Invective*, LNTS 581 (London: T&T Clark, 2019).

[98] The prevailing consensus among scholars is that these resonances arise from some form of literary dependence during the composition of Jude or 2 Peter. Whether this is the case or not is largely irrelevant for our approach, which does not focus on the compositional history of the Catholic Epistles, but instead on the verbal and conceptual resonances that exist between the texts of the collection in their final form.

	οὗτοι δὲ ὅσα μὲν οὐκ οἴδασιν **βλασφημοῦσιν**, ὅσα δὲ **φυσικῶς ὡς τὰ ἄλογα ζῷα** ἐπίστανται, ἐν τούτοις **φθείρονται**. But these people blaspheme all that they do not know, but they are destroyed by all that they understand naturally, as speechless animals. (v. 10)	**Οὗτοι δὲ ὡς ἄλογα ζῷα** γεγεννημένα **φυσικὰ** εἰς ἅλωσιν καὶ **φθορὰν** ἐν οἷς ἀγνοοῦσιν **βλασφημοῦντες** ἐν τῇ **φθορᾷ** αὐτῶν καὶ **φθαρήσονται**. But these as speechless animals, natural creatures, having been born for ignorance and destruction, blaspheming about that which they are ignorant, for their own destruction and they will be destroyed. (2:12)
Following/ Walking in the Wages/way of Balaam/Cain	**τῇ ὁδῷ τοῦ** Κάϊν ἐπορεύθησαν καὶ τῇ πλάνῃ τοῦ **Βαλαὰμ μισθοῦ** ἐξεχύθησαν. They walked in the way of cain and they were given to the deception of Balaam for gain. (v. 11)	ἐξακολουθήσαντες **τῇ ὁδῷ τοῦ Βαλαὰμ** τοῦ Βοσὸρ ὃς **μισθὸν** ἀδικίας ἠγάπησεν. Following the way of Balaam, the son of Bosor, who loved unrighteous gain. (2:15)
They are blots at your feasts	οὗτοί εἰσιν οἱ ἐν ταῖς ἀγάπαις ὑμῶν **σπιλάδες συνευωχούμενοι** ἀφόβως, They are blots in your love (feasts), feasting with you without fear. (v. 12)	**σπίλοι** καὶ μῶμοι ἐντρυφῶντες ἐν ταῖς ἀπάταις αὐτῶν **συνευωχούμενοι** ὑμῖν, They are blots and blemishes revelling in their deceitfulness, feasting with you. (2:13)
Predicted by the Apostles and called "Scoffers" who follow their own passions	[17]Ὑμεῖς δέ, ἀγαπητοί, **μνήσθητε τῶν ῥημάτων τῶν προειρημένων ὑπὸ τῶν ἀποστόλων τοῦ κυρίου** ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ **[18]** ὅτι ἔλεγον ὑμῖν **ἐπ' ἐσχάτου** χρόνου ἔσονται **ἐμπαῖκται** κατὰ τὰς ἑαυτῶν **ἐπιθυμίας πορευόμενοι** τῶν ἀσεβειῶν. [17]But you, beloved, must remember the words of prediction spoken by the apostles of our lord Jesus Christ [18]that they spoke to us "In the last time there will be scoffers, following their own ungodly desires. (vv. 17-18)	[2]**μνησθῆναι τῶν προειρημένων ῥημάτων ὑπὸ** τῶν ἁγίων προφητῶν καὶ **τῆς τῶν ἀποστόλων** ὑμῶν ἐντολῆς **τοῦ κυρίου** καὶ σωτῆρος. **[3]** τοῦτο πρῶτον γινώσκοντες ὅτι ἐλεύσονται **ἐπ' ἐσχάτων** τῶν ἡμερῶν ἐν **ἐμπαιγμονῇ ἐμπαῖκται** κατὰ τὰς ἰδίας **ἐπιθυμίας** αὐτῶν **πορευόμενοι**. [2]To remind you of the words of prediction spoken by the holy prophets and the commandment of your apostles of the lord and saviour. [3]Knowing this first, that scoffers will come in the last days with scoffing, following their own desires. (3:2-3)

Figure 7 - Verbal Resonances between the Opponents in Jude and 2 Peter

For the purposes of amplifying the false teaching and moral failure of the opponents in Jude, the most significant portion of the 2 Peter passage is 3:4-13. In these verses, the author of 2 Peter identifies the false teaching, and consequent moral failure, of his opponents. 2 Peter 3:4 states:

> καὶ λέγοντες· ποῦ ἐστιν ἡ ἐπαγγελία τῆς παρουσίας αὐτοῦ; ἀφ' ἧς γὰρ οἱ πατέρες ἐκοιμήθησαν, πάντα οὕτως διαμένει ἀπ' ἀρχῆς κτίσεως.
> And saying; "Where is the promise of his appearance? For since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue in the same way as from the beginning of creation.

The primary doctrinal point of contention between the author of 2 Peter and the opponents seems to be their denial of the second coming of Christ (v. 4). In light of their denial of the return of Jesus, they have embraced a kind of antinomianism (as evidenced by the extended description of their conduct in 2 Peter 2).

The host of verbal and conceptual resonances shared between these passages encourages the reader to interpret them in conjunction with each other. In other words, given the range of resonances between Jude and 2 Peter's descriptions of their opponents, as well as the notable absence of any specificity in Jude's description of its opponents, the specific identification of the false teaching of the opponents in 2 Peter amplifies a similar interpretation of Jude's opponents. That is, a reader encouraged by the multiplicity of verbal resonances will inevitably supply the explicit identification of the false teaching of 2 Peter's opponents (i.e. denial of the second coming) to fill the parallel gap in Jude's description of its opponents.[99]

Another group of opponents in the Catholic Epistle collection that are incorporated into this network of associations is the opponents of the Johannine Epistles. The opponents in 1 and 2 John are said to deny the coming of the Christ "in the flesh" (1 John 4:2, 2 John 7). This ambiguous phrase ("in the flesh") has inspired much discussion,[100] with the majority of interpreters taking it as a reference to Jesus' incarnation (i.e. the incarnation), or even more recently, to his resurrection (i.e. the bodily nature of his resurrection).[101] However, given the ambiguous nature of the Johannine phrase "in the flesh" and the description of the opponent's denial of Jesus' second coming in 2 Peter

[99] Richard Bauckham observes that the "common habit" of the majority of scholars who note the literary relationship between Jude and 2 Peter involves "classing these two works together as similar works, deriving from the same background and context, displaying the same theological outlook." Consequently, one of Bauckham's overarching goals in his commentary is to demonstrate that "Jude and 2 Peter are very different works, from very different historical contexts." Richard J. Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter*, WBC (Waco: Word, 1983), 143.

In light of this, Bauckham ardently argues that the opponents of Jude and 2 Peter should be distinguished from one another, unlike my above discussion. Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter*, 154-157. Here is the key distinction between Richard Bauckham's analysis and that of the current thesis. Richard Bauckham is occupied with uncovering the identity of the original, historical opponents of Jude and 2 Peter. This thesis is interested in the portrait of the opponents that arises for the reader of the collection. In other words, Bauckham is searching for the historical opponents of the individual documents, whereas this thesis is constructing the opponents of the collection.

[100] See Matthew Jensen's survey of the six interpretive options offered by previous scholarship: Matthew D. Jensen, *Affirming the Resurrection of the Incarnate Christ: A Reading of 1 John*, SNTSMS, 153 (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 152-158.

[101] See: Jensen, *Affirming the Resurrection of the Incarnate Christ: A Reading of 1 John*; Matthew D. Jensen, "'Jesus is the Christ': a new paradigm for understanding 1 John", *RTR* 75, no. 1 (2016): 1-20..

(and Jude), an alternate interpretive option is amplified. Namely, that a reader of the collection might plausibly interpret their denial of Jesus' coming "in the flesh" (1 John 4:2 and 2 John 7) as a denial of Jesus' second coming (cf. 2 Peter 3:4).[102] The late Raymond Brown, in his commentary on the Johannine Epistles, actually proposes this very interpretation of 2 John 7, on the basis of the use of the present tense of ἔρχομαι, compared to the perfect tense in 1 John 4:2.[103] While this interpretation has not gained wide recognition, it is important to note that it arose within strictly historical-grammatical scholarship, and yet, it is an interpretation which is amplified when 1 John is read alongside 2 Peter within the context of the collection.

In 3 John, the Elder warns Gaius of another opponent, an individual named Diotrephes (3 John 9-10):

> Diotrephes, who likes to put himself first, does not acknowledge our authority… talking wicked nonsense against us. And not content with that, he refuses to welcome the brothers, and also stops those who want to and puts them out of the church.

The Elder's opposition to Diotrephes is not grounded in the orthodoxy (or otherwise) of his teaching, as was the case with 2 Peter (and Jude) or 1 and 2 John. Rather, it seems that the major point with which the Elder takes issue is his conduct, namely, the heavy-handed, authoritarian approach Diotrephes has adopted in his leadership of the community.

The description of Diotrephes' leadership in 3 John 9-10 resonates conceptually with the instructions to elders in 1 Peter 5:2-3. 1 Peter exhorts elders to "shepherd the flock of God", by "exercising oversight", "not lording it over" them and "being examples (τύποι) to the flock." (vv. 2-3) Even though Diotrephes is never referred to as an "elder" in 3 John, he is described by "the elder" (3 John 1) as an individual exercising a kind of leadership, that within the context of the collection, is contrary to that envisioned in 1 Peter 5:2-3.

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[102] On internal grounds, such an interpretation is quite at home within 1 John. Note the teaching concerning the Second Coming of Christ in 1 John 2:28 and 3:2, as well as the "day of judgement" (τῇ ἡμέρᾳ τῆς κρίσεως, 4:17). Notice also the ambiguity of 1 John's use of φανερόω, sometimes referring to Jesus' first appearance in the incarnation (1:2 [twice], 3:5, 8; 4:9), other times to his second appearance at his future return (2:28; 3:2 [twice]) and once to the appearance of genuine and false believers (2:19).

[103] Raymond E. Brown, *The Johannine Epistles*, AB (New York: Doubleday, 1982), 686. He says, "Thus with the one formula, 'Jesus Christ coming in the flesh,' the Presbyter may be striking at the whole range of secessionist deceit: they do not accept the full effects of the first coming and they neglect the second coming."

This conceptual resonance, between the leadership style of Diotrephes and the exhortations to leaders in 1 Peter 5, is strengthened by the presence of mimetic language in both passages. Peter says that elders should be τύποι to the flock (1 Peter 5:3), while, immediately after his description of Diotrephes, the Elder commands Gaius to "not imitate (μιμοῦ) what is evil but what is good" (v. 11).[104] In the context of the collection, Diotrephes functions as the foil to the exhortations of 1 Peter 5 concerning appropriate leadership, not only because he behaves precisely counter to Peter's instruction, i.e. lording it over those entrusted to him (1 Peter 5:3a, 3 John 9-10), but also because, in doing so, he has become an example to be avoided (1 Peter 5:3b, 3 John 11).

Above we highlighted the doctrinal specificity of 2 Peter's critique of its opponents, using it to amplify the parallel gap in Jude's description of its opponents. Furthermore, both 2 Peter and Jude detail their opponents' conduct in three ways that are resonant with the description of Diotrephes' conduct in 3 John (and, in a corollary manner, with 1 Peter's instructions to elders in 1 Peter 5). First, just as Diotrephes does not receive the Elder (cf. 3 John 9, probably in terms of recognizing his authority),[105] so too, the opponents of Jude and 2 Peter reject authorities (cf. Jude 8 and 2 Peter 2:10). Second, just as Diotrephes casts out individuals from the church who do not abide by his rulings (cf. 3 John 10), so too, Jude states that its opponents "are the ones who cause divisions" (Jude 19, Οὗτοί εἰσιν οἱ ἀποδιορίζοντες). Finally, the instructions for elders in 1 Peter 5:2-3 are framed primarily in terms of shepherding imagery (e.g. ποιμάνατε τὸ ἐν ὑμῖν ποίμνιον τοῦ θεοῦ… τύποι γινόμενοι τοῦ ποιμνίου…καὶ φανερωθέντος τοῦ ἀρχιποίμενος…, "Shepherd the flock of God among you… being examples to the flock… and when the Chief Shepherd appears…). In stark contrast to Peter's instructions concerning godly leadership, which shepherds the flock of God with gentleness (1 Peter

[104] According to De Boer, the τύπος ('example') and μιμέομαι ('to imitate') word groups both belong to the broader realm of mimesis. In chapters 1 and 2 of his book, de Boer establishes that the two word groups (μιμέομαι and τύπος) both firmly belong to the realm of mimetic language. The first (μιμέομαι) emphasises the action of imitation, while the second (τύπος) the act/person to be imitated. See further chapter 3 of the present work. Willis Peter De Boer, *The Imitation of Paul: An Exegetical Study* (Kampen: Kok, 1962), 1-16, 17-23.

[105] In an influential article, Margaret Mitchell argues against the prevailing interpretation of ἐπιδέχομαι as "acceptance of authority" in 3 John 9. She argues that the term belongs to the sphere of Greco-Roman politics and refers to the reception of one's envoys and delegates, and should not have a special meaning given to it in 3 John 9. Therefore, she suggests that the phrase should just be translated as "Diotrephes does not accept us." See: Margaret M. Mitchell, "`Diotrephes does not receive us': The lexicographical and social context of 3 John 9-10", *JBL* 117, no. 2 (1998): 299-320. Regardless though, whether the term is understood as the recognition of another's authority or the acceptance of another's envoys, the point remains that Diotrephes does not acknowledge the Elder and/or his delegates.

5:2-3), Jude's opponents are described as those who "shepherd themselves" (ἑαυτοὺς ποιμαίνοντες, Jude 12). When read in the context of the collection, both Diotrephes and the opponents of Jude function as the antithesis of the ideal eldership presented in 1 Peter 5:1-2.

In this way, for the reader of the collection, the doctrinal issues at play in 2 Peter (and Jude) and 1-2 John are not distinct from the moral failures of Diotrephes in 3 John. Diotrephes' conduct resonates strongly with the conduct of the opponents in 2 Peter and Jude, such that the reader relates them to one another, forming a composite picture in their mind, of bad leaders, with bad conduct and bad doctrine. This picture, which emerges from a collective reading of the opponents of the Catholic Epistles, further implies that bad doctrine and bad leadership go hand in hand.

The differences between this robust collective reading of the Catholic Epistles and the other approaches outlined above can be demonstrated by considering how they might account for the opponents of the collection. As I have articulated the network of associated passages above, the Epistle of James did not feature. This is because there are no explicit opponents addressed or described in James. Therefore, for Nienhuis, who proposes that James is the frontispiece of the collection, that is, the leading letter through which the rest of the collection is to be interpreted, the range of material surveyed above concerning the false teachers stands in isolation. There are no parallel passages in James, through which this significant theme can be centralised and interpreted. This leaves Nienhuis with little interpretive space to move.

A similar issue arises for Nienhuis and Wall's sequential reading of the Catholic Epistles. However, the issue is even more complex for them. They claim that James "sets into play a range of orienting concerns that are glossed by the succession of epistles."[106] However, given that James does not have any explicit opponents, it is difficult to understand how James might orient its readers to interpret the opponents in the rest of the collection when James has no opponents to begin with.

Additionally, within Nienhuis and Wall's sequential reading, a reader might recognise the instructions to leaders in 1 Peter 5:2-3 as a leading frame through which the various leaders presented in the Catholic Epistles should be interpreted, much the same as our interpretation observed the resonances between Diotrephes and the opponents of 2

[106] Nienhuis and Wall, *Reading the Epistles*, 252.

Peter and Jude and the constructive injunctions of 1 Peter 5:2-3. However, it is not obvious how taking 1 Peter 5:2-3 as the leading frame of leadership is able to incorporate the false teachers of 1 and 2 John, with whom the author's contention is primarily doctrinal, rather than moral.

The most likely interpretive option that seems open to Nienhuis and Wall is the association of the opponents of the Catholic Epistles with the historical opponents of Christianity active at the historical point of canonization. Indeed, Nienhuis and Wall do understand the formation of the Catholic Epistle collection in terms of the refutation of Marcionite groups. They say:

> Given the pervasive concern about protecting a right, 'catholic' reading of Paul against his many heretical champions, [the ancients] would have received this collection as a kind of *unifying* safeguard against the many aspects of Paul's letters that are 'hard to understand, which the ignorant and unstable twist to their own destruction, as they do the other Scriptures' (2 Pet 3:16).[107]

Therefore, Nienhuis and Wall could relate the composite picture of the opponents of the Catholic Epistle collection to Marcion, or to some other second or third century group.[108]

Lockett, on the other hand, might recognise that false teachers are a prominent feature of the collection. But, in his commentary, Lockett did not draw connections between the various opponents of the Catholic Epistles as we have here.[109] Moreover though, given his framework of continuity between the meaning of the texts individually and collectively, Lockett's approach does not collate the opponents of the Catholic Epistle

[107] Nienhuis and Wall, *Reading the Epistles*, 39 (emphasis original). For further examples of Nienhuis and Wall on this topic, see: the discussion of Marcion on pp. 20-22, the discussion of 1 John's "anti-Christ" passages on p. 172, and their discussion of Augustine' rationale for the inclusion of the Catholic Epistles in the NT on pp. 34-35 (an extract from which follows). Regarding Augustine's rationale for the inclusion of the Catholic Epistles alongside the Pauline Epistles, Nienhuis and Wall say: "According to Augustine, then, the Catholic Epistle collection was added to the canon in order to keep readers from falling into a Paulinist fideism. This conclusion bears up with the evidence we have considered from the collection's historical development: from Irenaeus and Tertullian against Marcion, through Origen, and on to Augustine, at nearly every turn we find the insistence that Paul be placed in an appropriate interpretive frame lest his readers contract the spiritual sickness of heresy. Reading him in the embrace of Acts and the Catholic Epistles is the ancient inoculation against this disease."

[108] This is not explicit in their book, but they make frequent reference to the fact that the Catholic Epistles were designed as a collection to counter the heresies of the second/third century, particularly the heresies that spouted from poor interpretations of Paul.

[109] See Lockett's discussion of these passages on pp. 91 (1 Peter 5:2-3), 115-117 (2 Peter 3:4); 154-155 (1 John 4:2); 178 (2 John 7); and 183-184 (3 John 9-10).

Interestingly, Lockett even decides against the interpretation that the previous correspondence sent to Diotrephes' church (cf. 3 John 9) is 2 John, which shares the same attribution to "The Elder" (cf. 2 John 1 and 3 John 1). While this may be the prevailing opinion of historical-critical scholarship, surely within the context of the collection, the previous correspondence should be identified with 2 John.

collection together in such a way as to provide a composite picture. He makes this explicit in his discussion of the parallels between 2 Peter and Jude's description of the opponents. He says, "Though Jude and 2 Peter share a significant amount of material, it would be wrong to conclude that the letters confront the same group of opponents."[110] He then details the distinctive features of Jude's opponents, as compared to those of 2 Peter.[111] This is a decidedly different approach to that taken in this thesis, where the different portraits of the opponents represent opportunities for amplification, and thus, the creation of a composite portrait. In Lockett's works a collective reading of the opponents has not been provided, and we might even say, that his historical framework for interpretation has limited his capacity to do so in a productive manner.

As demonstrated above, within the context of the collection, the unnamed opponents of 2 Peter, 1 John, 2 John and Jude, as well as Diotrephes of 3 John, are all related to one another through a complex network of associations, based on verbal and conceptual resonances. All of this is not to suggest that, for example, the instructions to elders in 1 Peter 5:1-4 were composed in light of the specific issue of Diotrephes' leadership style, or that, vice versa, Diotrephes' leadership style was presented to be the literary foil of 1 Peter's envisioned eldership. Neither does this framework advance a theory of actual historical overlap between the various opponents of the Catholic Epistles. Rather, I argue that as the reader of the collection encounters these various individuals, they recognise that they all share the same conceptual space as *opponents*, and consequently, readers begin to integrate the passages into an interpretive network, the nodes of which are determined by the resonances shared between the passages.

2.5 Conclusion

Recently, scholarship has begun considering the potential of interpreting the Catholic Epistles as a collection. The works of Nienhuis, Nienhuis and Wall, and Lockett, have attempted to break new hermeneutical ground in their interpretation of the Catholic Epistle collection. However, due to the frameworks adopted for the formation of the Catholic Epistle collection, these scholars reverted to previous modes of reading and interpretation. These previous forms of scholarship were illustrated in the works of New

[110] Lockett, *Letters for the Church*, 190.
[111] Lockett, *Letters for the Church*, 190-191.

Testament ethics, which approached the task by either synthesising the New Testament texts or differentiating between them (either diachronically or authorially). Both the lack of new hermeneutical insights arising from the works of Nienhuis, Wall, and Lockett, as well as the lack of attention to the Catholic Epistles in works on New Testament ethics, invites a fresh attempt to interpret the Catholic Epistles as a collection, focusing upon their ethical teaching.

This chapter concluded with a discussion of the three hermeneutical principles which will govern our collective reading of the Catholic Epistles. First, that the textual connections between the Catholic Epistles should be conceived of as "resonances," rather than "allusions" or "echoes." These resonances, while primarily verbal in nature, are regulated by conceptual resonance, which safeguards the process from being reduced to mere proof texting passages based on shared terminology.

Second, our reading of the Catholic Epistle collection will not necessarily adhere to the collection's arrangement. The reason for this is that as a reader's familiarity with the collection grows, so too does their ability to hear resonances across the collection. Therefore, our discussions throughout chapters 3-5 will not begin with James and conclude with Jude. Nor will we derive exegetical insights into the texts based on their internal arrangement. Rather, we will identify the verbal and conceptual resonances that exist across the collection and allow those resonances to form a network of associated passages.

Third, this network of associated passages surrounding a given motif can be used to adjudicate potential interpretive options in another resonant passage. In other words, the network of associated passages forms a new context in which contentious interpretive issues can be analysed. The network amplifies certain interpretive options, and consequently dampens the alternative interpretation. This is the major hermeneutical contribution of this thesis.

Finally, an example of this kind of collective reading was provided, surrounding the false teachers in the Catholic Epistle collection, to demonstrate these principles in action. The rest of this thesis will perform similar readings of the Catholic Epistles, focusing on ethical motifs that further demonstrate the strengths and weaknesses of the collective approach. In chapter 3, we will discuss a major motif in ancient Greco-Roman ethical discourse, mimesis, with an additional discussion concerning how the collective

approach might handle the recent suggestion by Russell Pregeant concerning the *imitatio Christi* motif in James 2:1. In chapter 4, we will explore the motif of love in the Catholic Epistles, examining specifically what the collective approach contributes to the long-debated issue of the intra-communal nature of love in the Johannine Epistles. Finally, in chapter 5, we demonstrate how the collective approach is capable of unearthing a new area of inquiry, when we analyse the exhortations to restore the wayward believer in the Catholic Epistles.

3 *Mimesis* in the Catholic Epistles

3.1 Introduction

In chapter 2 we surveyed the state of scholarship on the Catholic Epistles, and especially, the recent proposals to treat the Catholic Epistles as a collection. This led to the development of our own reading strategy at the conclusion of chapter 2, which focuses on identifying the resonances between passages, placing those passages into a network, and then, assessing how that network amplifies (and dampens) interpretive possibilities. In this and the following chapters, we will apply this collective approach to three ethical motifs within the Catholic Epistles: *mimesis* (ch. 3), love (ch. 4) and restoration of an errant believer (ch. 5). This, the first of our exegetical analyses, will focus on *mimesis,* a common subject within Greco-Roman ethical discourse.

While originating in discourse concerning the relationship between an artistic creation and the inspiration for the art (i.e. the 'original'), the term mimesis and related concepts have come to be applied across a range of other disciplines, particularly, in the ancient world, to the realm of education.[1] In terms of New Testament studies, mimesis has long played a role in scholarly discourse concerning the ethics of the New Testament.[2] For many New Testament scholars, imitation, and especially the imitation of Christ, is a crucial element of New Testament ethics.[3] Though conversation on this topic has been

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[1] For an introduction to the history of Mimesis in art and history, see: M. Potolsky, *Mimesis*, The New Critical Idiom (New York: Routledge, 2006), 13-46; S. Halliwell, *The Aesthetics of Mimesis: Ancient Texts and Modern Problems* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2009), 37-259.

For modern applications,see: Potolsky, *Mimesis*, 113-161.

The modern concept of a 'meme', so popular on social media platforms, even derives from this ancient concept of describing the relationship between reality and the portrayal of reality in an artistic composition. 'Memes,' in this sense, are only effective, or comical, in so much as they reflect something of reality.

[2] For a history of scholarship on the role of mimesis in biblical studies, see: Bennema, *Mimesis*, 4-8, 17-22.

For a specifically Old Testament and Early Judaism history of scholarship, see: Leung, "Ethics and Imitatio Christi", 114-124.

[3] Hays, *Moral Vision*, 197.

The centrality of imitation (specifically of Christ) in the ethics of the New Testament has been asserted by many: Soon-Gu Kwon, *Christ as Example: The Imitatio Christi Motive in Biblical and Christian Ethics*, USSE, 21 (Uppsala: Uppsala Universitet, 1998), 14; Schrage, *Ethics*, 8-9. Significantly, for Willi Marxsen, who analyses the ethics of the New Testament from a diachronic perspective, the imitation of Christ is of such importance, that it functions as one of the criteria that he utilises in determining whether a given New Testament document develops its ethics successfully or falsely. He develops this idea in his chapter "Ethics Oriented Towards Jesus" and then applies it to 2 Thessalonians, the Pastoral Epistles, James, 1 Peter, Colossians and Hebrews, see: Marxsen, *Foundations for Ethics*, 48-50, 254, 259, 263, 272, 279.

On the other hand, Birger Gerhardsson, on the basis of Immanuel Kant's insistence that moral actions be autonomous actions, has hesitations concerning the ethical nature of mimetic action. He says, "A

wide ranging, a central topic within the discussions has concerned the continuity between various terms found within the New Testament. For some, the discipleship language of the Gospels (i.e. "following Jesus") and the imitation language of the Epistles (i.e. "imitating Jesus") represent two distinct realms of thinking.[4] Others argue that the *imitatio* language of the Epistles stands in direct continuity with the discipleship language of the Gospels.[5] Still others suggest that the New Testament themes of discipleship and imitation are the direct descendants of the Jewish concept of the *imitatio Dei*.[6]

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blameless ethical action must start within the acting subject itself; it must be autonomous. To imitate somebody else, even if it is the Christ, is to take on a borrowed dress; it is not genuine moral action." Birger Gerhardsson, "Agape and Imitation of Christ", in *Jesus, the Gospels and the Church*, ed. E. P. Sanders (Macon: Mercer University Press, 1987), 173. However, Gerhardsson maintains that the *imitatio Christi* motif in the New Testament is morally viable, if one understands that it is the ethos of Christ that is to be imitated rather than Christ himself. He says, "The concrete model [Jesus] does not confront us as something *which is not us* (heteronomous); it has its resonance in the agape which is part of all human existence. Thus if we interpret the imitation as an imitation of Christ's agape, then it cannot be characterised as a foreign pattern pressed from without upon the imitator, a heteronomous norm… In that way, the imitation comes to maturity and becomes an independent, creative attitude, in which thinking and decisions of one's own are necessary." (p. 175)

[4] Martin Hengel says, "Following after [Jesus] did *not* mean imitating individual actions of his." See: Martin Hengel, *The Charismatic Leader and His Followers*, trans. J. C. G. Grieg (Edinburgh: Wipf & Stock, 1981), 42-57, quotation from 53.

[5] Scholarship has long been concerned with the debate concerning the continuity between the discipleship language of the Gospels (i.e. "following Jesus") and the mimetic language of the Epistles (i.e. "imitating Jesus"). A number of scholars, such as de Boer, Larsson, Schulz and Betz (from a previous generation), as well as Kwon, Hawthorne and Copan more recently, all argue that while Discipleship and Imitation are distinct (to varying degrees), there is still a conceptual link between the two. De Boer, Larsson, Kwon, Hawthorne and Copan all connect discipleship and mimesis in a much closer manner than Betz and Schulz, who locate the origins of each concept within different realms, the Palestinian Rabbinical system and Hellenism, respectively, drawing a strong demarcation between the two. See: De Boer, *Imitation of Paul*, 51-57; Edvin Larsson, *Christus als Vorbild: Eine Untersuchsung zu den paulinischen Tauf- und Eikontexten*, ASNU (Lund: Gleerup, 1962), 17; Anselm Schulz, *Nachfolgen und Nachahmen: Studien über das Verhältnis der neutestamentlichen Jüngerschaft zur urchristlichen Vorbildethik*, SANT, 6 (Munich: Kosel, 1962), 332-334; Hans Dieter Betz, *Nachfolge und Nachahmung Jesu Christi im Neuen Testament*, BHT, 37 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1967), 40, 42-43; Kwon, *Christ as Example: The Imitatio Christi Motive in Biblical and Christian Ethics*, 56-84; Gerald F. Hawthorne, "The Imitation of Christ: Discipleship in Philippians", in *Patterns of Discipleship in the New Testament*, ed. R. N. Longenecker (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1996), 163-166; Victor A. Copan, "Μαθητής and μιμητής: exploring an entangled relationship", *BBR* 17, no. 2 (2007): 313-323.

Another perspective on this debate belongs to Burridge, followed by David Capes, who claims that because the Gospels belong to the genre of *bioi*, it implies "the purpose of *mimesis*, or imitation," of their primary subject. Burridge, *Imitating Jesus*, 28-31, quotation from 29; David B. Capes, "Imitatio Christi and the Gospel Genre", *BBR* 13, no. 1 (2003): 1-19.

[6] Another key element of these discussions was the relationship between certain commands and motifs within the Old Testament, such as: "Walk in [the LORD's] ways" (e.g. Deut 10:12) or "following the LORD" (e.g. Num 14:43). Scholars like Tinsley (1960), Smalley (1965), Hood (2013) and Leung (2018) argue that these commands equate to exhortations to imitate God, which has conceptual continuity with the teaching of the New Testament. See: Ernest John Tinsley, *The Imitation of God in Christ: An Essay on the Biblical Basis of Christian Spirituality* (London: SCM, 1960), 30-35, 67; Stephen S. Smalley, "The Imitation of Christ in the New Testament", *Them* 3 (1965): 14-15; Jason B. Hood, *Imitating God in Christ:*

The goal of this chapter is to explore the mimetic teaching of the Catholic Epistles as a collection. The collective approach will offer a way by which the two major competing models of discussing mimetic material (represented by Cornelis Bennema and Kelsie Rodenbiker, see §3.2 below) in epistolary discourses can be unified, and thus, will offer a thorough reading of mimesis in the collection. After contrasting our approach to those practiced by these other scholars, we will examine a key text for mimesis in the collection (1 Peter 2:21) and note three distinct elements of its communication of mimesis: first, the use of the walking metaphor, which this chapter will argue is an oft overlooked element of mimetic discourse, at least in the Catholic Epistles; second, the use of an explicit mimetic term (ὑπογραμμόν); and third, the *imitatio Christi* motif, which is a specific form of the broader use of narrative exemplars in mimetic teaching. From this key passage we will trace a network of resonances throughout the collection, which has three branches or major nodes (the walking metaphor, explicit mimetic language and the *imitatio Christi* motif). This chapter will conclude by using the collective approach to evaluate a recent suggestion by Russell Pregeant that James 2:1 is an exhortation towards the imitation of Jesus Christ. That is, we will consider whether the potential of reading the *imitatio Christi* motif in James 2:1 is amplified or dampened when James 2:1 is read in the context of the Catholic Epistle collection. We turn now to consider how our collective approach allows us to bring together two distinct approaches to discussing mimesis in ancient epistolary discourse.

3.2 Approaches to Mimesis in the Catholic Epistles

While the majority of scholars agrees that imitation is an important feature of the New Testament's ethical discourse, the methods used to identify and analyse this mimetic teaching have varied widely. For the purposes of the current discussion, previous scholarly work has been grouped into two categories: first, studies that ground their

Recapturing a Biblical Pattern (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2013); Leung, "Ethics and Imitatio Christi", 131.

Others, such as de Boer or Elizabeth Castelli, argue that *imitatio Dei* is not present in the Old Testament at all. De Boer argues this on the basis that the language of "walking in [The LORD's] ways" refers to obedience to the Law and faithfulness to the covenant. See: De Boer, *Imitation of Paul*, 34-35. Castelli, however, argues that the notion that there is continuity between the concepts of *Imitatio Dei*, *Imitatio Christi* and following Jesus, is the result of a prior "theological desire to view history itself as a singular unilateral voyage towards Christian salvation." See: Elizabeth A. Castelli, *Imitating Paul: A Discouse of Power* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1991), 26.

analysis of mimesis in lexical terms or syntactical constructions; and second, studies that prioritise the role of narrative exemplars in mimetic teaching.

3.2.1 Lexical/Syntactical Studies

In order to provide their work with a sense of objectivity, some scholars begin their analysis of mimesis in the New Testament by identifying and discussing the lexical terms and syntactical constructions used in communicating mimetic teaching. Outside of the Catholic Epistles, De Boer's classic 1962 study on the Pauline corpus began in just this manner, analysing the lexemes μιμέομαι and τύπος.[7] In a similar way, Dirk van der Merwe begins his analysis of mimesis in the Gospel of John with discussion of the noun ὑπόδειγμα and the comparative particle κάθως.[8]

In relation to the Catholic Epistles, an important representation of this approach is Cornelis Bennema. In his recent monograph, Bennema explored the role of mimesis in the Johannine literature (i.e. the Gospel and Epistles of John) and concluded that mimesis stands "at the heart of Johannine ethics."[9] Bennema insists that mimetic teaching is closely connected to a select range of lexical phrases and syntactical constructions. He goes so far as to say, "There is no point speaking of a Johannine concept of mimesis unless we can show that this concept is rooted in 'real' words that John uses."[10]

Analysis of these "real" words is so crucial that it forms the basis upon which he critiques the validity of other scholars' work. He regards the work of Van der Merwe as "cursory"[11] because he does not "clarify when καθώς indicates mimesis and when merely comparison."[12] As Van der Merwe "fails to anchor the concept [of mimesis] in concrete Johannine words," Bennema concludes that he does not "carefully establish" whether the "many parallels between Jesus' actions and the actions expected from the disciples," are

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[7] De Boer, *Imitation of Paul*, 1-16 and 17-23, respectively.
[8] Dirk G. van der Merwe, "*Imitatio Christi* in the Fourth Gospel", *VeE* 22 (2001): 134-139 and 139-140, respectively.
[9] Bennema, *Mimesis*, 3, 23, 26.
[10] Bennema, *Mimesis*, 33.
[11] Bennema, *Mimesis*, 13. He also claims that Van der Merwe "does not go to the heart of the matter" and "lacks precision." (pp. 13 and 14)

Bennema's critique of Jason Hood's work is on the same basis, and consequently, carries the same charge of carelessness. He says about Hood's work, "Mimesis or imitation is loosely and hastily defined early on in the book – it is primarily about adopting a mindset – rather than being derived from *specific terms* in the text." Bennema, *Mimesis*, 22, emphasis added.
[12] Bennema, *Mimesis*, 14.

actually examples of mimesis.[13] All of that to say, that for Bennema, a valid exploration of mimesis requires a prior examination of the lexical and syntactical forms that are involved in the communication of mimetic teaching.

Bennema's insistence that mimetic teaching is closely connected to a select range of lexical phrases proves problematic for his study though, because the Johannine writings do not contain many explicit mimetic words, only: ὑπόδειγμα (John 13:15),[14] τύπος (twice in 20:25)[15] and μιμέομαι (3 John 11).[16] In light of the paucity of explicit mimetic terms in the Johannine literature, Bennema says:

> One may wonder whether this study is legitimate because the term μιμεῖσθαι or its cognates do not occur in the Johannine literature (barring 3 John 11). Hence, if there is a Johannine concept of mimesis, we must look at other literal terms to establish the semantic domain for this concept.[17]

In order to establish a valid basis upon which to conduct his analysis, Bennema was forced to cast his net wider than merely lexical terms. Thus, he identified seven syntactic constructions that communicate mimesis in the Gospel and Epistles of John:[18]

Syntactic Constructions	Examples
Καθώς	John 8:28; 10:14b-15a; 14:27; 15:10, 12; 17:11b, 14b, 16, 22b; 1 John 3:3, 7, 12
Καθώς … καί	John 6:57; 13:15, 34; 15:9; 17:18, 21; 20:21; 1 John 2:6; 4:17b
Καθώς … οὕτως	John 12:50; 15:4. **Not**: John 3:14; 14:31; 1 John 2:6
Οὕτως … καί	1 John 4:11
Καί	John 12:26; 13:14; 14:3, 12, 19; 17:24; 1 John 3:16
Ὥσπερ … οὕτως καί	John 5:21, 26
Ὁμοίως / ὅμοιος	John 5:19; 1 John 3:2
No comparative term[19]	John 8:26, 38-39; 14:16; 15:15; 16:13-15; 17:22a

Figure 8 - Bennema's Taxonomy of Mimetic Syntactical Constructions

Bennema's approach is representative of scholars who use lexemes/syntactical constructions as heuristic devices to locate the presence of mimesis, which forms the basis

[13] Bennema, *Mimesis*, 13-14.
[14] Bennema, *Mimesis*, 46-47, 91-103, esp. 98-100.
[15] Bennema, *Mimesis*, 6 and 47, n. 34. However, Bennema rightly concludes that the use of τύπος in John 20:25 is not mimetic.
[16] Bennema, *Mimesis*, 6 and 40.
[17] Bennema, *Mimesis*, 27, emphasis original.
[18] See: Bennema, *Mimesis*, 39-63.
[19] Two of Bennema's observations suggest that using lexemes and syntactical constructions as heuristic devices for mimetic teaching is flawed. First, Bennema finds the Καθώς … οὕτως construction in John 3:14; 14:31 and 1 John 2:6 (and the mimetic term τύπος twice in John 20:25) but, insists that these passages are not examples of mimetic teaching. Second, Bennema's final category "No comparative term" presents seven passages that, according to Bennema, contain clear mimetic teaching, but employ no lexical terms or syntactical constructions to signal the presence of mimetic teaching.

for their analysis. Bennema's work is a recent and thorough monograph on mimesis in the Johannine epistles, and consequently, we will regularly interact with it throughout the rest of this chapter.

In addition to the multiple occurrences of mimetic teaching in the Johannine Epistles, communicated by syntactical constructions, there are six technical terms used to communicate mimesis in the wider Catholic Epistle collection: τύπος (1 Pet 5:3), ἀντίτυπος (1 Pet 3:21), δεῖγμα (Jude 7), ὑπόδειγμα (Jas 5:10; 2 Pet 2:6), μιμέομαι (3 John 11) and ὑπογραμμός (1 Pet 2:21). Considering only the use of these explicit mimetic terms and syntactical constructions reveals the prominence of mimesis in 1 Peter and the Johannine Epistles especially, while potentially suggesting the relative paucity of mimesis in the rest of the collection. As we will see though, mimesis is prominent in the other Catholic Epistles as well, although not signalled by these mimetic terms. Therefore, while using explicit mimetic terminology as a heuristic tool to identify mimetic teaching is helpful, it is limited in its scope.

3.2.2 Narrative Exemplars

Other scholars approach their analysis of the New Testament's mimetic teaching from the perspective of the exemplars that are presented. Kelsie Rodenbiker, who also approaches the Catholic Epistles as a collection, is a good example of this approach.[20] She argues that the Catholic Epistles employ narrative exemplars in order to present their readers with mimetic examples either to be imitated or avoided.

Rodenbiker qualifies her discussion of mimesis and narrative exemplars in two important ways. First, she argues that the presence of a character in a text (particularly if it is only a brief mention) requires that the reader recalls the narrative context of that character. She says, "Reference to a narrative exemplar *necessarily* evokes that exemplar's larger narrative context in order for readers to understand the purpose of their presence."[21] This requires that the audience of the text is familiar with the "exemplar's

[20] Rodenbiker, "The persistent sufferer: the exemplar of Job in the Letter of James", 479-496; Kelsie G. Rodenbiker, "Disputing with the Devil: Jude, Michael the Archangel, and the Boundaries of Canon", *AKIZU* 28 (2019): 267-282.
[21] Rodenbiker, "Disputing with the Devil", 272, emphasis original.

larger narrative context," which in the case of the Catholic Epistles is usually the Old Testament or other Jewish traditional sources.[22]

But, secondly, and most importantly, she indicates that, when a reader encounters a character in a text, they will interpret that character in light of the other narrative contexts within which they have encountered that character previously. She explains, "as a result of this being *narrative context*" readers experience "a more vivid recollection of the exemplar's previous characterization in other contexts."[23] In other words, when readers encounter Cain in Jude 11, they recall not only the narrative of Cain in Genesis 4, but also subsequent retellings of the narrative that they have experienced, such as 1 John 3:12 (what Rodenbiker calls the "other narrative contexts").[24] As we shall see, this is somewhat analogous to this project's approach of identifying resonances between passages, and then allowing the resonant passages to mutually interpret one another in a way that amplifies or dampens particular interpretive possibilities. According to Kelsie Rodenbiker, in the Catholic Epistles "there are *eighteen* narrative exemplars, many of which are unique to the Catholic Epistles."[25] By "unique," she means not present as narrative exemplars in the rest of the New Testament canon. Unfortunately, Rodenbiker did not provide a list of the eighteen exemplars. In the rest of her argument, fifteen (or sixteen, if Sodom and Gomorrah are viewed as distinct exemplars even though they are viewed as a single unit in 2 Peter 2:6-7 and Jude 7) narrative exemplars are identified. While space does not permit a thorough examination of each of these exemplars here, we make two observations that are particularly pertinent to our discussion.[26]

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[22] This may have some bearing on the historical critical issue of identifying the audiences of the various Catholic Epistles, requiring an audience that is familiar with Jewish traditions. According to Rodenbiker, the author's provision of an individual vignette requires that their audience has sufficient familiarity to recall that individual's larger narrative.

[23] Rodenbiker, "Disputing with the Devil: Jude, Michael the Archangel, and the Boundaries of Canon", 272, emphasis original.

[24] This framework may offer a new way of navigating the discussion concerning the Catholic Epistles' use of characters who have narrative contexts in both the canonical Old Testament and extra-biblical traditions. For other scholars, the presence of characters from extra-biblical sources leads to considerations about the boundaries of the canon, either in their reception or at the time of their composition. For Rodenbiker, however, the presence of these characters represents an opportunity to explore the narrative inter-textuality that the reader experiences in their encounter of the character.

[25] Rodenbiker, "Disputing with the Devil: Jude, Michael the Archangel, and the Boundaries of Canon", 271, emphasis original.

[26] Many of the exemplars will be examined in further detail when we explore other elements of mimesis in the Catholic Epistles, i.e. the use of explicit mimetic language, or the use of the Footsteps/Walking/Following metaphor.

Exemplar[27]	Passage(s)	Exemplary Characteristic
Abraham	James 2:21-23	Works and Faith
Rahab	James 2:24-25	Works
Job	James 5:11	Endurance
Elijah	James 5:17-18	Effective Prayer
Sarah	1 Peter 3:5-6	Submission
The Sinful Angels (Watchers)	2 Peter 2:4; Jude 6	Sinned/Arrogance
Noah	2 Peter 2:5	Herald of Righteousness
Sodom and Gomorrah	2 Peter 2:6; Jude 7	Sensuality/Sexual Immorality
Lot	2 Peter 2:7-8	Righteous and Tormented/Distressed by Sin
Balaam	2 Peter 2:15-16; Jude 11	Profiteering from wrongdoing/error
Cain	1 John 3:12; Jude 11	Murdered his brother
Wilderness Generation	Jude 5	Faithlessness
Archangel Michael	Jude 9	Humility/Not arrogant
Korah	Jude 11	Unspecified
Enoch	Jude 14-15	Not a characteristic, but a textual citation

Figure 9 - Narrative Exemplars in the Catholic Epistles

First, the previous table substantiates Rodenbiker's observation that the Catholic Epistles use narrative exemplars in a substantial and varied way.[28] "Aside from Hebrews 11," she says, "the Catholic Epistle collection presents the most concentrated use of Old Testament characters in the New Testament."[29] This confirms that the presentation of narrative exemplars is a crucial and prevalent element of the Catholic Epistles' moral discourse. However, the distribution of these narrative exemplars across the collection is far from equal, with a particular concentration in James, 2 Peter and Jude, and a relative paucity in 1 Peter and the Johannine Epistles. Here it is important to remember that narrative exemplars are not the only way of communicating mimetic teaching. As seen above, the use of explicit mimetic terms and syntactic constructions is particularly

[27] Rodenbiker says that there are eighteen narrative exemplars in the Catholic Epistles, but her work only identifies 15 (or 16, if we separate Sodom and Gomorrah). The below table constitutes my speculation as to the identity of the remaining three unnamed narrative exemplars in the Catholic Epistles.

Exemplar	Passage(s)	Exemplary Characteristic
The Prophets	James 5:10	Suffering and Patience
Noah's Generation	2 Peter 2:5 (cf. 1 Peter 3:20; 2 Peter 3:5-6)	Disobedience/Ungodliness
Jesus	1 Peter 2:21 and Others	Numerous

James calls the Prophets "examples" (ὑπόδειγμα) of suffering and patience.

2 Peter introduces the destruction of Noah's Generation in the same language (οὐκ ἐφείσατο, in v. 4 and 5) as used for the sinful angels (whom Rodenbiker counts as a narrative exemplar, see pages 272, 274 and 275). In Greek, the two exemplars (and Noah, as well as Sodom and Gomorrah, and Lot) are part of the same sentence, introduced by the conditional Εἰ. Thus, it logically follows that if Rodenbiker counts the Watchers as a narrative exemplar, that Noah's Generation (i.e. "the ancient world"), which is equally "not spared" by God, is also a narrative exemplar.

As will be demonstrated in this chapter, Jesus is presented as a narrative exemplar repeatedly throughout the Catholic Epistles.

[28] Rodenbiker, "Disputing with the Devil: Jude, Michael the Archangel, and the Boundaries of Canon", 271-272.

[29] Rodenbiker, "Disputing with the Devil: Jude, Michael the Archangel, and the Boundaries of Canon", 272.

focused in the parts of the collection (1 Peter and the Johannine Epistles) where narrative exemplars are largely absent.

Second, the only exemplar whose faith is described is Abraham in James 2:21-23 (the faith-lessness of the Wilderness generation is described in Jude 5). This will prove significant later in our discussion when we assess Russell Pregeant's suggestion that James 2:1 and its genitive phrase τὴν πίστιν τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ is an instance of the *imitatio Christi* motif (§3.4). Significantly, the ambiguous genitive phrase which is present in James 2:1 does not occur in relation to Abraham's faith (i.e. something like "the faith of Abraham"). Nonetheless, the import of the presentation of Abraham's faith as an exemplar for the readers to imitate (James 2:21-23), in such close proximity to the potentially mimetic reference to Jesus' faith (James 2:1), will be considered later (§4.4). We will argue that while Jesus is presented as an exemplar through the Catholic Epistles, and that "faith" is an exemplary attribute in the context of 2:1, James 2:1 lacks the typical hallmarks of mimetic teaching present throughout the Catholic Epistles, suggesting that James 2:1 is not an example of the *imitatio Christi* motif.

3.2.3 Mimesis as a Sammelbegriff

However, the idea that mimetic teaching is limited to a select range of lexemes and syntactical constructions (Bennema) or is largely centred on the presentation of narrative exemplars (Rodenbiker) has been challenged. Friedrich Horn has recently proposed that mimetic ethics should be used as a collective concept (*Sammelbegriff*) that covers "the various concepts of mimesis – of imitation-, example-, analogy-, and *imitatio*-ethics – and also including the ideas of discipleship."[30] Where a scholar like Bennema expends a great deal of energy differentiating between imitation and analogy (even

[30] Friedrich W. Horn, "Mimetische Ethik im Neuen Testament", in *Metapher - Narratio - Mimesis - Doxologie*, WUNT 356, eds. U. Volp, F. W. Horn and R. Zimmermann (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2016), 200. — Ich möchte daher anregen, mimetische Ethik demgegenüber als einen Sammelbegriff zu verwenden, der unterschiedliche Konzepte von Mimesis, von Nachahmungs-, Vorbild-, Entsprechungs- und Imitatio-Ethik, aber wohl auch von Nachfolgevorstellungen umfasst.… Mimetische Ethik begegnet in diesem Verständnis in allen Schriftengruppen des Neuen Testaments und ist keinesfalls auf den Sprachgebrauch von μἱμέομαι [sic] κτλ …einzugrenzen.

Horn's explicit inclusion of "the ideas of discipleship" within the range of concepts that he argues exist within mimetic teaching is in reference to the old debate of whether Jesus' teaching on discipleship in the Gospels should be related to the mimetic teaching of Paul and the other New Testament authors (see note 3 above). Where a previous generation of scholars like de Boer, Larsson, Schulz, Betz, Kwon, Hawthorne and Copan only admit discipleship into the imitation discussion after qualification (and Hengel, not at all), Horn places it squarely under the umbrella of mimesis

critiquing others who do not take the same care), Horn places both under the umbrella of mimesis.

While Horn proposes that scholars should adopt a broad definition of mimesis, he does not provide any guidance on how to perform an analysis that uses such a broad definition.[31] This chapter will demonstrate that the collective approach offers a way to analyse mimesis in this broad way. Thus, one of the goals of the present chapter, is to provide an analysis of mimesis within the Catholic Epistles that adopts just such a broad definition. Our analysis will begin with 1 Peter 2:21, a passage in which we find both kinds of mimetic teaching (explicit mimetic language [i.e. ὑπογραμμόν] and a narrative exemplar [Jesus Christ]), as well as a metaphor for imitation ("…follow in his footsteps," ἐπακολουθήσητε τοῖς ἴχνεσιν αὐτοῦ). Having begun with 1 Peter 2:21, we will then trace a network of resonances across the collection along each of these branches: first, the use of the walking metaphor as a medium for communicating mimetic teaching; second, the use of explicit mimetic language; and third, the *Imitatio Christi* motif as a particular species of the mimetic presentation of narrative exemplars. By placing 1 Peter 2:21 at the centre of our network, we are able to include in our discussion texts that use both explicit mimetic terms and narrative exemplars. This is not only a point of distinction of this work compared to other analyses of mimesis, but it also responds to the call of Friedrich Horn to embrace a broader approach to mimesis.

3.3 1 Peter 2:21 as the Central Node

In the first section of its household code,[32] 1 Peter addresses slaves (1 Peter 2:18-25), urging them to submit to their masters, even when their masters treat them unjustly

[31] Horn's essay is presenting a history of scholarship on the topic, rather than an extensive study of mimesis, and so, this omission from his work does not represent a flaw, so much as an opportunity that is being seized by the current project.

[32] For a classic treatment of Greco-Roman household codes as they relate to 1 Peter 2:18-3:7, see: Balch, *Let Wives be Submissive*. Balch concludes that the function of 1 Peter's *Haustafel* is to "reduce the social-political tension between society and the churches." (p. 81) In other words, while the newly minted Christian religion was still being eyed with uncertainty, 1 Peter attempted to smooth relations by offering a domestic code that was in line with contemporary Greco-Roman ideals. For a more recent treatment, that takes note of Balch and others, see: Karen H. Jobes, *1 Peter*, BECNT (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2005), 181-187.

(2:18-20).[33] The author delivers this ethical ideal on the basis of the prior work of Jesus on the cross, suffering unjustly on behalf of the audience (2:21-25). 1 Peter 2:21 reads as follows:

> εἰς τοῦτο γὰρ ἐκλήθητε, ὅτι καὶ Χριστὸς ἔπαθεν ὑπὲρ ὑμῶν ὑμῖν ὑπολιμπάνων ὑπογραμμόν, ἵνα ἐπακολουθήσητε τοῖς ἴχνεσιν αὐτοῦ.
> For, to this you were called, that Christ also suffered on your behalf leaving an example for you, so that you might follow in his footsteps.

The usage of the *imitatio Christi* motif in "Haustafeln" has been noted by Jonathon Lookadoo, in his survey of the Pauline Epistles and the epistles of those whom he calls "early Pauline readers" (i.e. 1 Clement, Ignatius and Polycarp).[34] He argues that the *imitatio Christi* motif is used in the Pauline and post-Pauline letters to "provide a rationale for why believers should undertake certain commandments and an example for various groups to imitate in their ordinary responsibilities."[35] The *imitatio Christi* motif functions in a similar manner in 1 Peter, as slaves are commanded to endure their master's treatment, following the example of Jesus (1 Peter 2:21).[36]

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[33] A helpful article on setting the parameters of discourse on slavery in the New Testament is: Hendrik Goede, "Constructing ancient slavery as socio-historic context of the New Testament", *HvTSt* 69, no. 1 (2013): 1-7. However, Goede does not present the contours of the current discourse, for a helpful overview of the current state of scholarship (especially as it relates to the work of Keith Bradley), see the five articles in *Biblical Interpretation* 21.5: Jennifer A. Glancy, "Resistance and Humanity in Roman slavery", *BibInt* 21, no. 4-5 (2013): 497-505; James A. Harrell, "Slavery and inhumanity: Keith Bradley's legacy on slavery in New Testament studies", *BibInt* 21, no. 4-5 (2013): 506-514; Sheila Briggs, "Engaging the work of Keith Bradley", *BibInt* 21, no. 4-5 (2013): 515-523; S. Scott Bartchy, "Response to Keith Bradley's Scholarship on Slavery", *BibInt* 21, no. 4-5 (2013): 524-532; K. R. Bradley, "Engaging with slavery", *BibInt* 21, no. 4-5 (2013): 533-546.

[34] Jonathon Lookadoo, "Categories, Relationships and Imitation in the Household Codes of 1 Clement, Ignatius and Polycarp: A Comparison with Household Codes in the Pauline Corpus", *Neot* 53, no. 1 (2019): 31-52. Due to his focus on Paul and Pauline reception, however, the household code of 1 Peter 2 was omitted from his work. Lookadoo is aware of the omission of 1 Peter's household code, however, his reasoning is simply: "This household code has not been included, however, because the letter is attributed to Peter." However, excluding 1 Peter's household code from an article that is focused on Paul and Pauline reception needs further defence than what Lookadoo has provided. For many scholars, 1 Peter itself as an example of Pauline reception, so requiring treatment alongside 1 Clement and the letters of Ignatius. See: §3.2.4 in Peter Davids, *A Theology of James, Peter, and Jude: Living in the Light of the Coming King*, BTNT (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2014), 110-112; David G. Horrell, *1 Peter*, NTG (London: Bloomsbury, 2008), 36-38.

[35] Lookadoo, "Categories, Relationships and Imitation in the Household Codes of 1 Clement, Ignatius and Polycarp: A Comparison with Household Codes in the Pauline Corpus", 46. Lookadoo points to Ephesians 5:22-24, 25-31; Ign. Pol. 4.1; 5.1-2; 1 Clem. 16.1-2 as evidence of the trend of including mimesis in *Haustafeln.*

[36] Darian Lockett notes that "Jesus serves as the example par excellence of innocent suffering." According to Lockett, innocent suffering is a major theme of the letter as a whole (cf. 2:18, 20; 3:13-14, 16-17; 4:15-16, 19).

For the purposes of the development of our network of resonances coordinated around mimesis, 1 Peter 2:21 proves central for three reasons.[37] First, it presents Jesus Christ as an exemplar to be imitated by the readers. Consequently, this passage contains what has become known as the *imitatio Christi* motif, which is a particular class of narrative exemplar. That is, unlike the Johannine Epistles,[38] which regularly express their mimetic teaching by means of a comparative particle (most commonly καθώς),[39] or 2 Peter,[40] which relies on the reader importing their prior understanding of the narrative context of an exemplar in order to discern if the exemplar is to be imitated or avoided, the presentation of Christ as a narrative exemplar in 1 Peter 2:21 is explicit, and has already performed the work of discerning the quality of the exemplar.[41]

Second, it describes Jesus' willing endurance of suffering with a technical mimetic term, ὑπογραμμός, "an example."[42] Ὑπογραμμός is used in other literature to refer to a stencil, which was followed in tracing,[43] or more broadly to exemplary pieces of writing given by teachers to students in order to "improve their knowledge of the alphabet."[44] In his willing endurance of suffering, Jesus is an exemplar for slaves enduring their own suffering, in the same way that a stencil offers an example for children

[37] So prominent is 1 Peter 2:21's presentation of the *imitatio Christi* motif, that Barbarick actually deems it an instance of christological theosis. He re-defines theosis from the Eastern Orthodox 'doctrine of deification', to what he calls the "theme of deification." He says, "The doctrine of deification is a complex of thought that includes a certain understanding of creation, anthropology, soteriology, the incarnation, sanctification, ecclesiology, and eschatology. In a short, occasional letter such as I Peter, we will not find this complex of thought. Instead, at best, we may find the theme of deification." He goes on to explain that the "theme of deification" is not "an ontological fusion with the divine essence," but merely the "progressive assumption of some attributes of divination." Barbarick, "Theosis in 1 Peter", 289-291, quotations taken from 290.

[38] The above discussion of Bennema (§3.2.1) was heavily oriented to the Johannine Epistles, as they were the topic of Bennema's monograph.

[39] See: Bennema, *Mimesis*, 40-41.

[40] The above discussion of Rodenbiker (§3.2.2) was heavily oriented around 2 Peter.

[41] The issue of assessing the quality of an exemplar was a major motif of discussions of mimesis in the ancient world. See: Cornelis Bennema, "A Shared (Graeco-Roman) Model of Mimesis in John and Paul?", *JSNT* 43, no. 2 (2020): 175-180. Bennema discusses mimesis in the works of Isocrates, Cicero and Quintillian.

[42] The literary skill of our author is on display here, with five successive alliterative terms: ὑπὲρ ὑμῶν ὑμῖν ὑπολιμπάνων ὑπογραμμόν. The final two terms are *hapax legomena* in the NT.

[43] Jobes, *1 Peter*, 195. Jobes says, "It suggests the closest of copies… Jesus' suffering is not simply *an* example or pattern or model, as if one of many; he is *the* paradigm by which Christians write large the letters of his gospel in their lives… Jesus Christ left us this pattern over which we are to trace out our lives." (p. 195)
See also: Gottlob Schrenk, "ὑπογραμμός (ὑπογράφω)", in *TDNT*, ed. G. Kittel, trans. G. W. Bromiley (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1964), 772-773; F. F. Bruce, "ὑπογραμμός", in *NIDNTT*, ed. C. Brown (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1971), 291.

[44] Raffaela Cribiore, "Writing Exercises", in *BNP*, ed. H. Cancik (Leiden: Brill, 2006), 15:775-776.

learning to write their letters. Stencils, after all, encourage the student to follow the exemplar as closely as possible.

Third, 1 Peter employs a metaphor in his communication of the purpose of Jesus' example: "in order that you might follow in his footsteps" (ἵνα ἐπακολουθήσητε τοῖς ἴχνεσιν αὐτοῦ). The use of the image of walking in the sense of one's ethical lifestyle is a staple of biblical literature (Judg 2:22; Psalm 119:1; Prov 14:2; Isa 2:3; 26:8; Jer 6:16; Hos 14:9; Mic 4:2).[45] The imagery is also common in the New Testament (John 8:12; 11:9-10; 12:35, Gal 5:16; Eph 5:2; Col 3:7; and esp. 2 Cor 12:18), even occurring elsewhere within the Catholic Epistles (2 Peter 2:2, 15; 1 John 1:6–7; 2:11; 2 John 4, 6; 3 John 1:3–4; Jude 11). Darian Lockett sees this motif active in 1 John 1:6-7; 2:6, as well as 2 John 4-6.[46] The verb ἐπακολουθέω ("to follow") in 1 Peter 2:21 picks up this common motif by exhorting the readers to "follow" (i.e. walk in) the footsteps of Jesus.

In this instance, however, the author pursues the imagery of "walking" and "following" further by including the expression τοῖς ἴχνεσιν αὐτοῦ. This complements the closeness of the imitation called for by the use of ὑπογραμμός in the previous clause. Just as a child must follow the writing example exactly if they are to form their letters properly, so too slaves must follow the footsteps of Christ exactly if they are to fulfil their calling (2:21a). Jobes also notes the combination of the walking/following metaphor and the extension of the metaphor with the inclusion of the phrase, "in his footsteps." She suggests that it was Peter's usage of the phrase "in his footsteps" which caused the author to use the verb ἀκολουθέω, saying, "This imagery of footsteps has likely contributed to the adoption of the Greek verb ἀκολουθέω … to refer to Christian discipleship."[47] Irrespective of determining which came first to the mind of the writer, the verb or the prepositional phrase, below we will see in more detail that the walking/following imagery is a common motif of mimetic teaching in the Catholic Epistles.

Having now briefly explored the mimesis of 1 Peter 2:21, we now turn to consider the resonances that this passage has with other portions of the collection, in relation first

[45] For a concise overview of the background of the 'walking' metaphor in Judaism, see: Robert J Banks, ""Walking" as a Metaphor of the Christian Life: The Origins of a Significant Pauline Usage", in *Perspectives on language and text*, eds. E. W. Conrad and E. G. Newing (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 1987), 303-313; James W. Thompson, *Moral Formation according to Paul: The Context and Coherence of Pauline Ethics* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2011), 61.
[46] Lockett, *Letters for the Church*, 133, 137, 177-178.
[47] Jobes, *1 Peter*, 195.

to walking imagery, then to narrative exemplars and finally to the *imitatio Christi* motif.[48] It is around these three notes that resonances with other passages in the Catholic Epistles will emerge.

3.3.1 Walking as a Mimetic Metaphor in the Catholic Epistles

Just as 1 Peter 2:21 uses the metaphor of walking (following) in the footsteps of Christ to support the mimesis of the passage (using the verb, ἐπακολουθήσητε), so too the metaphor is used elsewhere in the collection in connection with mimesis. Three of these instances relate to negative exemplars (2 Peter 2:2, 15; Jude 11), while it is used twice in relation to positive exemplars (1 John 1:7; 2:6). The opponents of 2 Peter and Jude are characterised as walking in the ways of negative narrative exemplars (2 Peter 2:15 and Jude 11), the problem with which is that they themselves have become exemplars to the readers (2 Peter 2:2).

The same verb as 1 Peter 2:21, although with a different prefix, i.e. ἐξ-ακολουθέω, also appears in 2 Peter 2 to communicate the idea of imitating another's behaviour (vv. 2 and 15). In verse 15, it is said that the opponents "follow (ἐξακολουθήσαντες**)** the way (ὁδῷ) of Balaam." In a similar context, but using a different verb, that nonetheless conveys the walking/following concept, Jude says that the opponents "walk (ἐπορεύθησαν) in the way (ὁδῷ) of Cain and give themselves up to the error of Balaam for gain" (Jude 11).[49] Both 2 Peter and Jude use the metaphor of following/walking in the way[50] of Balaam/Cain (2 Peter 2:15 and Jude 11) to describe the manner in which the

[48] A brief sketch of 1 Peter 2:21 in its context has been offered here, for a more thorough discussion see §3.2.3.1.

[49] Tom Thatcher has written concerning the way that Cain is presented in Early Christianity (and, particularly, 1 John cf. 3:12). His interest lies in terms of Social and Collective Memory theory, that is, how did Early Christians remember and, consequently, present Cain, and how does that remembrance and presentation function to form them morally. Tom Thatcher, "Cain and Abel in early Christian memory: a case study in 'the use of the Old Testament in the New'", *CBQ* 72, no. 4 (2010): 732-751; Thatcher, "Cain the Jew, the AntiChrist", 350-373.

[50] Jorg Frey suggests that the use of "way" in 2 Peter 2:15 and Jude 11 activates the Two Ways motif, which was so prevalent in Jewish literature. He cites: LXX 1 Sam 12:23; LXX Ps 106:7 (= MT 107:7); Hos 14:10; Prov 2:13, 15; Acts 13:10; 1 *Clem.* 7.3; 35.5 and points to an expanded list of references in: Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter*, 267. J. Frey, *The Letter of Jude and the Second Letter of Peter: A Theological Commentary* (Waco: Baylor University Press, 2018), 350. For a more general examination of the Two Ways motif, see: Michael J. Wilkins, "Teaching, Paraenesis", in *DLNT*, eds. R. P. Martin and P. H. Davids (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1997), 1158-1159. More generally in the Catholic Epistles, Wilkins identifies the Two Ways motif as being especially present within "James 4, the light and dark contrasts in the Epistles of John and the eschatological contrasts of 2 Peter 2:1-2." (p. 1159) While the Two Ways motif is beyond the

author perceives their opponents to be imitating the actions of Balaam and Cain. This resonates with the use of the same metaphor of following in the footsteps of Jesus in 1 Peter 2:21, even using the same verb in the case of 2 Peter 2:15.

2 Peter's major point of critique with the opponents is not just that they imitate a negative exemplar,[51] but in doing so they themselves have become exemplars to others. 2 Peter 2:2 says, "Many will follow their [the opponents'] sensuality" (πολλοὶ ἐξακολουθήσουσιν αὐτῶν ταῖς ἀσελγείαις). The shift from the opponent's imitation of others to their capacity to be objects of imitation themselves, signals a reality of mimesis to which we will return later when we treat 1 Peter 5:3 and 3 John 11 in §4.3.2 below. Namely, these exemplars are not just located in the traditions of the community, whether they be scriptural examples or the traditions of Jesus, but rather amongst contemporaneous leaders (cf. 1 Peter 5:3) or even peers (cf. 3 John 11). That is precisely what the author of 2 Peter says has happened in the case of his opponents, namely, their sensuality has appeared so appealing to others that "many" have begun to follow them, that is, to imitate them.[52] On this point, Jorg Frey says, "Above all, the opponents 'loose' way of life tempts others to follow them."[53]

On the positive side, the walking metaphor is employed mimetically twice in 1 John to enjoin readers to walk in the same way that Christ walked (2:6) and to walk in the light as God is in the light (1:7).[54] 1 John 2:6 says: "The one who claims to remain in

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boundaries of the current chapter, its prevalence among the moral discourse of the Catholic Epistles (as identified by Wilkins) can be seen to support our basic premise that reading the ethical teaching of the Catholic Epistles as a collection is a helpful approach.

[51] The uses of this mimetic language in reference to the opponents' imitation of negative narrative exemplars is striking when considering the first criteria Bennema uses to differentiate between Mimesis, Analogy and Reciprocity (pp. 33-39). Bennema claims that "Mimesis is *intentional* as regards the imitator (person B consciously seeks to imitate person A in activity or state X), whereas analogy is often observed or created by an external person (person C notes a correspondence between entities A and B)." (Bennema, *Mimesis*, 35, emphasis original.) In this way, Bennema would classify 2 Peter 2:15 and Jude 11 as examples of analogy, not mimesis, but I argue that the use of the walking metaphor, which is elsewhere explicitly related to imitation, amplifies the sense of imitation in these passages.

[52] 2 Peter 2:18 and 19 suggest that it was not just casual observation on behalf of 2 Peter's audience that led to their imitation of the opponents, but rather the opponents' active advertisement of the viability of their lifestyle. 2 Peter 2:18-19 read: "For, by speaking futile boasts, they entice, with fleshly passions, with sensualities, those who are escaping those who live in error. Promising freedom to them, they are slaves of corruption. For what overcomes a person, to this they are enslaved."

[53] Frey, *Jude and 2 Peter*, 321.

[54] There are multiple other places in which the walking metaphor is used to describe one's moral life (i.e. 1 John 1:6; 2 John 4, 6; 3 John 3-4), however in these passages the walking metaphor is not connected to mimesis, but rather walking in the darkness (1 John 1:6) or in the truth (2 John 4, 6; 3 John 3-4). Thus, the use of walking language by itself is not enough to establish a mimetic action, but the use of walking/following imagery combined with the description of an exemplar indicates that mimesis may be in view.

him, just as that one [Christ] walked, he also ought to walk [in the same way]" (ὁ λέγων ἐν αὐτῷ μένειν ὀφείλει, καθὼς ἐκεῖνος περιεπάτησεν, καὶ αὐτὸς [οὕτως] περιπατεῖν). According to Mavis Leung, this is the "first clear instance of the imitation of Christ" in 1 John.[55] The mimesis is communicated in numerous ways, first, by means of the syntactical construction καθώς … καί,[56] which involves a correspondence between the verb used in the protasis (in reference to the exemplar) and the apodosis (in reference to the imitator), in this case the verb, περιπατέω.[57] Moreover, the use of the verb περιπατέω itself supports the mimetic emphasis of the passage, as it employs the walking metaphor. Bennema suggests something similar when he says, "Since περιπατεῖν ('to walk') is shorthand for 'way of life' or behaviour, this most likely refers to Jesus' life on earth that had been observed – and hence could be imitated."[58] The metaphor of 'walking' as one's 'way of life', is used to facilitate the mimetic teaching. This creates a strong conceptual resonance between 1 John 2:6 and 1 Peter 2:21. Just as believers are to follow in the footsteps of Jesus in 1 Peter 2:21, so too believers are to walk in the same way that Jesus walked here in 1 John 2:6.

According to Bennema, 1 John 1:7 does not constitute mimesis, because unlike 2:6, the verb in the protasis, i.e. the verb used in reference to the imitator ("if we walk in the light", ἐὰν ἐν τῷ φωτὶ περιπατῶμεν) does not correspond to the verb in the apodosis, i.e. the verb used in reference to the exemplar ("as he [God] is in the light", ὡς αὐτός ἐστιν ἐν τῷ φωτί,).[59] He says:

> I do not consider 1 John 1:7 an example of mimesis because two different verbs are used (to walk versus to be), so the comparative idea indicated by ὡς[60] is that both the believers' conduct and

[55] Leung, "Ethics and Imitatio Christi", 124. Bennema's survey of mimesis in 1 John agrees with Leung on this point. See: Bennema, *Mimesis*, 60.

[56] Some manuscripts include the comparative conjunction οὕτως after the καί in 2:6. Jan van der Watt suggests that the mimesis of 2:6 lies in the καθώς … οὕτως construction. However, Bennema contends that it lies in the καθώς … καί construction (Bennema, *Mimesis*, 48). According to Metzger, the textual evidence for inclusion or exclusion of the conjunction is evenly divided. Bruce M. Metzger, *A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament*, 2nd ed. (New York: United Bible Societies, 1994), 639.

Regardless of which syntactical construction carries the weight of the mimetic material (or whether the comparative conjunction is viewed as original), the mimetic nature of the clause is clear.

[57] The use of ὀφείλω shifts this passage from a mere comparison between Jesus and the reader, to a mimetic obligation.

[58] Bennema, *Mimesis*, 48.

[59] Bennema, *Mimesis*, 17, n. 83.

[60] Ὡς in the apodosis is not one of Bennema's seven syntactical categories within which Johannine mimesis occurs.

> God's existence occur in the realm of light (ἐν τῷ φωτί). If there is an implied mimesis, I consider it too weak to include.[61]

While Bennema is certainly correct that the verbs in the protasis and the apodosis are different, his assessment that this negates the mimetic nature of the passage seems unfounded. The same scenario, i.e. different verbs being applied to the exemplar and the imitator, occurs in John 12:50; 20:21 and 1 John 3:3, however, Bennema admits each of these passages as instances of mimetic teaching.[62] Excluding 1 John 1:7 from his analysis of mimesis on the basis of the use of different verbs is inconsistent with his analysis elsewhere. But more to the point for the current discussion, dismissing 1 John 1:7 from his discussion results in the usage of the walking metaphor in the communication of mimesis being overlooked.

Both Mavis Leung and Jan van der Watt, on the basis of the verbal connections that exist between 1 John 2:6 (the command to walk in the same way that Jesus walked) and 1 John 1:7 (the exhortation to walk in the light as God is in the light), consider the latter to be an example of the *imitatio Dei*.[63] Moreover though, when considered from the perspective of the collection, the presence of the walking metaphor amplifies the mimetic potential of 1 John 1:7. The resonances surrounding the walking metaphor and its relation to mimetic teaching throughout the collection (as seen in 1 Peter 2:21; 2 Peter 2:2, 15; 1 John 2:6 and Jude 11) amplify this interpretive possibility within 1 John 1:7. The mimetic elements of 1 John 2:6 and 1 Peter 2:21 are so conceptually resonant that unintentionally in the course of her discussion on 1 John 2:6, Leung echoed the words of 1 Peter 2:21 "to follow in his/Jesus' footsteps" three times, creating something akin to what we have been describing as a resonance between her own work and 1 Peter 2:21.[64] This inadvertent link further illustrates the strength of the resonances that exist between these passages.

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[61] Bennema, *Mimesis*, 17, n. 83.

[62] Bennema, *Mimesis*, 44, 48, 50.

[63] Leung says, "The use of this verb [περιπάτεω] in 1 John 2:6 harks back to its earlier appearances in 1 John 1:6-7, in which the contrast between 'walking in darkness' and 'walking in the light' evidently bears moral overtones (cf. 1 John 2:11). It is crucial to recall our earlier discussion that the expression of 'walking' in the 'way(s) of the Lord' in the OT is related to the idea of the imitation of God." Leung, "Ethics and Imitatio Christi", 126.

Van der Watt says, "The description of God as light [1:7] and walking in the light echoes a form of mimesis on the basis of hierarchical and authoritative relations (God, who is the model, is light vs. the person, who is the copy, is in this light) that aim at unified action (all should walk in the light)." Van Der Watt, "The Ethos of being like Jesus: Imitation in 1 John", 423.

[64] Leung, "Ethics and Imitatio Christi", 111, 125, 131.

3.3.2 Explicit Mimetic Terms in the Catholic Epistle Collection

Earlier in this chapter, we discussed Friedrich Horn's proposal that mimesis is a broad concept, and consequently, that those seeking to study it should not limit their analysis to passages that contain explicit mimetic terms. The scholarly backdrop for Horn's proposal is the work of scholars like Cornelis Bennema, who insist that mimetic teaching is indicated by the presence of mimetic words. The underlying assumption of Horn and Bennema's work is that there is a recognised lexical field that is regularly associated with mimesis. In the central passage of our developing network of associations (1 Peter 2:21) the author uses the term ὑπογραμμός to bear some of the weight of communicating the exemplarity of Jesus' life and death for the believer. This use of ὑπογραμμός sparks associations with other passages in the Catholic Epistles where other technical words for mimesis are used. While there was no strict delimitation of which words could or could not be used to communicate mimetic teaching in the ancient world, there does seem to be a lexical range that was regularly used for the communication of these semantic concepts.[65] Within our literature the following words feature: τύπος (and ἀντίτυπος), δεῖγμα (and ὑπόδειγμα), μιμέομαι and ὑπογραμμός.[66]

These words do not occur frequently in the Catholic Epistles, hence Horn's warning that mimesis is not limited to these lexemes must be heeded. Nonetheless, the presence of these more technical words in the Catholic Epistles does activate a new set of resonances across these letters.

[65] Matthew Roller proposes that there are four stages in any *imitatio* activity: (1) Action, (2) Evaluation, (3) Commemoration and (4) Norm Setting. Given that we are studying how a static set of ancient texts communicates mimetic teaching, we are interested primarily in stages 3 and 4 of this process. Specifically, the Catholic Epistles use of explicit mimetic language belongs to the process of 'commemoration' (i.e. bring to mind the actions) of Jesus and other narrative exemplars. M.B. Roller, *Models from the Past in Roman Culture: A World of Exempla* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018), 4-8. The only explicit mimetic term that is mentioned in Roller's work is ὑπόδειγμα, which occurs in James 5:10 and 2 Peter 2:6 within our literature.

[66] Lockett's discussion of these passages shows evidence of his awareness that they contain mimetic teaching, however, the use of these more technical words to convey the mimetic teaching is absent. Lockett, *Letters for the Church*, 45-46, 76-77, 91, 111, 184-185, 199.

Word	Passage/Exemplar	Text
τύπος	1 Peter 5:3 – Elders are to be Exemplars for Believers	μηδ' ὡς κατακυριεύοντες τῶν κλήρων ἀλλὰ **τύποι** γινόμενοι τοῦ ποιμνίου·
ἀντίτυπος[67]	1 Peter 3:21 – Noah's Ark is a Hermeneutical Exemplar of Baptism	ὃ καὶ ὑμᾶς **ἀντίτυπον** νῦν σῴζει βάπτισμα,
δεῖγμα	Jude 7 – Sodom and Gomorrah are Exemplars of Destruction	πρόκεινται **δεῖγμα** πυρὸς αἰωνίου δίκην ὑπέχουσαι
ὑπόδειγμα	James 5:10 – The Prophets are Exemplars of Patience and Suffering	**ὑπόδειγμα** λάβετε, ἀδελφοί, τῆς κακοπαθείας καὶ τῆς μακροθυμίας τοὺς προφήτας
	2 Peter 2:6 – Sodom and Gomorrah are Exemplars of Destruction	καὶ πόλεις Σοδόμων καὶ Γομόρρας τεφρώσας καταστροφῇ κατέκρινεν **ὑπόδειγμα** μελλόντων ἀσεβεῖν τεθεικὼς
μιμέομαι	3 John 11 – Command to the reader not to imitate that which is evil, but that which is good.	Αγαπητέ, μὴ **μιμοῦ** τὸ κακὸν ἀλλὰ τὸ ἀγαθόν.
ὑπογραμμός	1 Peter 2:21 – Jesus' death is Exemplary for the slave's endurance of unjust suffering	ὅτι καὶ Χριστὸς ἔπαθεν ὑπὲρ ὑμῶν ὑμῖν ὑπολιμπάνων **ὑπογραμμόν**, ἵνα ἐπακολουθήσητε τοῖς ἴχνεσιν αὐτοῦ,

Figure 10 - Technical Mimetic Terms in the Catholic Epistles

Ὑπόδειγμα is used in reference to a positive exemplar in James 5:10 and a negative exemplar in 2 Peter 2:6. In James 5:10, the Prophets are called ὑπόδειγμα ("examples") of patience and suffering (James 5:10), characteristics which the author has repeatedly called the readers to embrace (cf. James 1:2-4, 12; 5:7-8, 11). Which of the prophets James has in mind is difficult to say, but, *inter alios*, the exemplars of Job (5:11) and Elijah (5:17-18) in the following verses have often been highlighted by commentators.[68] Job especially is presented as the exemplar *par excellence* of steadfastness under trial, with the repetition of the macarism of 1:12 ("Blessed is the one who endures trial") in 5:11a ("Blessed are those who endure"), highlighting the

[67] 1 Peter 3:21, and its hermeneutical emphasis, is the obvious outlier among these passages, all of which refer to ethical mimesis in some way. Conceptually speaking, the hermeneutical nuance of ἀντίτυπος is tangentially related to this ethical usage, in so much as there is some kind of imitation (analogy, maybe) to be seen between the ark and baptism.

According to NIDNTT, τύπος and ἀντίτυπος,, were regularly used to talk about typology between two things. Hence, in 1 Peter, when the author wants to talk about the typological correspondence between Noah's Ark and Baptism, he reaches for the τύπος word group. In Romans, Paul does the same thing (cf. Rom 5:14), as does the author of Hebrews at times (cf. Heb 8:5 and 9:24). See: Leonhard Goppelt, "τύπος κτλ", in *TDNT*, ed. G. Kittel, trans. G. W. Bromiley (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1964), 251-256.

[68] Most commentators speak generally of the prophets as a group at some point in their discussion, before mentioning Job and Elijah, who are present in the context of James, see: Dale C. Allison Jr., *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistle of James*, ICC (London: Bloomsbury, 2013), 708-712; Peter Davids, *James*, NIGTC (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1982), 185-188.

Other commentators however go on to highlight other individuals at this point: Jeremiah, Isaiah and Ezekiel. See: Douglas J. Moo, *The Letter of James*, PNTC (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000), 288-289; Kurt A. Richardson, *James: An Exegetical and Theological Exposition of Holy Scripture*, NAC (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 1997), 224.

exemplarity of Job.[69] Moreover, the prophets are not the only exemplars that James offers in this regard. In the verses beforehand, James has offered an analogy[70] of the kind of patience that he is commanding his readers to practice. Just as the farmer awaits the rain to come in its season to water their crops, so too readers need to be patient during this time of trial and suffering (5:7-8).

Ὑπόδειγμα also appears in 2 Peter 2:6, as the designation for the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah, which function as negative examples of God's destruction of the ungodly. This negative use of ὑπόδειγμα demonstrates that the Catholic Epistles are capable of using technical mimetic language in presenting negative exemplars as well as positive.

A conceptually resonant passage to 2 Peter 2:6 is Jude 7, in which Sodom and Gomorrah are likewise presented as "examples" of destruction. However, Jude does not use the prefixed form ὑπόδειγμα, as 2 Peter 2 does, but instead the simpler form δεῖγμα (Jude 7). Thus, the resonances between 2 Peter 2:6 and Jude 7 are twofold: the use of a form of δεῖγμα and the presence of Sodom and Gomorrah as (negative) narrative exemplars. Jude, unlike 2 Peter, describes the cause of Sodom and Gomorrah's destruction as their "sexual immorality and the pursuit after other flesh" (ἐκπορνεύσασαι καὶ ἀπελθοῦσαι ὀπίσω σαρκὸς ἑτέρας, Jude 7). Given the clear resonances between Jude 7 and 2 Peter 2:6, the description of the sexual sin of Sodom and Gomorrah in Jude amplifies the sense that Sodom and Gomorrah's ungodliness is characterised by sexual sin in 2 Peter as well.[71]

The final two technical mimetic terms used in the Catholic Epistles, μιμέομαι and τύπος, are used by the authors not to describe the mimetic nature of a narrative exemplar presented in the text, but instead to directly commend imitation to the readers. At the close of his letter, in the opening verses of chapter 5, the author of 1 Peter turns to address

[69] Given the repetition of the macarism, and the exemplary nature ascribed to Job's endurance under suffering, the impetus of scholarship to identify James' Job as the Job of the inter-testamental document Testament of Job and not the Job of the canonical Job of the Old Testament is clear. See: Rodenbiker, "The persistent sufferer: the exemplar of Job in the Letter of James", 495-496.

[70] According to Bennema's categories, this should be regarded as an analogy, rather than an example of true mimetic teaching, as it does not fulfill the criterion of conscious exemplarity of the original actor (i.e. to be considering mimesis, the farmer would need to be waiting for the rains, in a conscious effort to be imitated by others).

[71] This is similar to our discussion of the false teaching of 2 Peter and Jude in the Case Study of the Opponent in Chapter 2. There we argued that the reader of the collection fills the doctrinal gap in Jude's description, with the parallel material in 2 Peter, as a result of the host of verbal resonances between them. Similarly here, the verbal repetition of Sodom and Gomorrah within the boundaries of the collection supports the reader's natural tendency to interpret the passages together.

the elders among his readers. He delivers a triad of prohibitions and commands (while exercising oversight, do not do so unwillingly [5:2b], greedily [5:2c] or domineeringly [5:3a], but willingly [5:2b], freely [5:2c] and exemplar-ly [5:3b]), which culminates in the command to be examples to the people in the congregation.[72] The text says τύποι γινόμενοι τοῦ ποιμνίου ("becoming examples to the flock"). The presence of the term τύπος locates this passage within the branch of our network which contains passages which use technical mimetic terms.

Additionally, this is the only time in the Catholic Epistles that the readers of a letter are commanded to become examples to others. The more common form of mimetic teaching in this collection, as we have seen above, involves the presentation of an exemplar, which is to be imitated by the readers in some way. Here, elders are directly commanded to be examples to others. This is not the first time we have encountered this phenomenon in the Catholic Epistles. In 2 Peter 2:2, analysed earlier for its use of the walking/following metaphor, the author identified one of his central concerns with the opponents as their tendency to be imitated by the readers, namely, that "many will follow their sensuality." 1 Peter's command to the elders to be examples to the flock, resonates with the description of 2 Peter's opponents as exemplars that others are following.

The final mimetic term employed in the Catholic Epistles is μιμέομαι, which appears in 3 John 11, in which the Elder commands Gaius to not imitate that which is evil, but instead that which is good. The command to not imitate evil, but good, is vague and undefined.[73] In the immediate context, many have noticed that these commands are surrounded by two individuals (Diotrephes [vv. 9-10] and Demetrius [v. 12]), who are evil and good respectively.[74] In this sense, "that which is evil" seems to be related to Diotrephes, and especially, his abuse of authority and denial of hospitality to those in need (v. 10). On the other hand, Demetrius represents "that which is good," on account of his hospitality extended to those in need (v. 12). The passage can even be arranged chiastically to further highlight the function of Diotrephes and Demetrius as the embodiment of "that which is evil/good".

[72] John H. Elliott, *1 Peter*, AB (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000), 809-811; Jobes, *1 Peter*, 304-306; Donald P. Senior, *1 Peter*, SP (Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 2003), 139-140, 143-144.
[73] Colin G. Kruse, *The Letters of John* PNTC (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000), 231.
[74] Kruse, *1-3 John*, 232; Daniel L. Akin, *1, 2, 3 John*, NAC (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 2001), 249-250; Bennema, *Mimesis*, 40.

A – Description of Diotrephes (vv. 9-10)
B – Do not imitate that which is evil (v. 11a)
B' – Imitate that which is good (v. 11b)
A' – Description of Demetrius (v. 12)[75]

The collocation of Diotrephes with "that which is evil" and Demetrius with "that which is good", functions to delimit the scope of the otherwise undefined mimetic command, and infuses it with a particular practical expression (namely, the practice of hospitality).[76]

In the context of the collection, however, another interpretive possibility emerges concerning the ambiguous command in 3 John 11. The undefined nature of the command can be understood as performing a summative function for the mimetic teaching of the Catholic Epistle collection as a whole. That is, the wide array of exemplars, both positive and negative, throughout the Catholic Epistles, amplifies the sense in which readers are to generally avoid imitating those who are evil (i.e. Sodom and Gomorrah, Cain, 2 Peter's opponents, and even Diotrephes, etc.), and to instead imitate those who are good (i.e. Lot, the elders of the congregation addressed by 1 Peter, Jesus Christ [to whom we will turn next], Job, and even Demetrius, etc.). If this is the case, the summative command of 3 John 11 to imitate "that which is good" would involve the imitation of positive exemplars within the Catholic Epistles, the most prominent of whom is Jesus Christ. Therefore, we turn now to consider the third and final branch of our network centred on 1 Peter 2:21, the imitation of Jesus Christ in the Catholic Epistle collection.

3.3.3 The imitatio Christi motif in the Catholic Epistle collection

In our brief analysis of 1 Peter 2:21 (§3.2), we saw that Jesus' passion functioned as an exemplar for the readers to imitate. Jesus is presented as an exemplar to be imitated in numerous other places within the collection as well. All of these other passages exist together within the branch of the network dedicated to the presence of the *imitatio Christi* motif which originated within 1 Peter 2:21. These passages will be explored in the following section. First, the narrative description of Jesus' passion in the verses immediately following 1 Peter 2:21 (namely, verses 22-23) has a number of correspondences within the remainder of 1 Peter, giving more concrete applications of

[75] This has been observed by: D. Edmond Hiebert, "Studies in 3 John (part 3): An Exposition of 3 John 11-14", *BSac* 144, no. 575 (1987): 295; Akin, *1, 2, 3 John*, 249; Brown, *1-3 John*, 720; Stephen S. Smalley, *1, 2, 3 John*, WBC, 51, Rev. ed. (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2007), 345.
[76] Kruse, *1-3 John*, 232; Bennema, *Mimesis*, 40.

the *imitatio Christi* motif presented in 1 Peter 2:21. Second, 1 Peter 4:1-2, while marred by interpretive issues, has two clear indicators that the *imitatio Christi* motif is operative. Finally, outside of 1 Peter, we will see that 1 John 3 and 4 are saturated with the *imitatio Christi* motif (cf. 3:2, 3, 7, 16; 4:17).

3.3.3.1 1 Peter 2:22-23 and Related Passages in 1 Peter

In 1 Peter 2:21, Jesus' willing endurance of suffering, culminating in the cross, is presented as the exemplar for imitation by the slaves that are being addressed. However, verse 21 is a largely a summative statement of how Jesus' passion is to function in the lives of 1 Peter's readers. It is verses 22 and 23 that present a narrative description of Jesus' endurance of suffering, which concretizes the imitation.[77] There are a number of correspondences between 1 Peter's description of Jesus' endurance of suffering in vv. 22-23 and the exhortations that are found throughout the rest of the epistle.[78]

Jesus' Passion		Exhortations for the Readers	
1 Peter 2:22b	οὐδὲ εὑρέθη **δόλος** ἐν τῷ στόματι αὐτοῦ	1 Peter 2:1	Ἀποθέμενοι οὖν πᾶσαν κακίαν καὶ πάντα **δόλον**…
		1 Peter 3:10	παυσάτω τὴν γλῶσσαν ἀπὸ κακοῦ καὶ χείλη τοῦ μὴ λαλῆσαι **δόλον**,
1 Peter 2:23a	ὃς **λοιδορούμενος** οὐκ **ἀντελοιδόρει**, πάσχων οὐκ ἠπείλει,	1 Peter 3:9	μὴ ἀποδιδόντες κακὸν ἀντὶ κακοῦ ἢ **λοιδορίαν ἀντὶ λοιδορίας**,
1 Peter 2:23b	παρεδίδου δὲ τῷ κρίνοντι δικαίως,	1 Peter 4:19	οἱ πάσχοντες … πιστῷ κτίστῃ παρατιθέσθωσαν τὰς ψυχὰς αὐτῶν

Figure 11 - Jesus' Passion and the Believer's Conduct in 1 Peter

The strongest of these resonances is between 1 Peter 2:23a and 3:9. According to 1 Peter (2:23a), when Jesus was insulted, he did not return insult (λοιδορούμενος οὐκ ἀντελοιδόρει). Which is precisely the behaviour that the readers are to imitate, when they are prohibited from insulting those who insult them in 3:9. Peter exhorts them to "not repay … insult in the place of insult" (μὴ ἀποδιδόντες … λοιδορίαν ἀντὶ λοιδορίας). The verbal correspondence here is clear, even though there is a shift from participial forms in 2:23a to nominal forms in 3:9. The λοίδορος root occurs twice in both passages, in conjunction with the ἀντί preposition (in 2:23, it is prefixed to the verb λοιδορεώ). Thus,

[77] Clifford Barbarick similarly emphasises the centrality of verse 21 in 1 Peter 2:21-25. Barbarick, "Theosis in 1 Peter", 295.

[78] Bennema's third criterion of a true mimetic passage is that the original act needs to be tangible and perceptible by the imitator. Peter makes Jesus' endurance of suffering (which is otherwise left undefined) tangible and perceptible in verses 22 and 23. See: Bennema, *Mimesis, 36.*

it seems that even though Jesus is not explicitly present in 3:9, his example presented earlier in 2:23a is formative to how Peter constructs his exhortation here. Such that, in the larger context of 1 Peter, the command of 3:9 represents an implicit exhortation to the imitation of Christ. First Peter is here teasing out the implications of his assertion that Jesus' passion functions as a stencil for the behaviour of the believer (2:21).

There is another significant correspondence between 1 Peter 2:23b and 4:19.[79] In 2:23, Peter tells us that Jesus, when he suffered, "entrusted (παρεδίδου) himself to the one who judges justly", and in 4:19, Peter exhorts his readers that those who suffer should "entrust (παρατιθέσθωσαν) their souls to their faithful Creator." The verbs here are different (although both have the παρα preposition prefixed, linking them together loosely at the verbal level). However, the conceptual overlap is enough to warrant considering 4:19 as an implicit command to the readers of 1 Peter to imitate Jesus' passion in their own willing endurance of suffering. [80] Just as Christ embraced his suffering by entrusting himself to God (2:23), so too believers are to embrace their suffering by entrusting their souls to their faithful Creator (4:19). This is another implicit instance of the *imitatio Christi* motif.

A final triangle of resonances exist between 1 Peter 2:22 (the saying that "deceit was not found in [Jesus'] mouth"), and the exhortations to the readers in 2:1 and 3:10. In 2:1 and 3:10 Peter urges his readers to avoid deceit using the same word (δόλος) as was used in 1 Peter 2:22. Additionally though, in 3:10, the exhortation is also paired with an anatomical body part, as was the case in the description of Christ in 2:22. In 2:22, no deceit was found in Jesus' "mouth" (στόματι), and in 3:10 the readers are exhorted to keep their "lips" (χείλη) from speaking deceit.[81] The addition of a piece of anatomy in which or by which deceit takes place (the mouth/lips) is not entirely necessary for the meaning of δόλος to be clear, as is demonstrated in 2:1, in which δόλος occurs absent from any anatomical references. Thus, the inclusion of the "lips" as the means through which deceit is spoken in 3:10 represents another level of correspondence between the

[79] The frequency of this observation is probably due to the fact that in many English translations of 1 Peter, παρεδίδου (2:23b) and παρατιθέσθωσαν (4:19) are both translated as "entrust", making the conceptual similarity between these passages appear as a verbal correspondence (ESV, HCSB, NASB, KJV). Therefore, the parallel goes: Jesus entrusted himself to God when he suffered, and so too, the readers ought to entrust themselves to God when they suffer. Conceptually, this is certainly what is going on here, but it obscures the verbal difference between 2:23b and 4:19.

[80] J. Ramsey Michaels, "St. Peter's passion: the passion narrative in 1 Peter", *WW* 24, no. 4 (2004): 392.

[81] This passage is in turn a portion of a larger quotation from Psalm 34:12-16.

behaviour of the believer and the passion of Jesus (2:22b) and thus, the mimetic sense of the passage increases.

We have demonstrated that 1 Peter 2:22-23 has correspondences throughout the rest of 1 Peter, such that Peter's description of Jesus' Passion functions repeatedly as the implicit exemplar that is to be imitated by the readers. This is precisely how the author of 1 Peter conceived of Jesus' passion functioning in the lives of his readers, according to the description of the imitation of Christ in the programmatic 2:21.

3.3.3.2 1 Peter 4:1-2

In addition to the correspondences between 1 Peter 2:22-23 and other passages in 1 Peter, 1 Peter 4:1-2, for all of its complexity, is another clear example of the *imitatio Christi* motif. It reads:

> [1]Χριστοῦ οὖν παθόντος σαρκὶ καὶ ὑμεῖς τὴν αὐτὴν ἔννοιαν ὁπλίσασθε, ὅτι ὁ παθὼν σαρκὶ πέπαυται ἁμαρτίας [2]εἰς τὸ μηκέτι ἀνθρώπων ἐπιθυμίαις ἀλλὰ θελήματι θεοῦ τὸν ἐπίλοιπον ἐν σαρκὶ βιῶσαι χρόνον.
> [1]Since therefore Christ suffered in the flesh, you also arm yourselves with the same thinking, because the one who suffered in the flesh has ceased from sin [2]to live the rest of the time no longer for human passions, but for the will of God.

There are a host of interpretive questions that present themselves in 1 Peter 4:1-2,[82] but for our purposes we note that the *imitatio Christi* motif is present here in two distinct ways. First, 1 Peter exhorts his readers to arm themselves with the same thinking as Christ. Which particular element of Christ's thinking is to be adopted by the readers is unclear, and depends largely on one's interpretation of the rest of the passage. Nevertheless, the command to adopt Christ's mindset is an explicit command to imitate Christ.

Second, just as Jesus suffered in the flesh (παθόντος σαρκί), Peter says that the readers suffer in the flesh (ὁ παθὼν σαρκί). The exact meaning of the reader's "suffering in the flesh" is unclear, but that 1 Peter assumes some level of correspondence between the experience of Jesus and that of the readers seems to be the central point of the passage. Strengthening the *imitatio Christi* motif here is the statement in verse 13 that the readers "Share in the sufferings of Christ" (κοινωνεῖτε τοῖς τοῦ Χριστοῦ παθήμασιν). While

[82] Craig S. Keener, *1 Peter: A Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2021), 289-290.

vexing issues remain in terms of 1 Peter 4:1-2, we have shown that the *imitatio Christi* motif is foundational to the passage. Moreover, in light of our above discussion (1 Peter 2:1, 21, 22-23; 3:9, 10; 4:1-2, 19), we could even say that it is a major foundation of the letter's ethical teaching as a whole. The kind of verbal correspondence that we have seen here in 1 Peter 4:1-2 and between 2:22-23 and a number of other passages in 1 Peter, which highlights the parallel nature of the actions of Christ and the actions of the readers, is also a major feature of the Johannine mimetic discourse as we will see now.

3.3.3.3 1 John 3 and 4

Extending our discussion of the *imitatio Christi* motif beyond 1 Peter, we turn now to 1 John. While chapters 3 and 4 are saturated with the *imitatio Christi* motif (3:2, 3, 7, 16; 4:17), we will see that the motif is used in a variety of different ways in these chapters. The only 'simple' exhortation to imitate Christ in these chapters comes in 3:16.

In 1 John 3:16, the author urges his readers towards a kind of love for their brothers and sisters that is of the same calibre as Jesus' love on the cross. 1 John 3:16 reads:

> [16]ἐν τούτῳ ἐγνώκαμεν τὴν ἀγάπην, ὅτι ἐκεῖνος ὑπὲρ ἡμῶν τὴν ψυχὴν αὐτοῦ ἔθηκεν, καὶ ἡμεῖς ὀφείλομεν ὑπὲρ τῶν ἀδελφῶν τὰς ψυχὰς θεῖναι.
> [16]By this we know love, that he laid down his life for us, and we ought to lay down our lives for the brothers.

The author expresses the reader's obligation to lay down their lives for one another (ἡμεῖς ὀφείλομεν ὑπὲρ τῶν ἀδελφῶν τὰς ψυχὰς θεῖναι, 3:16c) using the same language as the description of Jesus' death on their behalf (ἐκεῖνος[83] ὑπὲρ ἡμῶν τὴν ψυχὴν αὐτοῦ ἔθηκεν, 3:16b).[84] Indeed, the prior work of Christ on the cross seems to be the reason why the exhortation to lay down one's life for the sake of another, is expressed as an obligation (ὀφείλομεν) placed upon the believer rather than just an exhortation from the author. 1 John 2:6, a passage analysed earlier for its presentation of mimetic teaching that involves the walking/following metaphor, also expressed the imitation of Christ as an obligation

[83] The claim that the demonstrative pronoun ἐκεῖνος refers to Jesus is supported by virtually every commentator on 1 John. There are 7 occurrences of ἐκεῖνος in 1 John (2:6; 3:3, 5, 7, 16; 4:17; 5:16), and with the exception of 5:16 (which is a clear reference to the sin that leads to death), it is the scholarly majority that they all refer to Jesus. See: Bennema, *Mimesis*, 44, n. 26.

[84] The language of "laying down" (τίθημι) occurs also in John 13:4, in reference to Jesus laying down his clothes in order to take up a towel, with which he will wash his disciples' feet. Significantly, the Footwashing also functions mimetically in the Gospel of John (cf. John 13:15).

using the verb ὀφείλεω. This shared use of ὀφείλεω in 1 John 2:6 and 3:16 creates a resonance that cuts across the otherwise divergent branches of the mimetic network (walking/following metaphor and the *imitatio Christi* motif or the use of a narrative exemplar) which are being sketched in this chapter.

While the presence of mimesis in this passage is clear, the exact nature of the imitation is worth exploring, because there are precious few instances in which a believer might be able to give their lives in the sacrificial way that Jesus did on behalf of another believer.[85] Nonetheless, even granting the theoretical situation in which a believer can or perhaps does give their life on behalf of another, this would not be of the same nature as Jesus' death on the cross, which plays a distinctive theological role in salvation, securing "propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the sins of the whole world." (1 John 2:2) Thus, as an event in salvation history, the cross is inimitable.[86] However, as an action of self-sacrificial humility and love, the cross is presented as being exemplary for readers. Thus, the imitation of Jesus that John insists upon here is not an exact replication of Jesus' death, but a faithful articulation of the principle undergirding that death.[87]

The very next verse (1 John 3:17) presents an illustration of this principle of self-giving love in action, in which a believer in financial destitution comes to another believer who has the means to assist them.[88] This illustration is helpful in identifying the kind of behaviour that might qualify as imitation of Jesus' self-giving love on the cross. That is, just as Jesus sacrificially and lovingly gave of himself on the cross (3:16a-b), so too

[85] Bennema presents an extended discussion concerning what kind of mimesis is in view in this passage (and other Johannine passages like this, esp. John 13:15 and the Footwashing). Does John expect his readers to precisely replicate Jesus' actions (i.e. lay down their lives on a cross or physically wash each other's feet) or to creatively and faithfully articulate them in a new way (i.e. supporting those in need out of their own means, cf. 1 John 3:17, and serving others in humble and meaningful ways)? See: Bennema, *Mimesis*, 91-105 (the focus of this discussion is the Foot washing of John 13, however, the conclusion makes clear that these principles are valid for mimesis in the Johannine Literature more generally).

[86] Michael Jensen solves this problem by suggesting that in the New Testament it is only Christ's mindset that believers are to imitate. He argues that it is possible to uphold Christ's uniqueness (pp. 29-31) and imitate him (pp. 31-33), because "the imitation that [Paul] enjoins is part of a whole orientation of the mind in a Christ-ward direction." Michael P. Jensen, "Imitating Paul, imitating Christ: how does imitation work as a moral concept?", *Chm* 124, no. 1 (2010): 31.

[87] The language of "exact replication" and "creative/faithful articulation" comes from Bennema's discussion of these principles. Bennema, *Mimesis*, 91-105.

[88] This passage is treated again in connection to James 2:15-16, which offers a similar illustration, in chapter 4.

believers are to give of themselves sacrificially and lovingly for others (3:16c), in instances such as those who need financial support (3:17).

Interestingly, the other passages in these chapters (3:2, 3, 7 and 4:17) that contain the *imitatio Christi* motif do not utilise it in an explicitly hortatory fashion, as 3:16 does. We will treat 3:2 and 4:17 first, because they both relate the imitation of Christ to the believer's existence in quite a general fashion, in what Bennema calls "existential mimesis."[89] Verses 3:2 and 4:17 describe believers as participating in the imitation of Christ by nature of their adoption as "the children of God" (νῦν τέκνα θεοῦ ἐσμεν, 3:2). That is, these passages do not exhort believers to imitate Jesus, but declare that believers do imitate Jesus in this world (4:17) and will imitate Jesus at the Parousia (3:2).

1 John 4:17 reads, "we may have confidence on the day of judgement, because just as he is, we also are in this world." (παρρησίαν ἔχωμεν ἐν τῇ ἡμέρᾳ τῆς κρίσεως, ὅτι καθὼς ἐκεῖνός ἐστιν καὶ ἡμεῖς ἐσμεν ἐν τῷ κόσμῳ τούτῳ) The text does not specify in what ways the believer is like Jesus (unlike 3:16),[90] however given the context in chapter 4, one might assume that the imitation is somewhat connected to love. If the imitation is also centred on love, it would explain why it leads to confidence on the day of judgement. Because in 1 John, love for others is a sure sign that one has participated in the love that God has for them in Christ Jesus (cf. 4:10-12). If one has participated in the love of God, then they have been "purified from all sin" and "unrighteousness" (1 John 1:7, 9), and thus, have nothing to fear on the day of judgement (cf. 4:16-18).

In the other existential passage, 1 John 3:2, the author tells the readers that when Jesus appears, they "will be like him, because [they] will see him, just as he is" (ὅμοιοι αὐτῷ ἐσόμεθα, ὅτι ὀψόμεθα αὐτόν, καθώς ἐστιν). Here, in a similar way to 4:17, the author is not commanding his readers to imitate Jesus, but rather declaring that at Jesus' Parousia, the imitation process, that was begun "in this world" (4:17) will be brought to completion, for they shall be like him (3:2).[91] Again like 4:17, 1 John 3:2 does not specify

[89] Bennema, *Mimesis*, 60-61.

[90] On multiple occasions, 1 John discusses ἐκεῖνος, without clear indication whether it is speaking of Jesus, God, or even someone else. Most scholars universally read ἐκεῖνος as a referent to Jesus at each occasion (see, n. 80 above), Bennema however contends that ἐκεῖνος in 1 John 4:17 is the only instance in which ἐκεῖνος refers to God.

[91] Bennema shows awareness that 3:2 is of a different order to the majority of the other believer-Jesus mimetic passages in 1 John. He describes it as the difference between Mimesis and Resemblance, saying, "Although the essence of the verse is clear – believers will be transformed at the Parousia – the difficult

in what way believers will imitate Jesus at his eschatological coming, simply stating that "they will be like him".[92] However, the logic of 3:2 and 3:3 (to be explored momentarily) suggests that holiness and/or righteousness is in view. While the scope of mimetic activity in 1 John 3:2 and 4:17 is largely undefined, these verses clearly present the imitation of Christ as a reality in which believers do and will participate.[93] Therefore, these passages contribute to the developing network of passages which express the imitation of Christ in the Catholic Epistles.

1 John 3:3 and 3:7 present two more instances of the imitation of Christ which are, again, not hortatory, but declarative of the reality of the believer's life.

1 John 3:3	1 John 3:7
πᾶς ὁ ἔχων τὴν ἐλπίδα ταύτην ἐπ' αὐτῷ ἁγνίζει ἑαυτόν, **καθὼς ἐκεῖνος ἁγνός ἐστιν**.	ὁ ποιῶν τὴν δικαιοσύνην δίκαιός ἐστιν, **καθὼς ἐκεῖνος δίκαιός ἐστιν**·
Everyone who has this hope in him sanctifies themselves, just as he is sanctified.	The one who practices righteousness is righteous, just as he is righteous.

Figure 12 - Verbal Resonances between 1 John 3:3 and 3:7

The apodoses of 3:3 and 3:7 bear a striking level of verbal correspondence to one another. Indeed, these clauses are identical with the exception of the adjective, which shifts between ἁγνός (sanctified, 3:3)[94] and δίκαιος (righteous, 3:7).

issue is whether this transformation is one of resemblance (believers will seem like Jesus) or contains a mimetic element (believers will be like Jesus)." Bennema, *Mimesis*, 54. The difference is better understood, though, as the difference between an exhortation (3:16) and a declaration (3:2).

[92] According to our analysis above, the logic of 3:2-3 leads to the conclusion that holiness is the nature of the existential mimesis of Jesus. However, in the context of the collection another possibility emerges. The ambiguous nature of "being like him" in 3:2 and 4:17 may function as what Russell Pregeant calls a "global allusion" to "the whole of what our author perceives Jesus to have believed, said and done." Thus, in the Catholic Epistle collection, it could encompass Jesus' suffering (1 Peter 2:22-23), his perfection (1 Peter 4:1-2), his love (1 John 4:17), his death (1 John 3:16), his sanctity (1 John 3:3) and even his righteousness (1 John 3:7). Russell Pregeant, *Knowing Truth, Doing Good: Engaging New Testament Ethics* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2008), 291.

[93] One of Bennema's key criteria for determining if a passage is mimetic, is that the original act to be imitated needs to be tangible and perceptible, p. 35-37. However, his discussions of 3:2 and 4:17 (on pp. 54 and 49, respectively) claim that both are examples of mimetic ethics, and yet, show no awareness of the fact that these passages have no original act at all that is to be imitated by the readers. Thus, on his own definition, these passages cannot be mimetic in nature.

[94] From 1 John 3:3, we could launch a brand-new exploration of the collection, to explore the boundaries of what we could infer "sanctify themselves, as that one is sanctified," might involve. We could highlight the corrupting influence of 2 Peter's opponents (cf. 2 Peter 2:2, 14, 18-19; 3:17). Thus, the statement that believers purify themselves is encountered amidst the temptations of the false teachers. The false teachers are particularly related to sexual sin (2:2, 10, 14, 18), and narrative exemplars who are particularly characterised by sexual sin as well (the Watchers [2 Peter 2:4 and Jude 6] and Sodom and Gomorrah [2 Peter 2:6 and Jude 7]). In this light, the narrative exemplar of Lot surfaces as of particular importance. Just as Jesus "sanctified himself" (1 John 3:3b), so too Lot "tormented himself on account of the sensual conduct of the wicked." (2 Pet 2:7) 2 Peter 2:8 continues to describe Lot and his purity amongst a word of impurity, making Lot the most developed character in 2 Peter's wide array of narrative exemplars. These connections could then be taken through to other places in the collection where exhortations to purity or sanctity are

Similarly to 1 John 3:2 and 4:17, these passages are not explicit exhortations to the imitation of Christ, as much as declarations that those who hope in Jesus (3:3) and are righteous (3:7) are imitators of Jesus. In this sense, 1 John 3:16 stands out within the Johannine Epistles as the sole direct exhortation concerning the imitation of Christ. In 3:16, the believer's sacrificial love towards others is commanded upon the logical foundation of the prior sacrificial love of Jesus for the believer ("he laid down his life for us, and we also ought to lay down …"), such that the former cannot exist without the latter. However, in the other passages, the believer's imitation of Jesus is not something commanded, but is understood as an integral part of the believer's unity with Jesus through faith.

3.3.3.4 Conclusion

In these discussions, we have seen that the three nodes around which the mimesis of 1 Peter 2:21 revolve are present throughout the Catholic Epistle collection. We found that the walking/following imagery is used often to support the mimetic teaching of a passage. This mimesis is also regularly communicated by means of mimetic terms or syntactical constructions which indicate the presence of mimesis. Especially in the *imitatio Christi* passages examined above, we saw a tendency to connect the actions of the reader to the actions of Jesus by means of verbal correspondences. All of these elements signal the presence of mimetic teaching in a given passage. We will now use these signals as criteria against which to assess a recent suggestion concerning the presence of mimetic material in James 2:1.

3.4 Russell Pregeant and James 2:1

Up until this point, our discussion has offered a way to broaden the existing discussion on mimesis in three ways: first, providing a way to unify Bennema's and Rodenbiker's competing approaches to the topic (in response to the call of Horn); second, highlighting the importance of an often-overlooked metaphor for imitation (walking/following); and, third, admitting a new passage into the conversation (1 John 1:7). The capacity of the collective approach to embrace new potential connections is a

found. James 1:26-27 and Jude 23 stand out amongst these (cf. 1 Peter 1:15; 4:3-4; 2 Peter 2:13; 3:14; Jude 12) as resonant with 1 John 3:3 and 2 Peter 2:6-7.

strength of the approach. However, it does raise the issue of whether the collective approach provides any constraints concerning what material should be included and what material should be excluded from the discussion. Thus, we now turn to Russell Pregeant's recent suggestion that James 2:1 presents an instance of the *imitatio Christi* motif.

The Epistle of James is infamous for its lack of christological teaching.[95] Unsurprisingly, James' ethical teaching has not escaped criticism on this front.[96] Schrage remarks that:

> Apart from James 2:1, there is no hint of a specifically Christian or christological foundation.[97] This is not to suggest that the epistle is dominated by the notion of merit or that the author was unaware that Christians had been accepted by grace (cf. 1:17). But this realization is not utilised as a foundation for ethics and there is no trace of it in the central section of the epistle, 2:14ff.[98]

More recently though, Russell Pregeant has mounted a two-part argument suggesting that James' ethics are actually more christological than previously thought.[99]

His first argument is a literary one. He suggests that the Epistle of James is a pseudepigraphical epistle, in which "the author adopted the persona of James the Just and passed on sayings from the Jesus tradition as those of James."[100] In this vein, Pregeant argues that the author's claim to being the κυρίου Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ δοῦλος (Jas 1:1) "forg[es] a connection between the authorial voice and that of Jesus."[101] This is all, in Pregeant's view, part of the author's strategy to provide "a christological foundation for his ethics," by passing on Jesus' teaching, "not in the form of references to the past, but as a living word for the present."[102]

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[95] Richard Burridge, in his 2007 volume on Imitating Jesus and New Testament Ethics, simply does not even include James (or the other Catholic Epistles, for that matter) in his treatment. An omission which this chapter has demonstrated is a grave oversight. See: §2.2.1.3.

[96] Wolfgang Schrage describes James' ethical teaching as having a "deficient foundation and motivation." Schrage, *Ethics*, 281.

Willi Marxsen offers a similar critique when he says, "Because Christology is completely missing… the writer of James does not offer a genuinely Christian ethic." Marxsen, *Foundations for Ethics*, 263.

[97] It should be stated that even though Schrage suggests that James 2:1 provides a christological foundation for the ethical teaching of James, he does not suppose that it is anything as developed as the imitation of Christ. Instead, he understands James 2:1 as the suggestion that favouritism is incompatible with one's faith in Jesus. See: Schrage, *Ethics*, 282.

[98] Schrage, *Ethics*, 281.

[99] Pregeant, *Knowing Truth, Doing Good*, 290-292.

[100] Pregeant, *Knowing Truth, Doing Good*, 292.

[101] Pregeant, *Knowing Truth, Doing Good*, 292.

[102] Pregeant, *Knowing Truth, Doing Good*, 291.

Pregeant's basic hypothesis here is very similar to John Kloppenborg's more developed discussion.[103] Kloppenborg suggests that the author of James was engaging in the Greco-Roman practice of what he calls "paraphrasing", but was known as *aemulatio*.[104] By means of this practice, Kloppenborg is able to account for the significant amount of conceptual overlap between the teachings of the historical Jesus and the Epistle of James (which he argues is mistakenly understood by many scholars as "allusion"), the lack of verbal connections between the Jesus tradition and James, and the lack of attribution to the Jesus tradition within James. If Kloppenborg is right, then it can be said that rather than containing the *imitatio Christi* motif in its teaching, the Epistle of James has embodied the imitation of Christ in its very mode of communication.[105] Our own interests lie with how the ethics of James, and the other Catholic Epistles, use mimesis in their moral discourse, rather than how their composition might have been informed by pre-existing material, such as Jesus tradition.

Pregeant's second argument, to demonstrate that James' ethics have christological foundations, concerns the occurrence of τὴν πίστιν τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ in James 2:1. He argues that this is a subjective genitive, rather than an objective genitive.[106] Thus, for Pregeant, James 2:1 does not mean, "Do not show favouritism because it is inconsistent with genuine faith in Jesus Christ," but rather, "Do not show favouritism because it is inconsistent with the faith practiced by Jesus Christ."[107]

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[103] John S. Kloppenborg, "The Reception of the Jesus Tradition in James", in *The Catholic Epistles and Apostolic Tradition: A New Perspective on James to Jude*, eds. K.-W. Niebuhr and R. W. Wall (Waco: Baylor University Press, 2009), 80-88. For a detailed history of research, see: p. 72-80. Published previously as: John S. Kloppenborg, "The Reception of the Jesus Tradition in James", in *The Catholic Epistles and the Tradition*, BETL, 176, ed. S. J. (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 2004).

[104] Kloppenborg provides numerous examples of this practice from Greco-Roman school textbooks, Kloppenborg, "Reception of Jesus Tradition in James", 80-88.

[105] That is, *imitatio Christi* as *Aemulatio Christi*.

[106] Patrick Hartin, 5 years before the work of Pregeant, inhabits the scholarly minority, adopting the subjective genitive interpretation of 2:1. Additionally, unlike Pregeant, Hartin expressly connects the subjective genitive interpretation to the concept of imitation. He says, "The faith to which James refers is Jesus' faithfulness to his Father's will through the obedience of his life. This faithfulness operates as an example for the lives of believers: a faithfulness demonstrated in actions." He goes on to point out that the foundation for the prohibition against favouritism in the biblical tradition is normally the impartiality of God (he points to Deuteronomy 10:17; Romans 2:11 and 1 Peter 1:17), however, here "James develops the foundation in a christological direction… for James, Jesus' whole life becomes an example of faithfulness for the believer to emulate." Patrick J. Hartin, *James*, SP, 14 (Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 2003), 117 and 129.

[107] These translations/paraphrases of James 2:1, illustrating the difference between the subjective and objective understanding of the genitive are from: Christopher W. Morgan, *A Theology of James: Wisdom for God's People*, EBT, ed. R. A. Peterson (Phillipsburg: P&R, 2010), 154.

This is certainly a minority reading of James 2:1. The objective genitive understanding of James 2:1 is the prevailing understanding of all English translations and the majority of scholarship.[108] Indeed, the objective genitive interpretation of this passage is so prevalent that Daniel Wallace lists James 2:1 as one of only "three *clear* instances" of πίστις with a personal objective genitive in the New Testament.[109] In the same way, Darian Lockett says, "James couches the command to love the neighbour (Jas 2:8) within a discussion of the incommensurability of showing partiality and faith in Jesus Christ (Jas 2:1)."[110]

Nonetheless, Pregeant argues that it is not the reader's status as believers in Jesus Christ or a mere cognitive belief in Jesus that is to act as the deterrent against acts of partiality. Rather, it is the impartiality demonstrated in Jesus' faithfulness (to the law, cf. James 2:8-11) in his earthly life (i.e. a subjective genitive) that is to motivate the readers towards impartiality. If Pregeant is correct, then James' exhortation to impartiality is really an exhortation to imitate the faith of the earthly Jesus, as it was active in his equal treatment of the rich and poor. This suggestion is what we will now evaluate.

In favour of Pregeant's suggestion is the work of Suzan Sierksma-Agteres on the intentional ambiguity of the phrase πίστις Χριστοῦ.[111] Sierskma-Agteres, on the basis of the use of πίστις-language in ancient philosophy concludes that:

> The philosophical quest does not merely involve imaginary relationships of imitation, but real-life *Nachfolgung* of school leaders… It is within this real-life philosophical education that the vocabulary of faith and trust finds a 'natural habitat',

[108] Davids, *James*, 107; Moo, *James*, 100; Craig L. Blomberg and Miriam J. Kamell, *James*, ZECNT (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2008), 106; Chris A. Vlachos, *James*, EGGNT (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 2013), 68; Morgan, *Theology of James*, 154; Lockett, *Letters for the Church*, 213.

[109] Daniel B. Wallace, *Greek Grammar Beyond the Basics: an Exegetical Syntax of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1996), 118, emphasis original.

[110] Lockett, *Letters for the Church*, 213.

[111] Even though Sierksma-Agteres' work is primarily in reference to the Pauline Epistles, her discussion of the ancient philosophical schools is equally applicable to James 2:1. She argues that the ambiguity of the phrase *pistis Christou* is intentional and mirrored in ancient philosophical contexts: citing Cicero, Quintilian, Plutarch, Valerius Maximus, Dionsyius of Halicarnassus, Epictetus, Aristotle, Seneca and Epicurus.

She also says, "In reference to Christ, *pistis*-language seems to form the basis for a relationship of imitation and identification, including his faith in resurrection and faithfulness towards God." (p. 141) Again, it is clear that Sierksma-Agteres is maintaining the ambiguity of the *pistis Christou* phrase, while also advancing the argument that it concerns imitation specifically. Suzan J. M. Sierksma-Agteres, "Imitation in faith: enacting Paul's ambiguous pistis Christou formulations on a Greco-Roman stage", *IJPT* 77, no. 3 (2016): 119-153.

> sometimes as attitude towards an exemplar, yet mostly as one of the qualities to imitate.[112]

Here, Sierskma-Agteres maintains the potential ambiguity of πίστις in James 2:1 (it could represent one's attitude towards an exemplar or it could represent one of the qualities for imitation), but argues that in either instance, exemplarity and imitation is involved.

Additionally, as noted earlier, while the Catholic Epistles present a range of narrative exemplars, Abraham in James 2:21-23 is the only one whose faith is ever discussed. James 2:21-23 is in quite close proximity to our passage (2:1), and since Abraham's faith is the only other person's faith that is described in the collection, the function of Abraham and his faith should be considered in our analysis of "the faith of Jesus" (2:1). It seems that Abraham's faith, which was exemplified in his work of offering up his son Isaac, is an example of the kind of active faith that is required of the readers. Conceptually then, the exemplary nature of Abraham's faith in James 2:21-23 amplifies the interpretive potential that Jesus' faith is also exemplary in 2:1. Particularly given the prevalence of general mimetic teaching in the Catholic Epistles, and the imitation of Christ in particular, the suggestion that James 2:1 represents another instance of the imitation of Christ becomes all the more possible.

Further support for this suggestion may be deduced from the famous "faith and works" discussion (2:14-26), which directly follows our passage (2:1-13). The basic point of 2:14-26 seems to be that "faith on its own, if it does not have works, is dead" (2:17). James' argument that faith requires works in 2:14-26 undermines the suggestion that the "faith" in 2:1 refers merely to a cognitive belief in Jesus. For James, such a minimal account of πίστις hardly suits his broader argument. James' sense of an active faith in 2:14-26 coheres better with a subjective genitive reading of 2:1, in which τὴν πίστιν τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ indicates something that Jesus *does,* rather than something that the Christian *has.*

On the other hand though, it is said in 2:1 that this "faith" is something that is possessed by the subject of the exhortation. James 2:1 reads: "My brothers, do not with partiality hold the faith…" (Ἀδελφοί μου, μὴ ἐν προσωπολημψίαις ἔχετε τὴν πίστιν…) The prepositional phrase ἐν προσωπολημψίαις, inserted between the prohibitive particle (μὴ) and the imperatival verb (ἔχετε) implies that it is possible to "hold the faith" while

[112] Sierksma-Agteres, "Imitation in Faith", 125.

showing partiality, a possibility that the author is prohibiting his readers from practicing. This suggests that the focus of 2:1 is not on the nature of the faith which Jesus practiced, but instead, on the manner in which the subjects are holding their own faith in Jesus. This would mean that τὴν πίστιν τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ is an objective genitive and 2:1 is not an example of the *imitatio Christi* motif.

In other words, on internal grounds alone, adjudicating between the subjective and objective reading of τὴν πίστιν τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ is very difficult. In the context of the collection, I argue that the network which has been traced in this chapter does not support the suggestion that James 2:1 is mimetic. As we have seen above, the Catholic Epistles regularly signal their mimetic teaching through: the use of the walking/following metaphor, and/or the use of lexical terms or syntactical constructions that support the mimetic thrust of the passage. Additionally, in instances where the *imitatio Christi* motif is present (without the walking imagery or a lexical indicator of mimesis), there is normally a level of verbal correspondence, in the context, between the exhortation and the description of Jesus which alerts the reader to the exemplary nature of Jesus' actions. These are the hallmarks of mimetic teaching in the Catholic Epistles.

Significantly, none of these hallmarks are present in James 2:1. The walking/following metaphor is absent; there are no technical mimetic terms or syntactical constructions observed elsewhere; and, there are no clear verbal correspondences between way in which Jesus "held" his faith and the way in which the reader is to "hold" their faith. Moreover, while Abraham's faith does function mimetically as an exemplar in 2:21-23, there are no syntactic correlations between the presentation of Abraham's faith and the presentation of Jesus' faith in James 2:1. To be sure, the absence of these features from James 2:1 does not definitively demonstrate that πίστις in 2:1 is an objective genitive, which consequently does not communicate mimesis. However, it does suggest that the potential of interpreting James 2:1 mimetically is not an interpretive option that is amplified by the context of the collection.

3.5 Conclusion

This chapter has accomplished three distinct things. First, we established that mimesis is a prominent feature upon the landscape of moral discourse in the Catholic Epistles. More than that, however, by approaching the Catholic Epistles as a collection,

we have been able to answer the call of Friedrich Horn, to provide a fuller account of mimesis in these letters. Whereas, on the one hand, Bennema's discussion of mimesis is limited to passages in which technical mimetic terms or certain syntactical constructions occur, and on the other, Rodenbiker's is focused upon the narrative exemplars present in the text, our discussion has been able to draw both of those threads together into a single network of associated passages concerning mimesis. Our network of associations was built around three nodes of mimetic teaching present in 1 Peter 2:21 and the larger collection: the use of narrative exemplars, the use of explicit mimetic terms and the use of the walking metaphor. By reading the Catholic Epistles as a collection and tracing out the network of associations that exist within the collection's teaching on mimesis, it was possible to analyse all three nodes simultaneously.

Second, in addition to drawing together these two strands of scholarship, by placing the mimetic passages of the Catholic Epistles into a network of associations, we were able to identify a largely neglected motif of mimetic teaching in the Catholic Epistles: the use of the walking metaphor. This metaphor did not only occur in the initial passage of our network (1 Peter 2:21), but also in 2 Peter 2:2, 15; 1 John 1:7; 2:6 and Jude 11. The use of this metaphor in 1 John 1:7 enabled us to include this passage within the purview of our study, whereas Bennema excluded it within his strictly lexical framework.

Third, our network of associations provided a new evaluative framework for proposals concerning mimetic teaching in the Catholic Epistles. We performed just such an evaluation of Russel Pregeant's suggestion that James 2:1 is an example of the *imitatio Christi* motif. We concluded that while the collection conceptually supports James 2:1 as an example of the *imitatio Christi* motif, none of the hallmarks of mimesis in the Catholic Epistles are present, suggesting that this is not an interpretive option amplified by the collection.

In this way, this chapter has demonstrated a key hermeneutical feature of our collective approach. Not only does the collective approach offer a means by which various proposals can exist together (i.e. Bennema and Rodenbiker, answering the call of Horn), and new passages (i.e. 1 John 1:7) and metaphors (i.e. walking/following) can be included in the discussion, but it also functions to provide delimitations to that same theme. Having traced a network of resonances around the motif of imitation in the Catholic Epistles, we were able to then evaluate Pregeant's suggestion against the criteria

suggested by the collection. In other words, we demonstrated that the collective approach does not lend credibility to any and all interpretive options. The ability to use the collective approach to not only admit new evidence into the discussion, but also to preclude the acceptance of certain suggestions is a strength of the approach.

4 Love in the Catholic Epistle Collection

4.1 Introduction

In the previous chapter, we explored the teaching of the Catholic Epistle collection concerning a prominent ethical concept in the ancient world, imitation (*mimesis*). This chapter will take up the motif of love in the Catholic Epistles. This has been selected because it is an ongoing area of interest within the scholarship on the Catholic Epistles, especially 1 John. As we will see below, 1 John's notion of love is routinely understood as intracommunal in its scope, which is symptomatic of the larger sectarianism that is recognised as present within the Johannine Community. From a methodological point of view, therefore, the purpose of this chapter is to explore how the collective approach might contribute to an existing scholarly debate.

The love command is perhaps most famously known in its Levitical form of "Love your neighbour as yourself" (Lev 19:18). This form of the love command (with "neighbour" as the object) is only present once in the Catholic Epistles (James 2:8). However, other forms of a love command, with different recipients, permeate the collection. Readers are commanded to: love "one another" (1 Pet 1:22; 4:8; 1 John 3:11, 23; 4:7, 11-12; 2 John 5), love "the brotherhood" (1 Pet 2:17), love "the brother/s" (1 John 4:20-21), love "the children of God" (1 John 5:2) love "God" (Jas 1:12; 2:5; 1 Pet 1:8; 1 John 4:20-21; 5:1, 2) and even just to "love" (2 Pet 1:7; 1 John 4:8, 19). Additionally, there are numerous passages throughout the collection where love for God or others occurs in a non-hortatory, more descriptive way (e.g. James 1:12; 2:5; 1 Pet 1:8; 3:8; 2 Pet 1:7; 1 John 2:10; 3:10, 14, 18; 4:7-12, 16-21; 5:11; 2 John 6).[1]

[1] The inclusion of these passages which discuss love but do so in more descriptive ways raises the question of the scope of this chapter. Victor Furnish, in his landmark 1972 book *The Love Command in the New Testament* differentiated his approach from that of his predecessors. In Furnish's words, while they "cut a broad swathe through *all* aspects of 'love' in the New Testament… none focuses as such on the love command." Thus, the objective of Furnish's work is "considerably more limited than that which guided Moffatt, Warnach and Spicq. It focuses on the love *ethic*, the love *command*," rather than love more broadly. Victor Paul Furnish, *The Love Command in the New Testament* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1972), 15-21.

I contend that Furnish's restriction of treating only commands to love and not more general teaching concerning love present in the same documents is an artificial one. Moreover, his suggestion that "the love ethic" is to be somehow equated with the "the love command" is unhelpful. There is a vast amount of teaching on love in these letters that is not in the form a direct command. On this point, Ruben Zimmermann's *Implicit Ethics* framework is a helpful remedy. Ruben Zimmermann, *The Logic of Love: Discovering Paul's "Implicit Ethics" through 1 Corinthians*, trans. D. T. Roth (Lanham: Fortress, 2018).

This chapter will proceed by first outlining the state of scholarship concerning the problem of love in the Johannine Epistles. Then, we will trace a network of associations, beginning with James 2:8 through the rest of the collection. James 2:8 has been selected, because as noted above, it is the only place in which the traditional Levitical form of the Love Command appears. From this point, the network will sprawl across the collection, travelling along the branches of the verbal and conceptual resonances. Finally, we will map this network of associations onto the issue of love in the Johannine Epistles, in order to explore how the network, which is both generated by the collection and external to it, offers new insight to the critical issue.

4.2 The Nature of Love in the Johannine Epistles: The Status Quaestionis

4.2.1 The Primacy of Johannine Love

We saw above that love is a significant motif within the Catholic Epistle collection, but it has a certain prominence in 1 John. In 1 John, language related to love (namely, ἀγάπη and its cognate verb ἀγαπάω) occurs 46 times.[2] Considering the relative brevity of 1 John, standing at only 2,137 words long, this frequency of occurrences of 'love' language is remarkably high.[3] For the sake of comparison, Paul's letter to the Galatians is roughly the same length, and yet these 'love' words only occur 5 times. The sheer volume of occurrences of this language in 1 John indicates the primacy of love in 1 John and the pervasiveness of the theme throughout the letter.

To further illustrate the richness of 1 John's teaching on love, we note three features of the discussion that are unique to 1 John within the Catholic Epistle collection. First, 1 John 4:8 and 16 both predicate God as love in the parallel statements ὁ θεὸς ἀγάπη ἐστίν ("God is love"). In addition to these constructions, we note a particularly close relationship between God and love expressed elsewhere in the book (ἡ ἀγάπη τοῦ θεοῦ in 1 John 2:5; 3:17; 4:9; 5:3; cf. ἡ ἀγάπη τοῦ πατρός in 1 John 2:15 and ἡ ἀγάπη αὐτοῦ in 4:12, with the antecedent of αὐτοῦ clearly being θεὸς from earlier in the verse). With the exception of Jude 21 ("keep yourselves in the love of God," ἑαυτοὺς ἐν ἀγάπῃ θεοῦ τηρήσατε), such genitive phrases involving "love" are unique among the Catholic

[2] This statistic, and the Galatians frequency below, were calculated with the use of Accordance, using the Nestle-Aland 28th Edition of the Greek Text.
[3] John Painter, *1, 2 and 3 John*, SP (Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 2008), 35.

Epistles. Second, 1 John speaks of love as both a locality in which someone can "abide" (μένω) and as an agent that can "abide" in someone (1 John 3:17; 4:16). Attributing agency to love and describing it as a locality is unique among the Catholic Epistles. Finally, 1 John also speaks of the reader's ability to perfect love (1 John 2:5; 4:12, 17-18) and be perfected by love (1 John 4:18). In light of both the high frequency of "love" terminology in 1 John and the rich diversity of its teaching on love, it is ironic that historically it is the critical deficiencies of Johannine love that have been the subject of analysis, rather than the richness and variety of its teaching on love.

4.2.2 The Scope of Johannine Love: A Critique

Jack Sanders describes Johannine love as "morally bankrupt" because of its intra-communal focus, a description which encapsulates the scholarly consensus well. [4] He says that the "consistent use of the term, 'one another', in place of 'neighbour' is a conscious delimiting of the scope of love."[5] From a diachronic perspective, Sanders identifies that: the Levitical (and consequently, Jacobean) love for one's "neighbour" (cf. Lev 19:18), Jesus' love for "enemies" (cf. Matt 5:43-44)[6] and Paul's love for "all" (cf. 1 Thess 3:6) "does not appear in the Johannine literature."[7] Instead, the author explicitly only exhorts

[4] The field of Johannine Ethics has only recently been reinvigorated. With the publication of two collections of essays in 2012 and 2017. Van Der Watt and Zimmermann (eds.), *Rethinking the Ethics of John: Implicit Ethics in the Johannine Writings*; Brown and Skinner (eds.), *Johannine Ethics: The Moral World of the Gospel and Epistles of John*.

These two publications argue against the conventional view that the Johannine Epistles have little to offer those interested in ethics. Wolfgang Schrage, in what later became one of the most prominent works on the ethics of the New Testament, opened his chapter on 1 John with the following comment: "We may ask whether a chapter on the Johannine writings even belongs in a book on the ethics of the New Testament."[4] Schrage, *Ethics*, 297. See also the history of scholarships presented in: Michael Labahn, ""It's Only Love" - Is that all? Limits and Potentials of Johannine Ethics - A Critical Evaluation of Research", in *Rethinking the Ethics of John: Implicit Ethics in the Johannine Writings*, WUNT, 291, eds. J. Van Der Watt and R. Zimmermann (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2012), 3-43; Ruben Zimmermann, "Is there Ethics in the Gospel of John? Challenging an Outdated Consensus", in *Rethinking the Ethics of John: Implicit Ethics in the Johannine Writings*, WUNT, 291, eds. J. Van Der Watt and R. Zimmermann (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2012), 44-80; Christopher W. Skinner, "(How) Can we Talk about Johannine Ethics? Looking Back and Moving Forward", in *Johannine Ethics: The Moral World of the Gospel and Epistles of John*, eds. S. Brown and C. W. Skinner (Augsburg: Fortress, 2017), xvii-xxxvi.

[5] Sanders, *Ethics*, 91.

[6] The absence of Jesus' love for one's enemy is particularly striking, given the insistence of 1 John 1:1-3 that the text is based on apostolic experience of Jesus' words and deeds.

[7] Sanders, *Ethics*, 93. By "Johannine Literature", Sanders means both the Gospel of John and the Epistles of John. In 1996, when Richard Hays wrote *The Moral Vision of the New Testament*, he described this kind of critique of 1 John's formulation of love as "fashionable." He said, "It is fashionable to derogate the

his reader to love "one another" (ἀλλήλους, 1 John 3:11, 23; 4:7, 11-12, cf. 2 John 5) or the "brother" (ἀδελφός in the singular, 1 John 2:10; 3:10; 4:20-21; and in the plural at 3:14). The corollary prohibition against hatred for one's brother also appears numerous times (2:9, 11; 3:15; 4:20). Furthermore, there are also no explicit exhortations towards love for the world or outsiders, but we do in fact find a prohibition *against* loving the world (1 John 2:15). In Schrage's words: "Various attempts have been made to mitigate this observation [that love in 1 John is exclusively intra-communal in scope], but they are not persuasive."[8] As we will see, 1 John does in fact clearly delimit love to within the community of faith. We will analyse two texts in 1 John to demonstrate the intra-communal scope of love, 1 John 2:15 and 5:1-2.

Even though we find a direct prohibition against loving the world in 1 John 2:15, the context of the command (cf. v. 16) normally leads scholars to exclude 2:15 from the discussion of the scope of Johannine love. 1 John 2:15-16 reads:

> **15**Μὴ ἀγαπᾶτε τὸν κόσμον μηδὲ τὰ ἐν τῷ κόσμῳ. ἐάν τις ἀγαπᾷ τὸν κόσμον, οὐκ ἔστιν ἡ ἀγάπη τοῦ πατρὸς ἐν αὐτῷ· **16**ὅτι πᾶν τὸ ἐν τῷ κόσμῳ, ἡ ἐπιθυμία τῆς σαρκὸς καὶ ἡ ἐπιθυμία τῶν ὀφθαλμῶν καὶ ἡ ἀλαζονεία τοῦ βίου, οὐκ ἔστιν ἐκ τοῦ πατρὸς ἀλλ᾽ ἐκ τοῦ κόσμου ἐστίν.
> [15]Do not love the world, or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him; [16]because everything that is in the world, the desire of the world and the

Johannine exhortations to love within the community as sectarian retreats from the more universal call to love the neighbour, broadly defined in Luke, or even the enemy, as in Matthew." Hays, *Moral Vision*, 145.

Wolfgang Schrage makes the exact derogation that Hays is talking about, when he says the following, "In John the radical inclusiveness of 'neighbour' found in Jesus has vanished. As the object of *agapē* we find neither neighbour nor enemy but other Christians ('brother', 'brethren') as in 1 John, or 'one another,' as in the Gospel." Schrage, *Ethics*, 316.

[8] Schrage, *Ethics*, 316. Rudolph Bultmann and Rudolph Schnackenburg are examples of two 20th century solutions to the problem.

Bultmann attempted to sidestep the issue by maintaining that the missional motif present in the Johannine material mitigates the intra-communal nature of the love, because "the world constantly has the possibility of being drawn into this circle of mutual love." Bultmann assumes that the missional motif of the Gospel of John (cf. John 13:34) is carried into the Epistles of John (by some unspecified mechanism). Therefore, because the door is open for the world to join the community of faith, the exclusion of love to within the community of faith is not actually sectarian at all. See: Rudolf Bultmann, *Theology of the New Testament*, 2, trans. K. Grobel (London: SCM, 1955), 82.

Schnackenburg, on the other hand, argues that 1 John does not limit the scope of love to the community, because the "brother" language extends beyond the community and embraces all people. He argues that the use of the Cain and Abel midrash (cf. 1 John 3:12) shifts the emphasis of the brotherhood motif from a spiritual brotherhood, to a kind of brotherhood of all humanity. Additionally, he sees 1 John 4:21 as an allusion to the dominical double Love Command (cf. Luke 10:27), which means that the scope of the exhortation covers "neighbours." Thus, Schnackenburg concludes that "Brothers and sisters here includes everybody, even outsiders, with whom the Christians are in contact." Rudolf Schnackenburg, *The Johannine Epistles: A Commentary*, trans. R. Fuller and I. Fuller (New York: Crossroad, 1992), 110-114.

> desire of the eyes and the pride of life, is not from the Father, but is from the world.

The exhortation against loving the world in 2:15 is not usually understood as a direct prohibition against extra-communal love, but as an expression of 1 John's dualism.[9] Schrage adopts this perspective, saying, "this passage expresses Christian separation from the world and superiority to the world on unmistakeable terms."[10] Elsewhere 1 John expresses its strong dualism between those outside the community and those within the community by means of contrasts between "light" and "darkness" (cf. 1 John 1:5-7; 2:8-11) or "truth" and "lies" (cf. 1 John 1:6; 2:4, 21, 27; 4:6), or most poignantly, in terms of one's origins either "from God" (4:1, 2, 4, 6; 5:19) or "from the world" (2:16; 4:5, cf. "not from God" in 4:3, 6). Schrage suggests that 1 John 2:15-16 concerns how the identity (as those "in the light", "in the truth" and "from God") of those within the community should affect their relationship with that which is outside of the community. The context of the passage leads us to conclude that the focus is not on our relationship with the individual people who are outside of the community (i.e. worldly people), but with the world itself when it further clarifies that the prohibition against loving the world entails, "[Do not love] the things in the world." (2:15) The reason why those within the community must not love the things in the world, is that they are "not from the Father, but are from the world" (2:16).

Importantly though, against Schrage, the recognition that the prohibition in 1 John 2:15 is rooted in the nature of Johannine dualism, rather than the nature of Johannine love, does nothing to alleviate the intra-communal sense of the passage. Indeed, the fact that the dualism is expressed here in terms of love (either "loving the world" or having the "love of the Father") has the effect of prejudicing the reader from relating to the world in loving ways, lest they divest themselves of the love of the Father. Thus, while the passage does not explicitly prohibit love for outsiders, the rhetorical effect of the passage is the creation of critical distance between the Church and the world.

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[9] Käsemann adopted the position that 2:15 is a prohibition against extra-communal love. Sanders, on the other hand, argues that "the injunction to the church in 1 John 2:15 *not* to love the world means not to desire the world for oneself, not to wish to be 'of the world' … wishing to be 'worldly', to forsake allegiance to God for allegiance to 'this world'." (p. 94) Sanders is primarily responding to Ernst Käsemann who incorporated 1 John 2:15 into his analysis of the scope of Johannine love. See: Ernst Käsemann, *The Testament of Jesus: A Study of the Gospel of John in the Light of Chapter 17*, trans. G. Krodel (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1968), 59-60.

[10] Schrage, *Ethics*, 309.

1 John 2:15-16 is not the only passage in 1 John that contributes to the sense that love is to be kept within the community of faith. 1 John 5:1 also presents love in a strongly intra-communal manner:

> [1]Πᾶς ὁ πιστεύων ὅτι Ἰησοῦς ἐστιν ὁ Χριστὸς ἐκ τοῦ θεοῦ γεγέννηται, καὶ πᾶς ὁ ἀγαπῶν τὸν γεννήσαντα ἀγαπᾷ καὶ τὸν γεγεννημένον ἐξ αὐτοῦ.
> [1]Everyone who believes that Jesus is the Christ has been born from God, and everyone who loves the one who gave birth also loves the one who has been born from him.

The author here describes the orientation of his readers' love in an unusual way: they are to love "the one who has been born from [God]." Just prior to this, in verse 1a, the readers were told who it is that has been born from God, and it is those who "believe that Jesus is the Christ." Therefore, piecing together verse 1a and 1c, the author is instructing the readers to direct their love towards those who believe that Jesus is the Christ. Verse 2 confirms this, as it opens with the anaphoric phrase "In this" and goes on to discuss how one can "know that [they] love the children of God." In light of the above discussion of verse 1, the phrase "children of God" should be understood as referring to members of the community, who believe "that Jesus is the Christ," thus indicating the intra-communal nature of the love envisioned here.

To be sure, neither 1 John 2:15 or 5:1-2 explicitly prohibit extending love outside the community, but the explicit delimitations of the scope of love in both passages have the same effect. That is, the creation of critical distance between the world and the Church. Coupled with 1 John's repeated exhortations to love "one another" and the "brothers," it is little wonder that scholars conclude that love in the Johannine Epistles is exclusively intra-communal.[11] J. L. Houlden sums up the matter well, "for John, the believer has no duties towards 'the world,' but only towards those who like himself are saved from it."[12]

This chapter will explore a range of verbal resonances that exist between 1 John's teaching concerning love and the rest of the collection. By exploring these resonances, we will be able to ascertain whether the collection amplifies or dampens the intra-communal nature of love in 1 John.

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[11] Fernando F. Segovia, "The love and hatred of Jesus and Johannine sectarianism", *CBQ* 43, no. 2 (1981): 258-272; Wayne A. Meeks, "Man from heaven in Johannine sectarianism", *JBL* 91, no. 1 (1972): 44-72.; Hays, *Moral Vision*, 139.
[12] Houlden, *Ethics and the New Testament*, 36.

4.2.3 The Praxis of Johannine Love: A Critique

In addition to the "moral bankruptcy" (i.e. the intra-communal scope) of Johannine love, Sanders also critiques the lack of pragmatic paraenesis, which he describes as the "weakness" of Johannine ethics.[13] In other words, unlike the Epistle of James, which is full of pragmatic paraenesis which can be adopted and performed by the readers, 1 John has very few obvious points of application. For Sanders, the *only* observable point of application in the Johannine literature is the missional burden placed upon those in the community to evangelise those outside the community. He says, "The love that reaches beyond the congregation thinks of the welfare of the 'world' only in terms of bringing the neighbour to faith – nothing else."[14] As such, Sanders argues that those who adopt a Johannine understanding of love are "not concerned with war, poverty, racial inequities, and the rights of women (in other words, with those 'worldly' issues)."[15]

This is a criticism echoed by others more recently in the field as well. Wayne Meeks, in his oft-quoted chapter *The Ethics of the Fourth Evangelist*, declares the topic of Johannine ethics an "oxymoron," for this very reason.[16] According to Abraham Malherbe, the regular *topoi* of ancient ethical discourse include: the state, civil concord, retirement, civic responsibility, the professions, sexual conduct, covetousness, anger, slavery and freedom, and the armour of the Sage.[17] None of these topoi are present in the Johannine Epistles in any meaningful ways. Ruben Zimmermann, who does go on to assess the Johannine material positively (using his *implicit ethics* model), is worth quoting at length on this point:

> The Letters of John, which like the Letters of Paul, often deal with the community's concrete ethical questions, offer no ethical instructions on subjects such as meat offered to idols, sexual

[13] Sanders, *Ethics*, 100.
[14] Sanders, *Ethics*, 96. Sanders goes on to say, "Here is not a Christianity that considers that loving is the same as fulfilling the Law (Paul) or that the good Samaritan parable represents a demand (Luke) to stop and render even first aid to the man who has been robbed, beaten, and left there for dead. Johannine Christianity is interested only in whether he believes. 'Are you saved, brother?' the Johannine Christian asks the man bleeding to death on the side of the road. 'Are you concerned about your soul?' 'Do you believe that Jesus is the one who came down from God?' 'If you believe, you will have eternal life,' promises the Johannine Christian, while the dying man's blood stains the ground." (p. 100)
[15] Sanders, *Ethics*, 99.
[16] Wayne Meeks, "The Ethics of the Fourth Evangelist", in *Exploring the Gospel of John: in Honor of D. Moody Smith*, eds. R. A. Culpepper and C. C. Black (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1996), 317.
[17] Abraham J. Malherbe, *Moral Exhortation, a Greco-Roman Sourcebook*, LEC (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1986), 145-161.

> ethics, or the attitude towards the Roman state. The only exception is the commandment to love. In 1-3 John we find no ethical catalogues of virtues and vices, not even Haustafeln (household codes), which are present in other letters. There are absolutely no references to the subjects determining the concrete life of the community. There is no word about divorce or the renunciation of material property, no law of purity."[18]

Paul Anderson's understanding of ecclesiology in the Johannine Community represents a potential solution to this problem. Anderson suggests that the Johannine Community operated under what he calls "a spiritually mediated approach to Christocracy."[19] In other words, the Johannine Church did not need a formal leadership structure, instead embracing "a familial and egalitarian approach to leadership – one rooted in a Spirit-based approach to corporate discernment."[20] Anderson substantiates his view primarily by means of the sayings of Jesus in the Upper Room Discourse that refer to the Spirit's role as mediating Jesus' presence to his disciples, and especially in teaching/guiding them towards truth or reminding them of Jesus' words (cf. John 14:16-17, 26; 16:13). Anderson's claims could be further strengthened by integrating the puzzling statements about "the anointing" that believers have received in 1 John 2:20 and 27.

1 John 2:20	καὶ ὑμεῖς **χρῖσμα** ἔχετε ἀπὸ τοῦ ἁγίου καὶ οἴδατε πάντες.	And you have an anointing from the holy one and you know all things.
1 John 2:27	καὶ ὑμεῖς τὸ **χρῖσμα** ὃ ἐλάβετε ἀπ' αὐτοῦ μένει ἐν ὑμῖν, καὶ οὐ χρείαν ἔχετε ἵνα τις διδάσκῃ ὑμᾶς, ἀλλ' ὡς τὸ αὐτοῦ **χρῖσμα** διδάσκει ὑμᾶς περὶ πάντων, καὶ ἀληθές ἐστιν καὶ οὐκ ἔστιν ψεῦδος, καὶ καθὼς ἐδίδαξεν ὑμᾶς, μένετε ἐν αὐτῷ.	And the anointing which you have received from him remains in you, and you have no need for anyone to teach you. But as his anointing teaches you about everything, and is true and is not a lie, and just as he taught you, remain in him.

Figure 13 - The "Anointing" Passages in 1 John

[18] Zimmermann, "Ethics in the Gospel of John?", 47.

[19] Paul N. Anderson, "Discernment-Oriented Leadership in the Johannine Situation—Abiding in the Truth versus Lesser Alternatives", in *Rethinking the Ethics of John: Implicit Ethics in the Johannine Writings*, WUNT, 291, eds. J. Van Der Watt and R. Zimmermann (eds.) (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2012), 312. Anderson defines this Johannine model of leadership and ethical discernment in contradistinction to the other models that he detects in the New Testament (i.e. the "Jewish dynastic model of leadership" of James in Acts, the Pauline model of organising "presbyteries among the Churches", and the "Episcopal Developments after the Memory of Peter" in the Petrine Epistles). In his view, the Johannine Community was not led by a single ecclesial leader or a group of elders as is evident in the rest of the New Testament, but that "It is within the context of these other approaches to church governance and leadership that the Fourth Evangelist puts forward a familial and egalitarian approach to leadership – one rooted in a Spirit-based approach to corporate discernment."[19] Anderson, "Discernment-Oriented Leadership", 308-314. While in the above quote, Anderson discusses this Johannine model of church leadership and ethical discernment to the Evangelist of the Fourth Gospel, later he asserts that the same is true of the Elder of the Johannine Epistles. He says, "In addition to the Johannine evangelist, the Elder also operates with an *Alethēic* approach to ethics and corporate management."

[20] Anderson, "Discernment-Oriented Leadership", 312.

In these passages, the anointing that believers have received is repeatedly related to their knowledge of "all things" (2:20), because it "teaches [them] about everything," and consequentially, they now have "no need for anyone to teach" them (2:27). In other words, 1 John seems to suggest that the Johannine Community is capable of discerning Christ's will for themselves, without the need for ecclesial authorities (like, for example, Diotrephes).[21] Anderson goes on to develop this concept in terms of how it might inform our understanding of the development of the Johannine Community (i.e. the redaction of the Gospel of John in light of docetism, the contrary leadership models of his day and his conflict with Diotrephes),[22] however, it might also inform our current discussion.

Perhaps the author of 1 John did not feel the need to provide his readers with practical applications of his ethical principles, because he was aware that the community operated under this "spirit-based approach to corporate discernment," or what Jack Sanders called the "Johannine pneumatic ecclesiology."[23] Even though Sanders critiques 1 John for the lack of specificity in its ethical teaching, he does acknowledge that the Spirit was to act as "a guiding presence" for the Johannine congregation.[24] He explains further, "Within the 'in' group, within the church, the life that others awaited has already been made present in faith, so that there the absolute command to love may be made, with little or no need to elaborate on its meaning."[25] However, Sanders' awareness of the fact that the author of 1 John may have potentially expected the Spirit to do the work of application to the lives of the readers, does nothing to temper his criticism concerning the "weakness" of 1 John's ethical teaching. Nonetheless, whatever the merits of Anderson's perspective, it does not offer a solution to the problem of the lack of pragmatic teaching within 1 John, as is evident in Sanders' persistent criticism. Indeed, Anderson's discussion just offers an apology for the absence of practical ethical material and shifts the burden for its supplication from the author to the Spirit.

While this chapter is certainly not going to locate a hitherto undiscovered cache of normative ethical teaching within 1 John, it will underscore how the Catholic Epistle collection provides a whole host of practical applications for the ethical teaching of 1 John. By detecting the verbal resonances that exist between 1 John's teaching on love and

[21] Anderson, "Discernment-Oriented Leadership", 310-314.
[22] Anderson, "Discernment-Oriented Leadership", 304.
[23] Sanders, *Ethics*, 99.
[24] Sanders, *Ethics*, 99.
[25] Sanders, *Ethics*, 99.

other passages in the Catholic Epistles, we will identify a range of practical expressions of love that the collection amplifies for the reader of 1 John.

This section has identified three elements of 1 John's teaching on love. First, that it holds a place of primacy in the moral discourse of 1 John. Second, it is normally understood as intra-communal in nature. Third, it lacks normative specificity in terms of its application. In the next section we will outline a network of associations that exists within the Catholic Epistles' teaching on love. The goal of this section will be to identify passages that concern love and place those passages into a network, bound together by an assortment of verbal resonances. The network can then be applied to the Johannine material to examine which elements of Johannine love are amplified or dampened, i.e. the primacy of love, the scope of love and the *praxis* of love. The only explicit quotation of the Levitical Love Command comes in James 2:8, and so our analysis will begin there.

4.3 A Network of Love in the Catholic Epistles

4.3.1 James 2:1-13

James 2:8 contains the only explicit quotation of the Levitical love command ("Love your neighbour as yourself", cf. Lev 19:18) in the Catholic Epistles. The author exhorts his readers against showing favouritism to rich individuals (cf. Jas 2:1-3), because by showing favouritism to the rich, they are neglecting to show love to the poor (cf. v. 3 and 6a). This is the author's primary issue with favouritism, as indicated by his exhortation towards mercy in 2:12-13 (Οὕτως λαλεῖτε καὶ οὕτως ποιεῖτε ὡς διὰ νόμου ἐλευθερίας μέλλοντες κρίνεσθαι. ἡ γὰρ κρίσις ἀνέλεος τῷ μὴ ποιήσαντι ἔλεος· κατακαυχᾶται ἔλεος κρίσεως), and his concern for the poor elsewhere in the letter (1:9-11; 2:15-16; 5:1-6). The author gives his readers multiple reasons to not practice favouritism (2:4-13), and the quotation of the Love Command forms the basis of his longest and most developed argument (vv. 8-13).

4.3.1.1 The Primacy of Love in James 2:1-13

James 2:8-13 indicates the primacy of love in two distinct ways. First, with the titles that the author gives to the Levitical love command over the course of his discussion ("Law of Liberty" and "Royal Law"). Second, the main thrust of the argument in which

the Levitical love command is found indicates the centrality of the command in the mind of the author.

First, the designations used to kataphorically (v. 8) and anaphorically (v. 12) refer to the Levitical love command underline its significance for the author. In verse 8, the author calls the love command the νόμον βασιλικόν ("royal law") and, in verse 12, he calls it the νόμου ἐλευθερίας ("law of freedom", cf. 1:25). The fact that the author uses these two unusual phrases to refer to the Levitical love command, indicates its significance for our author.

Scholarship has regularly searched for the potential source of this title. According to Dale Allison, the title in verse 8 ("royal law") should be associated "with Jesus because he quotes Lev 19:18 in the Synoptics."[26] Particularly in light of how the Love Command functions in the theology of Jesus (cf. Matt 19:16-26; 22:34-40; Luke 10:25-37; 19:16-26) and the reference to "the kingdom" (βασιλεία) in James 2:5, Allison argues that the love command is regularly understood as functioning here as "the law of the Kingdom of God."[27] As such, Allison concludes his discussion by appealing to Matthew 19:23,[28] stating that "One might infer that the loving of one's neighbour is 'the royal (βασιλικός) law' because it gains *entry* into the *kingdom* (βασιλεία)."[29]

While Allison relates the designation "royal law" to the dominical sayings in Matthew and Luke, a range of verbal resonances exist between our passage and 2 Peter 1:5-11. 2 Peter 1:5-11 will receive fuller treatment in the next section of this chapter, but for now we note the host of resonant terms between James 2 and 2 Peter 1:

James 2:5, 8, 10	2 Peter 1:5, 7, 10-11
[5]ἀκούσατε, ἀδελφοί μου ἀγαπητοί· οὐχ ὁ θεὸς **ἐξελέξατο** τοὺς πτωχοὺς τῷ κόσμῳ **πλουσίους** ἐν **πίστει** καὶ κληρονόμους τῆς **βασιλείας** ἧς ἐπηγγείλατο τοῖς **ἀγαπῶσιν** αὐτόν; … [8]Εἰ μέντοι νόμον τελεῖτε **βασιλικὸν** κατὰ τὴν γραφήν· **ἀγαπήσεις** τὸν πλησίον σου ὡς σεαυτόν, καλῶς **ποιεῖτε**· … [10]ὅστις γὰρ ὅλον τὸν νόμον τηρήσῃ, **πταίσῃ** δὲ ἐν ἑνί, γέγονεν πάντων ἔνοχος.	[5]καὶ αὐτὸ τοῦτο δὲ σπουδὴν πᾶσαν παρεισενέγκαντες ἐπιχορηγήσατε ἐν τῇ **πίστει** ὑμῶν τὴν ἀρετήν, ἐν δὲ τῇ ἀρετῇ τὴν γνῶσιν… [7]ἐν δὲ τῇ φιλαδελφίᾳ τὴν **ἀγάπην**… [10]διὸ μᾶλλον, ἀδελφοί, σπουδάσατε βεβαίαν ὑμῶν τὴν κλῆσιν καὶ **ἐκλογὴν ποιεῖσθαι**· ταῦτα γὰρ **ποιοῦντες** οὐ μὴ **πταίσητέ** ποτε. [11]οὕτως γὰρ **πλουσίως** ἐπιχορηγηθήσεται ὑμῖν ἡ εἴσοδος εἰς τὴν αἰώνιον **βασιλείαν** τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν καὶ σωτῆρος Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ.

[26] Allison Jr., *James*, 405. The "royal" connotations of the Love Command are manifold for Allison. One of the nuances, he argues, is that it is "royal in so far as its giver – God or Christ – is king." He says, "To obey Torah or Lev 19:18 is to behave in a regal fashion."
[27] Allison Jr., *James*, 404.
[28] Which says, Ὁ δὲ Ἰησοῦς εἶπεν τοῖς μαθηταῖς αὐτοῦ· ἀμὴν λέγω ὑμῖν ὅτι πλούσιος δυσκόλως εἰσελεύσεται εἰς τὴν βασιλείαν τῶν οὐρανῶν (But Jesus said to his disciples; "Truly I say to you that only with difficulty will the rich enter into the kingdom of heaven.")
[29] Allison Jr., *James*, 405, emphasis added.

[5]Listen, my beloved brothers; has not God elected those who are in the world to be rich in faith and heirs of the kingdom which he promised to those who love him? … [8]If you really fulfil the royal law according to the Scripture; "Love your neighbour as yourself," you are doing well… [10]For, whoever keeps the whole law, but falls at one point, has become guilty of it all.	[5]And for this same reason, also exerting every effort supplement your faith with virtue, and virtue with… [7]and brotherly love with love… [10]Therefore, all the more, brothers, be diligent to make certain your calling and election; for, if you do these things, you will never ever fall… [11]For thus entrance into the eternal kingdom of our lord and saviour Jesus Christ will be richly supplemented to you.

Figure 14 - Verbal Resonances between James 2:5-10 and 2 Peter 1:5-11

Some of the more striking resonances include:

1. The use of the verb πταίω. In James, to describe the person who generally keeps the Law, but breaks it (falls) at one specific point (Jas 2:10). In 2 Peter 1:10, the person who embraces the virtues of vv. 5-7 is promised that they will never "fall" (πταίσητέ).
2. The use of the πλοῦτος root. In James, the poor have been chosen by God to be "rich" (πλουσίους) in faith and heirs of the Kingdom (Jas 2:5). In 2 Peter, God "richly" (πλουσίως) provides entrance into his eternal Kingdom to those who embrace the virtues of vv. 5-7 (2 Pet 1:11)
3. The use of the ἐκλογην root. In James, God has "chosen" (ἐξελέξατο) the poor in the world to be rich in faith (Jas 2:5). In 2 Peter, believers make their calling and "election" (ἐκλογήν) certain (2 Pet 1:10)
4. James 2:8 and 2 Peter 1:11 are also the only places in the Catholic Epistles where the noun βασιλεία ("kingdom") occurs.

These verbal resonances that exist between these two passages invites us to read them together, a task to which we will return in our fuller treatment of 2 Peter 1:5-11 below.

Regarding the second title for the Levitical love command in this passage ("the law of liberty", cf. 1:25), scholars have identified its origins in either ancient Stoic philosophy, the Apostle Paul's writings, or the Jesus tradition.[30] In the same way as the Catholic Epistle collection offered an alternative context in which to read the designation "the royal law", so too the phrase "law of liberty" (νόμου ἐλευθερίας) has rich conceptual resonances elsewhere in the collection, namely, 1 Peter 2:16 and 1 John 5:3.

James 1:25	… νόμον τέλειον τὸν τῆς ἐλευθερίας…	… The perfect law of liberty…
James 2:12	… νόμου ἐλευθερίας…	… The law of liberty…

[30] Dibelius associates the "perfect law of freedom" (cf. 1:25 and 2:12) with all three historical traditions: Paul, early Stoicism and the Jesus tradition (in that order). See: Martin Dibelius, *James: A Commentary on the Epistle of James*, Hermeneia (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1976), 116-120.

Dale Allison, on the other hand, excludes Stoicism as a possible background for the designation "law of liberty." Allison Jr., *James*, 418.

Again, from a different perspective, Matt Jackson-McCabe argues that Stoicism is the primary background for the designation "law of liberty", and all of its "correlations," including: the implanted word (1:21) and the perfect law (1:25). Matt A. Jackson-McCabe, *Logos and Law in the Letter of James: The Law of Nature, the Law of Moses and the Law of Freedom*, *NovTSup* (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2001).

1 Peter 2:16	ὡς ἐλεύθεροι καὶ μὴ ὡς ἐπικάλυμμα ἔχοντες τῆς κακίας τὴν ἐλευθερίαν ἀλλ’ ὡς θεοῦ δοῦλοι.	[Live] as free people, and do not use your freedom as a cover-up for evil, but [live] as slaves of God.
1 John 5:3	αὕτη γάρ ἐστιν ἡ ἀγάπη τοῦ θεοῦ, ἵνα τὰς ἐντολὰς αὐτοῦ τηρῶμεν, καὶ αἱ ἐντολαὶ αὐτοῦ βαρεῖαι οὐκ εἰσίν.	For this is the love of God, that we keep his commands, and his commands are not burdensome.

Figure 15 - "Law of Liberty" in the Catholic Epistles

The phrase "law of liberty" is almost oxymoronic (James 1:25; 2:12). A law normally functions to limit a person's liberty, effectively constraining the activity that a person can freely perform, rather than granting additional liberties. Nevertheless, James dialectically calls the love command a "law of liberty." This dialectic (of a law that limits activity and gives liberty simultaneously) appears elsewhere in the collection as well.

In 1 Peter 2:16, the author exhorts the readers to live as free people (ἐλεύθεροι), but insists that the readers not use their freedom (ἐλευθερίαν) as a cover-up for evil, but instead exercise their freedom by enslaving themselves to God (1 Pet 2:16). This dialectic of being free, and exercising one's freedom by becoming enslaved, resonates with the "law of liberty" in James 1 and 2.

A similar conceptual resonance exists with 1 John 5:3, which reads:

> αὕτη γάρ ἐστιν ἡ ἀγάπη τοῦ θεοῦ, ἵνα τὰς ἐντολὰς αὐτοῦ τηρῶμεν, καὶ αἱ ἐντολαὶ αὐτοῦ βαρεῖαι οὐκ εἰσίν.
> For this is the love of God, that we keep his commands, and his commands are not burdensome.

Just as James speaks of a Law that gives liberty, and 1 Peter speaks of a freedom that is enslaving, so too 1 John speaks of commands that are not burdens.

Observing the verbal resonances between the "royal law" in James 2:8-11 and the discourse concerning the virtues in 2 Peter 1:5-11, as well as the conceptual resonances between the phrase "law of liberty" and the statements of 1 Peter 2:16 (concerning the free slave) and 1 John 5:3 (concerning the non-burdensome commands), does not negate the possibility that these phrases have connections to the Jesus tradition, Pauline theology or Stoic philosophy, but it does demonstrate that the Catholic Epistle collection provides an alternative context in which to read these terms in James.

The second way that James 2 establishes the primacy of the Levitical love command, is the argumentation employed by the author in verses 8-12. The author's argument is that the Mosaic Law, to which the Levitical love command belongs, has an indissoluble unity, such that if a person transgresses any command (e.g. adultery or murder, cf. v. 11), they are liable for the entire Law (vv. 10-11).

Given the logic of James' argument, it seems that any commandment from the Mosaic Law could have been used to illustrate his point. Consequently, his selection of the Levitical love command represents a significant choice on the behalf of the author. Dibelius understands James' argument in this same way, but draws a very different conclusion concerning the significance of the Levitical love command in the author's mind, saying:

> One thing can be established, at any rate: The commandment of love is not considered in our passage to be the chief commandment, in the sense of the famous saying of Jesus (Mk 12:31 par); instead, it is one commandment alongside others, for otherwise the argument in v. 10f would make no sense.[31]

While Dibelius' interpretation of the argument of James is correct, his understanding of the implication of the argument for the status of the love command in the author's mind is mistaken. Indeed, the very fact that the Love Command is conceived of as "one commandment alongside others," is what makes its selection all the more significant.[32] As argued above, nothing in the author's argument requires the selection of a summative command like the love command. In fact, the author could have chosen any command from the Mosaic Law to illustrate his point. Perhaps there were even other commands from the Mosaic Law that would have been more appropriate to the context of showing favouritism to the rich and neglecting the poor (cf. Lev 19:15, "You shall not be partial to the poor or defer to the great"). Therefore, his selection of the love command is significant, in so much as it does indicate the status of the love command in the mind of the author. In other words, according to Ralph Martin, the author of James has chosen the Love Command because it functions for him as a "litmus test of character."[33] For James at least, it seems that love for one's neighbour is the primary, defining mark of one who holds τὴν πίστιν τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ ("the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ," Jas 2:1).[34] The author of James highlights the primacy of love by both the designations

[31] Dibelius, *James*, 142.
[32] Douglas J. Moo, *The Letter of James*, PNTC, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2021), 141-144, 146-148; Scot McKnight, *The Letter of James*, NICNT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2011), 211-218.
[33] Ralph P. Martin, *James*, WBC, 48 (Waco: Word, 1988), 73.
[34] The question of whether this is an example of a subjective or objective genitive received full treatment in chapter 3, where we discussed with Pregeant's suggestion that this is a subjective genitive, and consequently, that this verse represents the presence of the *imitatio Christi* motif in an otherwise Christ-less Epistle of James.

used for the love command, and the argument in which we find the love command situated.

4.3.1.2 The Scope of Love in James 2:1-13

In order to determine the scope of love anticipated by James 2:1-13, it seems that we need to identify whether the hypothetical rich and poor individuals who enter into the community's space in verses 2-3 are community members or outsiders (i.e. believers or non-believers). This is one of a number of *cruces interpretum* in James 2:1-13.[35] On the basis of the statements that the rich oppress and drag the audience before court (v. 6) and blaspheme the name that was called over them (v. 7),[36] some might suggest that the rich (and, by extension, poor) man[37] are outsiders, i.e. non-community members.[38] This is also

[35] A separate issue, that is often treated concurrently in the literature, is the nature of the συναγωγὴν into which the poor and rich enter. Even though the situation is a hypothetical one that is presented by the author (cf. ἐάν in v. 2), this does not preclude the question of the kind of situation that is being presented to the readers. "The more natural interpretation," in the words of Blomberg and Kamell, is that it refers to a Christian worship service into which the rich and poor enter.

However, James is very capable of using the word ἐκκλησία (as he does in 5:14) and so his use of συναγωγὴν is noteworthy (cf. BDAG, "συναγωγὴν", 963.), leading some to suggest that he is describing not a worship service, but a Christian courtroom. This suggestion is supported by the judicial language in verse 4 (διεκρίθητε ["you have made distinctions"] and κριταί ["judges"]) as well as the description of the rich in verse 6 as those who "drag you into court" (αὐτοὶ ἕλκουσιν ὑμᾶς εἰς κριτήρια). Moreover, the quotation of Leviticus 19:18, in its original literary context, is preceded by commands regarding favouritism in a judicial context. Verse 15 of Leviticus reads, "You shall do no injustice in court. You shall not be partial (λήμψῃ πρόσωπον, LXX, cf. προσωπολημψία ["partiality/favouritism"] in James 2:1) to the poor or defer to the great, but in righteousness shall you judge your neighbour." Thus, it is suggested that the quotation of Leviticus 19:18, with its associated context, suggests a judicial setting for the passage. After laying out the evidence, Blomberg and Kamell conclude that the judicial setting is more likely.

However, William Brosend equally aware of the issues involved, has defended the worship service setting. Douglas Moo adopts the worship service setting, arguing that "The possessive 'your meeting' in v. 2 seems to point to a definite, well-known gathering that better fits the worship service than a judicial assembly." On the whole, the question of the setting of the incident is outside the scope of our interest, but the question of the identity of the persons is central, because it will, in turn, inform our understanding of the scope and nature of the love that is envisaged by the passage.

Blomberg and Kamell, *James*, 110-111; William Frank Brosend, *James and Jude*, NCBC (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 61-64; Moo, *James*, 100.

[36] This is regularly taken to be a reference to a baptismal liturgy of sorts. Alistair Stewart-Sykes calls this a "clearly identified reference to baptism." Alistair Stewart-Sykes, "Ἀποκύησις λόγῳ ἀληθείας: Paraenesis and Baptism in Matthew, James and the Didache", in *Matthew, James, and Didache: Three Related Documents in Their Jewish and Christian Setting*, Matthew, James and the Didache, eds. J. K. Zangenberg and H. W. M. v. d. Sandt (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2008), 349.

[37] The rich and poor individuals must have the same status (as either Community or Non-Community members), otherwise the entire argument falls apart. The basis of the illustration is that the rich and poor man are identical in every sense, except their financial status. If it were to turn out that the rich man was a believer and the poor man a non-believer, then the basis for the hypothetical mistreatment of the poor man could be construed as his status as an outsider of the community.

[38] The reply to this assertion is normally that the setting of the illustration is a courtroom, rather than a worship service, and thus, the discussion of the oppression, the dragging into court and the blasphemy, are all in relation to the court room proceedings. See: Blomberg and Kamell, *James*, 110-111.

the opinion of Peter Wick who says, "Weder der Reiche noch der Arme muss schon zur Gemeinde gehören."[39] All of that to say, on internal grounds, the love of verse 8 could be intra-communal or extra-communal. The final line of evidence to be considered is the use of the word "neighbour" in James 2:8, and elsewhere in the collection.

However, determining the scope of the word "neighbour" on internal grounds alone is quite complex, with evidence on both sides. The original Levitical love command, quoted in James 2:8, does seem to be limited to the people of Israel. The parallel clause specifies that it is "the sons of your own people" (את־בני עמך) against whom vengeance and grudge-bearing are prohibited (Lev 19:18a).[40] Jesus, however, in his well-known exposition of the Levitical love command in the Parable of the Good Samaritan (cf. Luke 10:25-37), addresses the issue of the scope of the term "neighbour," and he expands it to include anyone with whom one comes into contact who has need.[41] The Levitical context would imply that the scope of the "neighbour" in James 2 is intra-communal, whereas the Parable of the Good Samaritan would suggest that the scope of "neighbour" should be conceived of as broad and extra-communal. Again, that is to say, usage of the term "neighbour" in other literature is not definitive for its meaning here in James 2:8.

The collection however, as we will see, amplifies the intra-communal sense of "neighbour." The only other use of the term "neighbour" in the Catholic Epistle collection is in James 4:11-12. These two passages are associated with one another not just by the single resonance "neighbour" (πλησίον), but a host of other verbal resonances.

James 2:4, 6, 8-13	James 4:11-12
καὶ οὐ **διεκρίθητε** ἐν ἑαυτοῖς καὶ ἐγένεσθε **κριταὶ** διαλογισμῶν πονηρῶν; (James 2:4) αὐτοὶ ἕλκουσιν ὑμᾶς εἰς **κριτήρια**; (James 2:6) **8**Εἰ μέντοι **νόμον** τελεῖτε βασιλικὸν κατὰ τὴν γραφήν· *ἀγαπήσεις τὸν <u>πλησίον</u> σου ὡς σεαυτόν,* καλῶς ποιεῖτε· **9**εἰ δὲ προσωπολημπτεῖτε,	**11**Μὴ καταλαλεῖτε ἀλλήλων, ἀδελφοί. ὁ καταλαλῶν ἀδελφοῦ ἢ **κρίνων** τὸν ἀδελφὸν αὐτοῦ καταλαλεῖ **νόμου** καὶ **κρίνει** νόμον· εἰ δὲ **νόμον κρίνεις**, οὐκ εἶ ποιητὴς **νόμου** ἀλλὰ **κριτής**.

[39] Peter Wick, "Zwischen Parteilichkeit und Barmherzigkeit!: Jak 2,1-13 und die elaborierte Ethik des Jakobusbriefes", *ASE* 34, no. 2 (2017): 448. Note however that Wick, while adopting the same conclusion, namely, that the subjects of the illustration are non-community members, does adopt the alternative conclusion that the setting of the context is a legal courtroom, rather than a worship service, see: Wick, "Zwischen Parteilichkeit und Barmherzigkeit!: Jak 2,1-13 und die elaborierte Ethik des Jakobusbriefes", 448-449.

[40] Darrell L. Bock, *Luke 9:51–24:53*, BECNT (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 1996), 1028-1029.

[41] These two criteria (need and proximity) for determining one's neighbour come from: Joseph A. Fitzmyer, *The Gospel According to Luke X-XXIV*, AB (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1985), 884. See also: Joel B. Green, *The Theology of the Gospel of Luke*, NTT (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 129, 139; Bock, *Luke 9:51–24:53*, 1034-1035.

ἁμαρτίαν ἐργάζεσθε ἐλεγχόμενοι ὑπὸ τοῦ **νόμου** ὡς παραβάται. **10**ὅστις γὰρ ὅλον τὸν **νόμον** τηρήσῃ, πταίσῃ δὲ ἐν ἑνί, γέγονεν πάντων ἔνοχος. **11**ὁ γὰρ εἰπών· *μὴ μοιχεύσῃς,* εἶπεν καί· *μὴ φονεύσῃς*· εἰ δὲ οὐ μοιχεύεις, φονεύεις δέ, γέγονας παραβάτης **νόμου**. **12**Οὕτως λαλεῖτε καὶ οὕτως ποιεῖτε ὡς διὰ **νόμου** ἐλευθερίας μέλλοντες **κρίνεσθαι**. **13**ἡ γὰρ **κρίσις** ἀνέλεος τῷ μὴ ποιήσαντι ἔλεος· κατακαυχᾶται ἔλεος **κρίσεως**. (James 2:8-13)	**12**εἷς ἐστιν ὁ **νομοθέτης** καὶ **κριτὴς** ὁ δυνάμενος σῶσαι καὶ ἀπολέσαι· σὺ δὲ τίς εἶ ὁ **κρίνων** τὸν πλησίον; (James 4:11-12)
And have you not judged among yourselves and become judges with evil thoughts? (James 2:4) [Aren't] they dragging you into court? (James 2:6) **8**If you really keep the royal law according to the Scripture: "Love your neighbour as yourself," you are doing well. **9**But if you show favouritism, you are committing sinning and are being convicted by the Law as a transgressor. **10**For whoever keeps the whole Law, but falls at one point, has become guilty of it all. **11**For the one who says; "Do not commit adultery," also said: "Do not murder;" but if you do not commit adulter, but you do murder, you have become a transgressor of the Law. **12**So, speak and act in such a way as though you are about to be judged by the Law of Liberty. **13**For judgement without mercy will be for the one who did not show mercy; mercy triumphs over judgement. (James 2:8-13)	[11]Do not speak against one another, brothers. The one who speaks against his brother or judges his brother, speak against the Law and judges the law; but if you judge the Law, you are not a doer of the law but a judge. [12]He is one, the lawgiver and judge, who is able to save and destroy; but who are you to judge your neighbour? (James 4:11-12)

Figure 16 - Νομος and κρινω in James 2:4-13 and 4:11-12

Both passages contain six cognate forms of κρίνω each: twice in 2:4, 2:6, 2:12, twice in 2:13 and six times in 4:11-12, demonstrating that "judging/judgement" is a concentrated motif in both passages. At the conceptual level, both passages emphasise the unity of the Mosaic Law, by means of highlighting the single Lawgiver who stands behind the Law (Jas 2:8-11 and 4:12). The entire argument of James 2:8-11 assumes that breaching any of the individual laws results in the transgression of the whole Law, because it is ultimately the Lawgiver who has been disobeyed, not the laws themselves. James 2:11 makes this clear by its uses of the substantival participle ὁ εἰπών ("the one who said"), indicating that it is the one who spoke the laws that is disobeyed, not the laws themselves.[42] Similarly, James 4:12 emphasises the role of the Lawgiver in the reception of the Law, in order to exhort the readers against judging one another (εἷς ἐστιν ὁ νομοθέτης καὶ κριτὴς ὁ δυνάμενος σῶσαι καὶ ἀπολέσαι· σὺ δὲ τίς εἶ ὁ κρίνων τὸν πλησίον;) These resonances suggest that James 4's use of "neighbour" might mutually

[42] Dibelius, *James*, 146; Luke Timothy Johnson, *The Letter of James*, AYB, 37A (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995), 232; Vlachos, *James*, 81.

interpret the use of "neighbour" in James 2:8, either intra-communally or extra-communally.[43]

In this passage, the readers are exhorted to not judge or speak against one another. The intra-communal scope of the passage is indicated by the correlated terms used to identify the objects of the verbs καταλαλέω and κρίνω. In 4:11-12, there are three terms "one another" (ἀλλήλων), "brother/s" (ἀδελφός) and "neighbour" (πλησίον) used as the objects of these verbs (ἀλλήλων [v. 11], ἀδελφοί [v. 11], ἀδελφοῦ [v. 11], τὸν ἀδελφὸν αὐτοῦ [v. 11], τὸν πλησίον [v. 12]).[44] The three formulations ("one another", "brother" and "neighbour") seem to be used without any sense of semantic shift between them. Thus, it seems that when the term "neighbour" appears, it is being used intra-communally, because it is linked with the reciprocal pronoun "one another" and the familial language of "brother/s" (cf. Lev 19:17-18, which similarly links "neighbour" [vv. 17 and 18] with "brother" [v. 17]). In terms of identifying the scope of the love envisioned by James 2, it seems that the intra-communal scope of love in James 4 amplifies the interpretive possibility that the "neighbour" in James 2 is limited to those within the community of faith. Whereas the hypothetical scenario of James 2:1-7 and the use of "neighbour" in Leviticus and Jesus were indeterminate concerning the scope of the love described in James 2:8, allowing the clearly intra-communal use of "neighbour" in James 4:11-12 to amplify the intra-communal possibility of James 2:8 brings a new perspective on the issue.

4.3.1.3 The Praxis of Love in James 2:1-13

Finally, concerning the *praxis* of love envisioned by James, we note that love, and more specifically the love command, is explicitly related to the financial responsibility incumbent upon believers to care for the poor in their midst. Matthias Konradt notes the shift in language from "love" (James 2:8) to "mercy" (v. 13) and argues that "the love

[43] Similarly, Edgar argues that James 2:1-13 and 4:11-12 ought to be read together, but his suggestion is on the additional basis of a perceived shared use of the Shema in both James 2:5 and 4:12. However, his suggestion that the Shema is behind James 2:5 is doubtful, because while there is indeed a reference to "loving God", the promise of the Kingdom is foreign to the Shema. Edgar, "Love Command and Shema in James", 15-17.

[44] Νόμος (law) appears in verse 11 three times as the object of καταλαλέω or κρίνω. However, the author uses the slander/judgement of the Law as the greater crime, against which he compares the slander/judgement of one's brothers.

command in James is closely connected to a merciful attitude towards the poor." [45] By focusing on the attitude of the almsgiver, rather than the almsgiving itself, Konradt helpfully nuances the previous point of application. He explains:

> "For James, mercy does not only mean almsgiving; mercy begins with the respectful attitude towards the poor, as James's example in 2:2– 4 illustrates. In other words, alms given condescendingly are not what James has in mind."[46]

Thus, given that the focus is on one's merciful attitude, rather than the financial aid itself, it seems that one's attitude towards those who are in need more generally is the focus.

The call to care for those in need finds other forms of expression throughout James. Back in chapter 1, James defined "pure religion" in verse 27 as "caring for orphans and widows in their affliction." Further on in chapter 2, James uses the example of a poor brother or sister, who is "naked" (γυμνοὶ) and "lacking in daily food" (λειπόμενοι ὦσιν τῆς ἐφημέρου τροφῆς, v. 17), whose needs are neglected by the community, as an example of faith without works. This example resonates conceptually with the example of love that is in word or talk, and not deed and truth (1 John 3:17-18). This resonance will receive fuller treatment when we discuss love in 1 John below in §4.4.3.

The practice of showing mercy to those in need, finds an additional expression at the conclusion of James, and in the wider Catholic Epistle collection. In addition to the socially marginalised (poor, orphans and widows) who are to be the objects of the community's love and "mercy" (2:13), those who are erring in their faith are to also be shown "mercy" (Jude 22-23, cf. James 5:19-20; 1 John 5:16). Such pursuit of the salvation of the erring is a motif that appears at the conclusions of James (5:19-20), 1 John (5:16) and Jude (22-23). These passages will receive full treatment in chapter 5. For now though, note that given their shared use of the verb διακρίνω (Jas 2:4 and Jude 22) and mercy (ἔλεος, twice in Jas 2:13 and ἐλεᾶτε, twice in Jude 22 and 23), the articulation of the motif in Jude is particularly resonant of our passage in James 2. Thus, by means of the "mercy" resonance, the practice of pursuing the salvation of erring believers is brought into the network of practical expressions of love, along with the practices of showing mercy to the poor, widows and orphans.

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[45] Matthias Konradt, "The Love Command in Matthew, James and the Didache", in *Matthew, James, and Didache: Three Related Documents in Their Jewish and Christian Setting*, Matthew, James and the Didache, eds. J. K. Zangenberg and H. W. M. v. d. Sandt (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2008), 279.

[46] Konradt, "The Love Command in Matthew, James and the Didache", 279.

4.3.1.4 Conclusion to Love in James 2:1-13

James 2:1-13, which contains the only explicit quotation of the love command in the Catholic Epistles, certainly affirms the primacy of love for the believer. Practically speaking, love is also related to the extension of mercy to those who are poor, socially marginalised (orphans and widows) and spiritually erring. Concerning the most contentious issue, the scope of the love, we observed that the clearly intra-communal nature of love in James 4:11-12, amplifies that same intra-communal possibility in James 2:8-11. During our discussion, we noted that 2 Peter 1:5-11 resonated with the designation of the love command as the "royal law." We turn now to consider 2 Peter 1:5-11 more fully.

4.3.2 2 Peter 1:5-7

At the opening of 2 Peter, the author revels in "the glory and excellence" of God, who provided everything that believers need to live godly lives, such that they "might become partakers of the divine nature, fleeing from the corruption, which is in the world, because of desire" (2 Pet 1:4). The way that the readers are to partake in the divine nature and flee the corruption of this world, is spelled out in the eight-fold virtue list of verses 5-7, which includes, in order: faith (πίστις), virtue (ἀρετή), knowledge (γνῶσις), self-control (εγκράτεια), steadfastness (ὑπομονή), godliness (εὐσέβεια), brotherly affection (φιλαδελφία) and love (ἀγάπη).

Scholarship is divided on whether there is some sequential relationship between these virtues, or if their arrangement is largely arbitrary.[47] A separate but related issue is whether or not the contents of this virtue list comes from the stock of ancient virtues that

[47] Charles, *Virtue Amidst Vice*, 145-146. Charles concludes that the Virtue List has been specifically arranged with a degree of linear development, such that one virtue leads to and enables the next. He says, "A prime example of this is 2 Pet. 1.5-7, which features an ethical progression that builds toward a climax in ἀγάπη. Each virtue, a fruit of the life of faith, facilitates the next; none is independent of the others, as is suggested by the εν δὲ τῇ syntactical arrangement of vv. 5-7. The virtues cannot stand in unrelated or unconnected juxtaposition." Charles' syntactical argument is stronger than that of most scholars who share his conclusion, who inevitably proceed by offering up various conceptual links between the virtues in the list.

The following commentators argue that there is a sense of logical progression amongst the items of the list: Michael Green, *2 Peter and Jude*, TNTC, 18 (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1987), 85-91; Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter*, 187.

Richard Wilson, on the other hand, argues that there is no progression to the list: Richard F. Wilson, *2 Peter*, SHBC, 22 (Macon: Smyth & Helwys, 2010), 298.

might be found in any other first century ethical discourse, or whether the list has been curated by the author to form something of a Christian virtue list.[48] Regardless of the conclusions drawn on these issues, scholarship has widely agreed that the placement of the first and final members of the list ("faith" and "love") is significant, and that they, at least, do bear a distinctive Christian stamp.[49] Faith and love have been placed at the book-ends of this list because they "are appropriate Christian virtues with which to begin and end the chain."[50] This section will not go about attempting to solve the issues of progression in the virtue list, or the socio-religious origins of the items, but instead we will analyse what this passage might contribute to the collection's teaching on the primacy, scope and praxis of love.

4.3.2.1 The Primacy of Love

The author indicates the primacy of love in two ways. First, the climactic positions that φιλαδελφίαν ("brotherly love") and ἀγάπην ("love") occupy in the virtue list. J. Daryl Charles, in his monograph on the virtue list, concludes that ἀγάπην stands as the climactic item in the list.[51] The climactic positioning of "love" is evidence of its primacy among the other virtues in the list. In light of this, Lockett describes love as "the crowning virtue of the Christian life."[52]

The second way that the author underlines the primacy of love is the way that the author frames the virtue list. Both before and after the virtue list, the author stresses the

[48] Charles, *Virtue Amidst Vice*, 139-140, 146. On this point, Charles occupies a mediating position. He acknowledges the Stoic/pagan influences upon 2 Peter's Virtue List, saying, "The Hellenistic thought-world, on display in 1.3-4, comes to expression in vv. 5-7 as well. Of the eight virtues listed in vv. 5-7, ἀρετή (moral excellence), γνῶσις (knowledge), ἐγκράτεια (self-control), ὑπομονή (perseverance), εὐσέβεια (godliness) and φιλαδελφία (brotherly affection) all appear in one form or another in comparable (pagan) ethical lists, of which ἀρετή, γνῶσις, ἐγκράτεια and εὐσέβεια are most common." (pp. 139-140) However, he also maintains that "the catalog of virtues in 2 Peter is not largely random; rather, it demonstrates from a Christian standpoint a logical interconnection of virtues, all of which move toward the highest virtue, ἀγάπη." (p. 146)

[49] The absence of πίστις and ἀγάπη from the list of parallel virtue lists is significant at this point.

[50] Wilson, *2 Peter*, 298. In terms of ancient discourse and the literary forms that ancient ethical teaching traditionally took, this virtue list conforms to the literary device known as *sorite*. See: Henry A. Fischel, "The Uses of Sorites (Climax, Gradatio) in the Tannaitic Period", *HUCA* 44 (1973): 119-151. In this article, Fischel describes a sorites: "The sorite is a series of statements which proceed, step by step, through the force of logic or reliance upon a succession of indisputable facts, to a climactic conclusion, each statement picking up the last key word (or key phrase) of the preceding one."

[51] Charles, "Virtue in 2 Peter 1:5-7", 70-71; Charles, *Virtue Amidst Vice*, 145-146.

[52] He goes on and says, "Because of the position of this virtue list in the structure of 2 Peter, and the position of love within the list, it is reasonable to highlight the overall significance of the command to love for 2 Peter." Lockett, *Letters for the Church*, 214.

necessity of obtaining these virtues. He introduces the catalogue by exhorting his readers to pursue these virtues "by exerting every effort" (v. 5). The adverbial participial phrase "exerting every effort" (σπουδὴν πᾶσαν παρεισενέγκαντες), highlights the kind of commitment that the author expects the readers to exercise in their pursuit of these virtues, and especially the climactic virtue of love.

Similarly, immediately after the virtue list, the author explains the positive and negative consequences of pursuing or not pursuing the virtues. Verses 8-11 say:

> [8]ταῦτα γὰρ ὑμῖν ὑπάρχοντα καὶ πλεονάζοντα οὐκ ἀργοὺς οὐδὲ ἀκάρπους καθίστησιν εἰς τὴν τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ ἐπίγνωσιν· [9]ᾧ γὰρ μὴ πάρεστιν ταῦτα, τυφλός ἐστιν μυωπάζων λήθην λαβὼν τοῦ καθαρισμοῦ τῶν πάλαι αὐτοῦ ἁμαρτιῶν. [10]διὸ μᾶλλον, ἀδελφοί, σπουδάσατε βεβαίαν ὑμῶν τὴν κλῆσιν καὶ ἐκλογὴν ποιεῖσθαι· ταῦτα γὰρ ποιοῦντες οὐ μὴ πταίσητέ ποτε. [11]οὕτως γὰρ πλουσίως ἐπιχορηγηθήσεται ὑμῖν ἡ εἴσοδος εἰς τὴν αἰώνιον βασιλείαν τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν καὶ σωτῆρος Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ.
>
> [8]For, if these things are yours and are increasing, they prevent you from being useless and unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. [9]For the one who lacks these things, he is blind, being near-sighted, having forgotten the cleansing of his former sins. [10]Therefore, all the more, brothers, exert every effort to make certain your calling and election; for if you do these things you will never ever fall. [11]For thus, entrance into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ will be richly supplemented for you.

On the negative side of things, the author makes it clear in verse 9 that unless his readers "exert" every effort (σπουδήν in verse 5, and σπουδάσατε in verse 10) to obtain these things (i.e. the virtues of verses 5-7, and especially the climactic virtues of love) they are "blind" (τυφλός), "near-sighted" (μυωπάζων) and "forgetful" (λήθην λαβὼν). On the positive side though, if the readers do pursue the virtues, and especially love, the author assures them in verse 8 that they will not be "useless" (ἀργοὺς) or "unfruitful" (ἀκάρπους), and in verses 10-11 that they "will never ever fall" (οὐ μὴ πταίσητέ ποτε) and that "entrance into the eternal kingdom" (ἡ εἴσοδος εἰς τὴν αἰώνιον βασιλείαν) will be "supplemented" (ἐπιχορηγηθήσεται, cf. ἐπιχορηγήσατε in verse 5) for them. In other words, the reader's growth in "brotherly love" and "love" is the final, necessary stage of development that their faith must undergo, if they are to be useful, fruitful, not forgetful and enter into the Kingdom.

In §4.3.1, we have already noted a number of verbal and conceptual resonances between our current passage and James 2. Here we note another resonance between the two passages, as well as a wider conceptual resonance that extends to James 2:14-26 and 1 John 4:20.

In the virtue list, the first and last items are πίστις, "faith", and ἀγάπη, "love." James 2:5 (cf. v. 1) also contains the first and final members (πίστις, "faith", and ἀγάπη, "love") of 2 Peter's virtue list:

<table>
<tr><th colspan="2">2 Peter 1:5-7</th><th colspan="2">James 2:1 and 5</th></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="2">[5]καὶ αὐτὸ τοῦτο δὲ σπουδὴν πᾶσαν παρεισενέγκαντες ἐπιχορηγήσατε ἐν τῇ **πίστει** ὑμῶν τὴν ἀρετήν, ἐν δὲ τῇ ἀρετῇ τὴν γνῶσιν… [7]ἐν δὲ τῇ φιλαδελφίᾳ τὴν **ἀγάπην**.</td><td rowspan="2">[5]And also for this same reason, exerting every effort, supplement your **faith** with virtue, and virtue with… [7]and brotherly love with **love**.</td><td>Αδελφοί μου, μὴ ἐν προσωπολημψίαις ἔχετε τὴν **πίστιν** τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ τῆς δόξης.</td><td>My brothers, you cannot hold the **faith** of our Lord Jesus Christ of glory while showing favouritism.</td></tr>
<tr><td>ἀκούσατε, ἀδελφοί μου ἀγαπητοί· οὐχ ὁ θεὸς ἐξελέξατο τοὺς πτωχοὺς τῷ κόσμῳ πλουσίους ἐν **πίστει** καὶ κληρονόμους τῆς βασιλείας ἧς ἐπηγγείλατο τοῖς **ἀγαπῶσιν** αὐτόν;</td><td>Listen, my beloved brothers; has not God chosen those who are poor in the world to be rich in **faith** and heirs of the kingdom which he promised to those who **love** him.</td></tr>
</table>

Figure 17 - Faith and Love in 2 Peter 1:5 and James 2:5 (cf. v. 1)

Conceptually, it seems that both James and 2 Peter know of a kind of "faith" that is incomplete on its own, such that we could say: faith that issues forth in favouritism, instead of mercy towards the poor (James) is of the same order as faith that is not supplemented with love (2 Peter).

Furthermore, when framed in the above fashion, i.e. an incomplete faith, another conceptual resonance within the collection emerges. The well-known "faith and works" passage in James 2:14-26 similarly knows of a kind of incomplete "faith" (πίστις, vv. 14, 17–18, 20, 22, 24, 26). In this instance, the faith is incomplete not because it lacks "love," but because it lacks "works" (vv. 14, 17–18, 20–22, 24–26). The problem with such workless faith, according to James, is that it is "useless" (ἀργή, v. 20), and equally, according to 2 Peter, if believers allow their faith to mature into love, it prevents them from being "useless" (ἀργοὺς, v. 8). This verbal resonance (useless: ἀργή in James 2:20 and ἀργοὺς in 2 Peter 1:8) further solidifies the conceptual resonances established above.

A further conceptual resonance is found in 1 John's insistence that confession, in all its various permutations, when devoid of right action, is not true confession (cf. 1:6;

2:4, 9, 15; 4:20). 1 John 4:20 is perhaps the clearest expression of this motif in the letter, it reads:

> ἐάν τις εἴπῃ ὅτι ἀγαπῶ τὸν θεὸν καὶ τὸν ἀδελφὸν αὐτοῦ μισῇ, ψεύστης ἐστίν· ὁ γὰρ μὴ ἀγαπῶν τὸν ἀδελφὸν αὐτοῦ ὃν ἑώρακεν, τὸν θεὸν ὃν οὐχ ἑώρακεν οὐ δύναται ἀγαπᾶν.
> If anyone claims to love God and hates his brother, he is a liar; for, the one who does not love his brother, whom he has seen, is not able to love God, whom he has not seen.

Verbally, we note the absence of the "faith" word group in this passage, which formed an element of the verbal resonances between James 2:1-13, 14-26 and 2 Peter 1:5-11. But, conceptually, the same notion of a kind of "faith" which is incomplete without love, is present. It is phrased in terms of a kind of "confession" which is incomplete without love. For the author of 1 John, similarly to the authors of James and 2 Peter above, a claim to love God, that is not accompanied by love for others is a lie.

In 2 Peter 1:5-11, the primacy of love is highlighted both by the climactic position that love occupies in the virtue list, as well as the argument to which the virtue list belongs. This primacy finds a host of resonances across the collection, in the passages that discuss: "faith without works" (James 2:14-26), "faith without love" (2 Peter 1 and James 2:5) and "confession without love" (1 John 4:20).

4.3.2.2 The Scope of Love

In terms of the scope of love in 2 Peter 1:5-11, the most important piece of evidence is the interrelation between the final items of the virtue list: brotherly love (φιλαδελφία) and love (ἀγάπην). Some have suggested that the two terms are basically cognates, and that the shift from one to the other is inconsequential.[53] While others have maintained that the shift between terms is reflective of an exhortation towards intra-communal love and extra-communal love, respectively.[54]

Schreiner's discussion of this verse evidences no shift in understanding between φιλαδελφία and ἀγάπην. Regarding φιλαδελφία, he says, "The focus is on the love between fellow believers, on the family-like devotion that should characterize the

[53] Thomas R. Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, NAC (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 2003), 301.
[54] Reidar Aasgaard, ""Brotherly Advice" Christian Siblingship and New Testament Paraenesis", in *Early Christian Paraenesis in Context*, eds. J. Starr and T. Engberg-Pedersen (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2004), 252-254; Gene L. Green, *Jude & 2 Peter*, BECNT, 22 (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2008), 195-196.

Christian community."[55] Then, when talking about ἀγάπην, Schreiner does not indicate that there is any form of expansion in terms of the scope of love.[56] For him, it seems that the two terms are essentially synonymous, although Schreiner does elevate ἀγάπη as somehow superior, calling it "Christian love," although the distinguishing feature of ἀγάπη does not seem to be its scope, so much as its quality.

Others however, have argued that the terms should be differentiated from one another, such as Reidar Aasgard and Gene Green. They both agree with Schreiner, that φιλαδελφία refers to intra-communal love. Aasgard argues that the term φιλαδελφία is located firmly in the realm of metaphorical sibling language.[57] Thus, the phrase implies: "emotional closeness, mutual love and support, and honourable living."[58] Similarly, Green argues that φιλαδελφίαν possesses a strong sense of exclusivity to it, stating, that it is "the love that family members extend to each other and not love toward those outside the family unit."[59]

Concerning ἀγάπην, though, Green describes it as the love that "was also to be shown to those outside the Christian family."[60] Green argues that the word ἀγάπην extends love outside the community, because it recalls the love that "God demonstrated to humanity," before citing 1 John 4:8, "God is love."[61] Green's citation of 1 John 4:8, and the consequent inter-textual reading of 2 Peter 1:7 with 1 John 4:7-12 that he offers is noteworthy. In it, Green tries to use 1 John 4:7-12 to substantiate his claim that ἀγάπην in 2 Peter 1:7 is extra-communal in scope, a thesis that is fraught with problems.

First, the basis for Green's reading of 1 John 4 and 2 Peter 1 (that the word ἀγάπη appears in both passages), is too narrow to support performing an intertextual reading of these passages. As this thesis has attempted to demonstrate, a single shared term between two passages is not enough suggest to the reader of the collection that the passages ought to interpret (i.e. amplify/dampen) one another. Generally, a set of verbal resonances, or a

[55] Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, 301.
[56] His entire discussion reads: "The chain climaxes with Christian love, the supreme evidence that one is a believer. Paul said love is the goal of Christian instruction (1 Tim 1:5). It is the most excellent way (1 Cor 12:31–13:13), the virtue that sums up all other virtues (Col 3:14). Anyone who loves will possess the other qualities Peter mentioned. The false teachers are lacking in faith and love and hence are not genuine believers at all." Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, 301.
[57] Aasgaard, "Brotherly Advice", 252-254.
[58] Aasgaard, "Brotherly Advice", 254.
[59] Green, *Jude & 2 Peter*, 195.
[60] Green, *Jude & 2 Peter*, 196.
[61] Green, *Jude & 2 Peter*, 196.

combination of verbal and conceptual resonances together would provide a sufficient connection between the passages to begin to explore the amplification effect of each passage on the other.

More importantly though, 1 John does not really offer a parallel semantic situation to 2 Peter 1:7 at this point. 2 Peter 1:7 contains both φιλαδελφία and ἀγάπη. For 1 John to be a good point of comparison, it would need to use both terms in its discourse as well. But, as it stands, the term φιλαδελφία is entirely absent from 1 John. If 1 John used both terms, then the argument that the word choice itself indicates intra- or extra-communal love would be convincing. But, considering that 1 John only knows of an ἀγάπη-love, Green's comparison feels superficial.

Moreover though, even if we grant that 1 John 4:7-12 is a valid conversation partner for 2 Peter 1:7 at this point, Green's reading of 1 John 4:7-12 is certainly the minority view. He suggests that:

> Love was also to be shown to those outside the Christian family (1 Thess 3:12), despite the hostility often directed at the church by the wider society. Christian love [finds] its source and model in the love that God demonstrated to humanity, even in their hostility against him (Matt 5:43-48; John 3:16; 1 John 4:19). God is love (1 John 4:8), and for that reason those in relationship with him love the ones who are also recipients of his love (1 John 4:7-12).

Green seems to suggest that it is "humanity" in general, who are "the recipients of [God's] love." This conclusion leads him to suggest that the scope of the love to be practiced by the readers is towards humanity in general, and thus, extra-communal. However, 1 John 4:7-12 specifies three times that the ἀγάπη that the readers are to have is for "one another" (1 John 4:7, 11, 12), and, thus seems to be intra-communal in scope, not extra-communal (as reviewed earlier, this is the standard scholarly assessment of this passages).

In summary, Green's argument for understanding ἀγάπη in 2 Peter 1:7 as extra-communal in scope, rather than intra-communal, on the basis of an intertextual reading with 1 John 4:7-12 is unconvincing. If anything, a collective reading of these passages would amplify an intra-communal understanding of love in 2 Peter 1:7, because the love in 1 John is certainly intra-communal. Below, in §4.3.3, we will discuss a better point of resonance for 2 Peter 1:7, namely, 1 Peter 1:22, in which both φιλαδελφία and ἀγάπη

appear together. We will argue that 1 Peter 1:22 amplifies an intra-communal reading of ἀγάπη here in 2 Peter 1:7.

4.3.2.3 The Praxis of Love

In the above section, we have seen how James 2:14-26 is related to 2 Peter 1:5-11 and Johannine passages like 1 John 4:20, by means of the incomplete faith/confession motif. We noted above that these passages insist that faith/confession are incomplete without love. Indeed, love functions throughout the collection as the final constituent part of faith, with the exception of James 2:14-26, which uses the more general "works." In this sense, the theologically loaded, albeit pragmatically vague, term "works" has a particular form amplified by the collection's teaching elsewhere (i.e. love). When read in the context of the collection, particularly the assertion of 2 Peter 1:8 that love prevents believers from being "useless" (ἀργοὺς), we could paraphrase James 2:20 as: "Faith apart from *love* is useless."

4.3.2.4 Conclusion to Love in 2 Peter 1:5-11

2 Peter 1:5-11 has highlighted the primacy of love in a significant way, through the motif of faith that necessarily results in faith, otherwise it is 'incomplete' in some sense. In our discussion of practical expressions of love, we used the 'incomplete' faith motif to further define the "works" of James 2:14-26, as works of love, and especially, works of love towards the needy. Concerning the scope of love, we analysed Green's attempt to amplify the interpretive option of reading the climactic virtue of love in 2 Peter 1:7 as extra-communal. However, the argument was unconvincing. We will have another discussion of the scope of love envisioned by 2 Peter 1:7, but this time reading it in the context of 1 Peter 1:22, which shares the dual terms φιλαδελφία and ἀγάπη. We turn now to consider the primacy, scope and praxis of love in 1 Peter.

4.3.3 1 Peter

There are a number of exhortations in 1 Peter concerning love (1:22; 2:17; 3:8; 4:8). We will analyse these passages in terms of primacy, scope and praxis.

4.3.3.1 The Primacy of Love

The passage which most clearly demonstrates the primacy of love in 1 Peter is 1 Peter 4:8, which reads:

> πρὸ πάντων τὴν εἰς ἑαυτοὺς ἀγάπην ἐκτενῆ ἔχοντες, ὅτι *ἀγάπη καλύπτει πλῆθος ἁμαρτιῶν.*
> Above all, have earnest love for one another, because love covers a multitude of sins.

The phrase πρὸ πάντων is an unusual idiomatic phrase.[62] It seems to function here to introduce what is, for the author, an exhortation of utmost importance.[63] This demonstrates that love holds a place of primacy for the author of 1 Peter, in the sense that it is "above all" (1 Peter 4:8).

In verse 7, the author reminds his readers of the eschatological nature of their existence, "The end of all (πάντων) is near" (4:7). The word play in vv. 7-8 seems to suggest that in light of the end "of all," Peter declare that love must come "above all."

According to Michaels, the impact of "the play on words ('all… above all') is, if anything, to heighten Peter's emphasis on mutual love as the most urgent necessity for Christian believers."[64] Peter's insistence that love is an "urgent necessity" conceptually

[62] The force of πρὸ πάντων is amply clear. Stanley Porter says that the sense of the phrase is to indicate "Priority", while BDF terms it "Preference" and A. T. Robertson calls it "Superiority." A.T. Robertson, *A Grammar of the Greek New Testament in the Light of Historical Research*, 4th ed. (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 1934), 622; F. Blass et al., *A Greek Grammar of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1961), 114; Stanley E. Porter, *Idioms of the Greek New Testament* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1994), 171. Similarly, in the more recent EGGNT commentary on James, Greg Forbes has stated that the phrase πρὸ πάντων "should be taken in a logical sense." Greg W. Forbes, *1 Peter*, EGGNT (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 2014), 147.

[63] Interestingly, the same idiom πρὸ πάντων occurs in James 5:12, however, at that point most commentators disagree with grammarians, arguing instead that the phrase is a structural marker indicating the conclusion of the epistle. The reason for this suggestion is that the ethical injunction that follows the phrase πρὸ πάντων in James 5:12 ("Do not take an oath") is not normally perceived of as a central and crucial ethical injection, unlike 1 Peter 4:8, which introduces an exhortation for love. Few commentators follow the grammarians at this point, and instead, normally conclude that this phrase introduces the beginning of the end of James. There, the phrase "Above all" seems unable to sustain the freight of indicating the author's chief ethical command, and so it is normally conceived of as indicating the beginning of the letter conclusion of the letter. Chris Vlachos summarises this view well when he says, "Since, however, it is difficult to see a clear connection to the foregoing or why a prohibition against oath-taking would be presented as the climax of James's parenesis, it may be that the phrase is a literary cliché [similar] in [meaning] to Paul's τό λοιπόν, 'finally', signalling that the letter is coming to an end." Vlachos, *James*, 178.

[64] J. Ramsey Michaels, *1 Peter*, WBC (Waco: Word, 1988), 246.

resonates with the primacy given to love in the passages analysed previously in this chapter (i.e. James 2:8-11,[65] 14-26; 2 Peter 1:5-11 and 1 John 4:20).

Another significant passage concerning love in 1 Peter is 1:22, which is also verbally and conceptually resonant with 4:8. 1 Peter 1:22 says: "Having purified your souls, by obedience to the truth, for a sincere brotherly love, love one another earnestly from pure hearts" (Τὰς ψυχὰς ὑμῶν ἡγνικότες ἐν τῇ ὑπακοῇ τῆς ἀληθείας εἰς φιλαδελφίαν ἀνυπόκριτον ἐκ καθαρᾶς καρδίας ἀλλήλους ἀγαπήσατε ἐκτενῶς). The primacy of the command (ἀγαπήσατε) to love here is indicated by the telic use of the preposition εἰς, denoting the purpose of the purification of the reader's souls.[66] This purification came about by means of their obedience to the truth,[67] and the purpose of their purification is explicitly that they might love one another. Given that the purpose of the reader's purification is love, one can surmise that love is to be the chief end of the readers. Both passages insist upon the "earnest" nature of the reader's pursuit of this love (ἐκτενῶς in 1:22, and ἐκτενῆ in 4:8). In both 1 Peter 1:22 and 4:8, the primacy of love in the mind of the author is indicated by their insistence that the readers are to have "earnest" love for one another, and by the fact that the exhortations to love are presented as either the purpose of their salvation (1:22) or the most important ethical injunction of the letter "above all" (in 4:8).

4.3.3.2 The Scope of Love

In §4.3.2.2, we discussed the shift in vocabulary from φιλαδελφία to ἀγάπη in 2 Peter 1:7. We noted that Green attempted to use the extra-communal scope of 1 John 4:7-12 to extend the scope of love in 2 Peter 1:7. However, we argued that the parallels did not function as Green claimed. A better parallel passage for 2 Peter 1:7 is 1 Peter 1:22,

[65] Darian Lockett also notes a connection between James 2:8 and 1 Peter 1:22. However, in his article, he is largely focused on their shared use of Leviticus 19:18, and especially what such shared usage might suggest about the circumstances of their composition. Lockett investigates the question of whether this shared use of Leviticus 19:18 is the result of James and 1 Peter drawing upon a pool of shared tradition or some form of literary dependence upon one another (either James borrowing from 1 Peter, or vice versa). While such tradition-historical considerations are interesting, in our methodology, this speculation about origins is beside the point: what matters is regardless of the source of the resonances, they are present to be heard by the reader of the collection. See: Darian Lockett, "The Use of Leviticus 19 in James and 1 Peter: A Neglected Parallel", *CBQ* 82, no. 3 (2020): 456-472.

[66] Forbes, *1 Peter*, 49.

[67] This is probably a reference to their reception of the Gospel, i.e. their conversion. However, on the complexities of this passage, see: Evang, "Ek kardias allēlous agapēsate ektenōs: zum Verständnis der Aufforderung und ihrer Begründungen in 1 Petr 1:22f", 112-118.

because it contains both of the relevant terms in close proximity, which more closely mirrors the situation of 2 Peter 1:7.

Importantly, in 1 Peter 1:22, the verb that Green conceives of as extra-communal in scope (ἀγαπήσατε) is accompanied by the reciprocal pronoun ἀλλήλους. In addition to the inherently intra-communal scope implied by the reciprocal pronoun ἀλλήλους ("one another"), the author's fronting of the pronoun, i.e. placed before the verb it modifies, further emphasises this intra-communal scope. The intra-communal scope of love in 1 Peter 1:22, indicated both by the noun φιλαδελφία and the reciprocal pronoun modifying ἀγαπάω, is evidence of the wider intra-communal concern found throughout 1 Peter.

1 Peter has a very high frequency of what Aasgaard calls "metaphorical siblingship language."[68] According to Aasgaard, three out of six of the occurrences of φιλαδελφία ("sibling-love") in the New Testament occur in the Petrine Epistles (1 Pet 1:22 and twice in 2 Pet 1:7), as well as the only instances of φιλάδελφος ("sibling-loving", 1 Pet 3:8) and ἀδελφότης ("siblingship", 1 Pet 2:17; 5:9) appearing in 1 Peter. This high proportion of siblingship language indicates the general emphasis in 1 Peter upon intra-communal relations.

Conversely however, 1 Peter also contains the clearest articulation of a missional motif in the Catholic Epistle collection (cf. 1 Peter 2:9, 12, 15; 3:1-2, 15-16; 4:11). 1 Peter 2:12 explicitly relates the audience's lifestyle to the conversion of the pagans around them:

> τὴν ἀναστροφὴν ὑμῶν ἐν τοῖς ἔθνεσιν ἔχοντες καλήν, ἵνα ἐν ᾧ καταλαλοῦσιν ὑμῶν ὡς κακοποιῶν ἐκ τῶν καλῶν ἔργων ἐποπτεύοντες δοξάσωσιν τὸν θεὸν *ἐν ἡμέρᾳ ἐπισκοπῆς*.
> Keep your conduct among the nations noble, in order that whenever they speak against you as evil doers, seeing your good deeds, they might glorify God on the day of his visitation.

Clearly, 1 Peter contains a missional motif, and thus, a concern for the salvation of outsiders. One might think that 1 Peter's mission motif would shift the focus of love away from within the community and include those on the outside. It could be that the extra-communal scope of 1 Peter's missional motif, amplifies the suggestion that the dual language of love (φιλαδελφία and ἀγάπη) in 2 Peter 1:7 and 1 Peter 1:22 represents both intra-communal and extra-communal love.

[68] Aasgaard, "Brotherly Advice", 241-242.

However, the fact that whenever 1 Peter employs its missional motif (1 Peter 2:9, 12, 15; 3:1-2, 15-16; 4:11) love terminology is absent, indicates that the extra-communal concern of the missional motif would not be naturally relatable by the reader to the concept of love. So, while we do not see the extra-communal missional motif being connected to love in 1 Peter, we do a consistent demarcation of the scope of love to within the community (1 Peter 1:22; 2:17; 3:8; 4:8; 5:14). This is especially the case in 1:22, which would amplify a similar intra-communal understanding of the scope of love in 2 Peter 1:7.

4.3.3.3 The Praxis of Love

Continuing our analysis of 1 Peter 1:22, we note that the imperative ἀγαπήσατε is modified by three adverbial qualifiers. First, he says that their brotherly love is to be "sincere" (ἀνυπόκριτον). Second, that their love for one another needs to originate "from a pure heart" (ἐκ καθαρᾶς καρδίας). Finally, that their love for one another is to be "earnest" (ἐκτενῶς). 1 Peter's concern that the love of his readers be sincere, arises from a pure heart and is earnest, reflects that the author knows of a kind of love that is insincere, arises out of impure motives and is half-hearted.

1 Peter's concern at this point resonates with a similar exhortation in 1 John. In 1 John 3:18, the author exhorts the readers against a kind of love that is only "with word and speech," and instead towards a kind of love that is "in work and truth" (1 John 3:18). 1 Peter and 1 John are both concerned that their readers do not practice a kind of love that is full of good intentions, while not meeting the practical needs of the people around them. Consequently, both authors not only urge the adoption of love by their readers, but they also qualify their commands in order to insist that love be authentic and practical.

4.3.3.4 Conclusion to Love in 1 Peter

1 Peter highlighted the primacy of love in both the way it introduced 4:8 ("above all") and the way it qualified its instructions in 1:22 and 4:8 ("earnest"). Love in 1 Peter was strictly intra-communal in scope.[69] The missional motif present throughout 1 Peter

[69] Our analysis coheres with that of Darian Lockett's quite closely. He says, "Rather than loving any neighbour generally, the consistent instruction throughout 1 Peter is to love 'brothers,' or better, 'the family

does widen the purview of 1 Peter's concern to include outsiders, but in those passages love language is absent. Where we do see 'love' terminology being used, there are always features of the text that indicate the restriction of the love to the intra-communal context. We also demonstrated how, contrary to Green's argument, the intra-communal scope of 1 Peter 1:22, which verbally resonates with 2 Peter 1:7, amplifies an intra-communal reading of the latter passage.

4.4 The Network of Love and its Implications for 1 John

This chapter began by exposing a pair of scholarly critiques of love in the Johannine Epistles. First, that it is too strictly intra-communal in scope, rendering it sectarian in nature. Second, that it does not possess any points of practical expression, but merely discussions about abstract ethical topics (such as purity [1 John 3:3], righteousness [2:29; 3:7, 10)] and most prominently, love [3:11, 23; 5:2-3]). In our initial examination of 1 John, we observed both of these features of Johannine love, as well as a third, namely, the primacy given to love within the Johannine Epistles. We turn now to consider how the network of associations outlined above might influence our understanding of these motifs of Johannine love.

4.4.1 The Primacy of Love

In 1 John, love is repeatedly presented as the sole defining characteristic of someone who has been born of God. Judith Lieu, for instance, describes love as one of 1 John's "Tests of Life."[70] According to Lieu, in 1 John, love is a "test" of whether or not a person truly has life in them. [71] This reveals the important role that love plays within the theology of 1 John.

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of believers' (NRSV). The command to love one another is also found in 1 Peter 3:8; 4:8. Such love has in view fellow members of the community, who, for 1 Peter, are likely facing suffering and hardship due to their commitment to following in Christ's footsteps (1 Pet 2:21-23). Love specifically for fellow believers is stressed in 1 Peter rather than love for the neighbour generally due to this specific context of suffering in 1 Peter." Lockett, *Letters for the Church*, 214.

[70] Judith Lieu, *The Theology of the Johannine Epistles*, NTT, ed. J. D. G. Dunn (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 49-71, esp. 65-71.

[71] Lieu adopts this descriptor from the earlier work of R. Law, *The tests of life: A study of the First Epistle of St. John* (Edinburgh, 1909).

This conception of love can be demonstrated from multiple passages in 1 John. 1 John 3:10 is one of the clearest articulations in the letter:[72]

> ἐν τούτῳ φανερά ἐστιν τὰ τέκνα τοῦ θεοῦ καὶ τὰ τέκνα τοῦ διαβόλου· πᾶς ὁ μὴ ποιῶν δικαιοσύνην οὐκ ἔστιν ἐκ τοῦ θεοῦ καὶ ὁ μὴ ἀγαπῶν τὸν ἀδελφὸν αὐτοῦ.
> By this the children of God and the children of the devil are revealed; everyone who does not practice righteousness is not from God, nor the one who does not love his brother.

In other words, the person who does not do righteousness or love his brother is not from God, but rather is a child of the devil. Love is presented here as the proof of genuine faith and identity as a member of the family of God.

In addition to our recognition of the role of love in 1 John, the network of associate passages outlined in this chapter offers a number of conceptually resonant passages throughout the entire Catholic Epistle collection. For James, the concept of a faith (Jas 2:1) that does not include love (2:8) is a contradiction in terms (2:1) and a transgression of the Law, which results in judgement (2:8-13). For 2 Peter, a faith (2 Pet 1:5) that does not tread the inevitable path towards love (1:7) is a symptom of blindness and forgetfulness (1:9) and the cause of falling (1:10). 2 Peter also provides the corollary to this fact, namely, that if love is present, it prevents believers from being useless and unfruitful in their knowledge (1:8) and ensures their entrance into the Kingdom of Jesus (1:11). In the case of 1 Peter, love is the explicit purpose of the reader's salvation (1 Pe 1:22), while also being the final exhortation of the author (4:8). The primacy given to love throughout the Catholic Epistle collection resonates with and amplifies the primacy of love in 1 John.[73]

[72] Lieu identifies the presence of this motif at 2:10; 3:14; 4:7-20; 5:1, 10; additionally, though we submit that the motif is present at 3:10-11 and 23. While all of the above passages evidence the motif in various ways, the clearest articulations are 3:10, 14; 4:8, 20 and 5:1.

[73] The primacy of love in the Catholic Epistle collection is recognised also by Darian Lockett (see: Lockett, *Letters from the Pillar Apostles*, 201-209. For Lockett, the consistent presentation of the primacy of love is a line of corroborative evidence of collection consciousness. He says, "Furthermore, thematic cohesion alone is unable to indicate the plausibility of collection consciousness; rather, the thematic connections explored below work along with the paratextual and compositional indicators already noted, thus these themes serve as corroborative evidence of collection consciousness." (p. 201)

4.4.2 The Scope of Love

Regarding the question of the scope of love, our earlier discussion in §5.2.2, demonstrated the strength of the proposal that the scope of Johannine love is largely limited to within the boundaries of the community:

General discussion about love[74]	1 John 2:5; 3:1, 17; 4:8, 9. 10, 16, 17, 18, 19; 5:3
Love for "the brother/s"	1 John 2:10; 3:10, 14, 16; 4:20, 21
Love for "one another"	1 John 3:11, 23; 4:7, 11, 12
Love for "those who are born of God"	1 John 5:1
Love for "the children of God"	1 John 5:2
Prohibition against love for "the world"	1 John 2:15

Figure 18 - A Taxonomy of Love in 1 John

From the above table, it is clear that without exception every occurrence of love in 1 John is intra-communal in scope. One might hypothesise that the collection offers a solution to this problem. Perhaps the intra-communal nature of love in 1 John is dampened by a chorus of extra-communal love throughout the rest of the Catholic Epistle collection. However, this is just simply not the case.

In our exegetical discussions above, we observed no clear instance of an exhortation to extend love outside the boundaries of the community. In our discussion, three possibilities came to the forefront as possible exhortations for the extension of extra-communal love (James 2:5; 1 Peter 1:22 and 2 Peter 1:7; and 1 Peter 2:12), but in each case the resonances elsewhere in the collection amplified an intra-communal scope of love, rather than an extra-communal. First, the "neighbour" in James 2:8, may represent an outsider, especially given the hypothetical narrative context of James 2:2-4 and 6-7. However, the only other usage of "neighbour" in the Catholic Epistle collection (James 4:12) clearly emphasises the intra-communal scope of the term, which coheres well with the citation of the love command from Leviticus 19:18 in James 2:8.[75] The intra-communal nature of "neighbour" in James 4:12, amplifies the possibility of interpreting the "neighbour" of James 2:8 as those within the community.

The second possibility for extra-communal love in the Catholic Epistle collection was the dual terms φιλαδελφία and ἀγάπη in 2 Peter 1:7, in which the first refers to a "brotherly-love" and the latter to love which extends outside the brotherhood. However,

[74] These include the formulaic "love of God/the Father" (1 John 2:5, 15; 3:1, 17; 4:9; 5:3) as well as the more esoteric discussions about "perfect" love (1 John 2:5; 4:12, 17, 18).

[75] Jacob Milgrom argues that love for the non-Israelite is not treated in Leviticus 19, until verse 34, indicating that Leviticus 19:18 is an intra-communal command. Jacob Milgrom, *Leviticus 17–22*, AB (New Haven: Yale Univesity Press, 2000), 1654.

the only other place where such a construction appears, containing both terms for love (1 Peter 1:22), clearly delimits ἀγάπη to within the bounds of the community, with the use of the reciprocal pronoun ἀλλήλους ("one another"). Additionally, Green's argument for assuming the extra-communal meaning of ἀγάπη rests largely on a minority reading of 1 John, in which its love is extra-communal, and not only extra-communal, but formulated in such a clear and emphatic way that it is capable of amplifying extra-communal love elsewhere. This runs counter to the current scholarly perspective on Johannine love.

The final possibility for extra-communal love in the Catholic Epistle collection is the missional motif found in 1 Peter. However, as observed, the missional motif is related to a whole range of different concepts (such as: proclamation [2:9], the observance of noble conduct, resulting in glorifying God [2:12], silencing the ignorance of foolish people [2:15], wives winning husbands to the faith by their conduct [3:1-2], answering those who ask for the reason for their hope [3:15], putting to shame those who slander believers [3:16]), however the missional motif never involves love. Therefore, the idea of using 1 Peter's missional motif to amplify an extra-communal understanding of love in 1 John is unfounded, because 1 Peter's missional motif is not related to love. More accurately, perhaps, 1 Peter exhorts its readers to love one another, with the intention that their love is to be visible to outsiders, so that they might observe it, and (hopefully) respond to it. But nonetheless, the missional motif, as construed in 1 Peter, is not an exhortation to love outsiders, but rather an exhortation to let their intra-communal love be visible to outsiders.

In view of these considerations, a collective reading of the Catholic Epistles actually amplifies the intra-communal nature of love in 1 John, rather than mitigate it. Also, conversely, the intra-communal nature of love within 1 John functions to amplify the occurrences of love throughout the collection. For the Catholic Epistles, love has a special role within the bounds of the believing community.

4.4.3 The Praxis of Love

As observed in §4.2.3, according to many scholars, 1 John is relatively devoid of practical ethical instruction. 1 John 3:17, however, has been understood as providing a clear and practical ethical injunction. It urges commitment to the financial aid of the poor within the community. Significantly, in our exegetical discussion earlier, we noted that

this passage resonates with a similar illustration offered in James 2:15-16. The illustration, although sharing no verbal resonances, clearly resonates conceptually:

James 2:15-16	1 John 3:17
[15]ἐὰν ἀδελφὸς ἢ ἀδελφὴ γυμνοὶ ὑπάρχωσιν καὶ λειπόμενοι ὦσιν τῆς ἐφημέρου τροφῆς, [16]εἴπῃ δέ τις αὐτοῖς ἐξ ὑμῶν· ὑπάγετε ἐν εἰρήνῃ, θερμαίνεσθε καὶ χορτάζεσθε, μὴ δῶτε δὲ αὐτοῖς τὰ ἐπιτήδεια τοῦ σώματος, τί τὸ ὄφελος;	[17]ὃς δ’ ἂν ἔχῃ τὸν βίον τοῦ κόσμου καὶ θεωρῇ τὸν ἀδελφὸν αὐτοῦ χρείαν ἔχοντα καὶ κλείσῃ τὰ σπλάγχνα αὐτοῦ ἀπ’ αὐτοῦ, πῶς ἡ ἀγάπη τοῦ θεοῦ μένει ἐν αὐτῷ;
[15]If a brother or sister is naked and they are lacking daily food, [16]and someone from you says to them; “Go in peace, be warmed and be filled,” but you do not give to them the things needed for the body, what good is that?	[17]But whoever has the goods of the world and sees his brother having need and closes his heart from him, how can the love of God remain in him?

Figure 19 - Illustrations of Love in 1 John 3:17 and James 2:15-16

Both 1 John and James offer the illustration of a brother (or sister, in James) who is in financial distress, in order to underline the importance of love expressing itself practically in the rendering of aid to those in need. In 1 John, the function of the illustration, according to verse 18, is to encourage the expression of love in practical ways, i.e. “not in word or speech, but in deed and truth.” Interestingly, this is the opposite of how scholars typically understand 1 John’s teaching on love.

1 John 2:15-16 is another passage that scholars have turned to, in order to provide 1 John’s ethics with some substance. The triad of vices in verse 16 has proven stimulating for scholarship:

> [15]Μὴ ἀγαπᾶτε τὸν κόσμον μηδὲ τὰ ἐν τῷ κόσμῳ. ἐάν τις ἀγαπᾷ τὸν κόσμον, οὐκ ἔστιν ἡ ἀγάπη τοῦ πατρὸς ἐν αὐτῷ· **[16]** ὅτι πᾶν τὸ ἐν τῷ κόσμῳ, ἡ ἐπιθυμία τῆς σαρκὸς καὶ ἡ ἐπιθυμία τῶν ὀφθαλμῶν καὶ ἡ ἀλαζονεία τοῦ βίου, οὐκ ἔστιν ἐκ τοῦ πατρὸς ἀλλ’ ἐκ τοῦ κόσμου ἐστίν.
> [15]Do not love the world, nor the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in them; [16]because all the things which are in the world, the desire of the flesh and the desire of the eyes and the pride of life, are not from the Father, but are from the world.

Recently though, commentators and scholars have suggested that finding specific referents for the three phrases is unwarranted. It is not that, “the desire of the flesh” refers to sexual desires, “the desire of the eyes” to covetousness and greed, and “the pride of life” to wealth.[76] Lieu, in her commentary, says, “It is probably unnecessary to identify separate activities among the three phrases.”[77] Lieu argues that these three phrases are oblique, and as such, they function to “infuse the rather abstract concept of ‘the world’

[76] Loader, "2:15-17 in 1 John’s Ethics", 223.
[77] Judith M. Lieu, *I, II, & III John: A Commentary*, NTL (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2008), 95.

with the immediacy of potential threat – something that in the Greek as well as in other New Testament traditions, required continuous vigilance."[78] For Lieu, the ambiguity of the text does not just caution her from searching for specificity, but it is actually an intentional rhetorical ploy on the part of the author.

William Loader, however, does assign a specific referent to the triad, saying, "the triad of vices may have more coherence and specific reference than is usually assumed."[79] He suggests that the three vices all refer to the realm of "the depraved excesses of the rich at their often pretentious banquets."[80] At these parties, Loader says, "Excess greed, excess liquor and excess sex go together."[81] Loader then connects the denunciation of the depraved lifestyle of the wealthy, in 2:15-16, with the call to offer practical aid and material assistance to others in 1 John 3:17-18. Therefore, for Loader, 1 John 2:15-17 and 3:17-18 must be construed as a "challenge [to] the neglect of the ethical obligation of support for the poor."[82] The author does not want his readers to be enraptured by the superficially attractive lifestyle that the world offers, but instead to be committed to aiding the poor financially. Significantly, as observed above, the same ethical concern is present elsewhere in the Catholic Epistle collection (namely, James 2:8-13 and 15-16). Therefore, Loader's suggestion is rendered all the more legible if 1 John is read as a member of the Catholic Epistle collection.

Therefore, while there is a particular paucity of practical examples of love in 1 John. The same can hardly be said of the collection to which 1 John belongs. Throughout the rest of the Catholic Epistle collection, a network of practical expressions of love have appeared, as we have traced out our network around the love motif. As the resonances bring additional practical expressions of love into the network, further resonances can be activated, bringing with them again even more points of application. To be sure, as the nodes travel further along the branches of the network, the connections to the initial love

[78] Lieu, *1, 2, 3 John*, 95. Lieu also says: "It would be looking for too much precision to ask whether the flesh and the eyes are the source of desire, or its location, or whether they are its objects (i.e. what the eyes see, the external); similarly, there is no need to determine quite how arrogance and life relate to each other." (pp. 94-95). For Lieu, the ambiguities present in this three-fold formula in verse 16 heightens the sense of danger posed by 'the world' in verse 15.
[79] Loader, "2:15-17 in 1 John's Ethics", 223.
[80] Loader, "2:15-17 in 1 John's Ethics", 231.
[81] Loader, "2:15-17 in 1 John's Ethics", 230. On this point, Loader draws significant parallels with the thought of Philo, see pp. 229-230.
[82] Loader, "2:15-17 in 1 John's Ethics", 235.

motif grow fainter, such that the network sprawls out from love in an ever widening and diffuse manner.

4.5 Conclusion

The most important observation this chapter has established is that love is a prominent motif in the Catholic Epistle collection. Not only is its prominence observable in terms of the frequency with which discussions about love occur, but also in the fact that there is a primacy attached to love consistently throughout the Catholic Epistle collection. Love is called the "royal law" (Jas 2:8) and the "law of liberty" (Jas 1:25; 2:12). It is commanded "above all" (1 Peter 4:8) and in light of the "end of all" (1 Peter 4:7). It is the culmination of faith (2 Peter 1:5-7), which guarantees fruitfulness (2 Peter 1:8) and entrance into the Kingdom (2 Peter 1:11). The Catholic Epistles condemn confession without love (1 John 4:20) and faith without love (2 Peter 1:5-11; James 2:5). In light of the above discussion, the possibility of interpreting the "works" of the notorious "faith and works" passage in James 2:14-26 as works of love is amplified.

While 1 John is saturated with teaching on love, scholarship has critiqued its love for being intra-communal in scope and vague in application. The goal of this chapter was to examine whether the collective approach provided some means of alleviating the Johannine Epistles of these critiques. In terms of the scope of love, the intra-communal scope of love in the Johannine Epistles is amplified by a resonant emphasis throughout the collection. However, there are three passages in which extra-communal love may be in view.

First, the quotation of the Levitical love command in James 2:8 uses the generic "neighbour" (πλησίον), which could entail the extension of love to those outside the community. The immediate literary context is indeterminate, as the hypothetical situation in James 2:2-3 could involve community members or outsiders. More constructive is the other use of πλησίον in the collection, found at James 4:12. In the context of James 4:12, the referent of πλησίον is clearly a fellow community member, as they are called a "brother" (ἀδελφοί) three times in verse 11, and the entire discussion is led by the exhortation to not speak evil against ἀλλήλων ("one another") in verse 11. Extending the intra-communal nature of πλησίον from James 4:11-12 back to James 2:8, leads to an intra-communal understanding of James' use of the Levitical love command.

The second potential instance of extra-communal love is the use of φιλαδελφία and ἀγάπη/ἀγάπαω in 1 Peter 1:22 and 2 Peter 1:7. This dual usage suggests to some that both intra-communal and extra-communal love are being highlighted as separate kinds of love that the readers are to perform. However, the discussion in 1 Peter 1:22 limits the scope of the ἀγάπη love to command to those within the community, by restricting the object of the verb to ἀλλήλους ("one another").

The final potential instance of extra-communal love in the Catholic Epistle collection is the missional motif present in 1 Peter (most clearly exemplified in 2:12, cf. 1 Peter 2:9, 15; 3:1-2, 15-16; 4:11). However, as we demonstrated above, when 1 Peter discusses his reader's mission towards outsiders, the author does not express it in terms of love, but rather in terms of good conduct (cf. 1 Pet 1:15, 17-18; 2:12; 3:1-2, 3:16). First Peter's convention of using 'love' language for intra-communal exhortations and 'conduct' language in the extra-communal context of the missional motif gives the impression that for our author love is to be reserved for believers who are properly to be regarded as familial. While believers are to "honour everyone," they are to "love the brotherhood" (1 Peter 2:17).

In each of the possible exceptions above, we saw that the love presented is best understood as intra-communal in scope. Moreover, love across the rest of the collection is consistently intra-communal, and consequently, the network which emerges is resoundingly intra-communal. This intra-communal network amplifies the already intra-communal scope of love in 1 John, and as a corollary, dampens the possibility of reading love in 1 John as extra-communal in scope.

On the other hand, the absence of specific applications of love in the Johannine Epistles is largely remedied by the collective approach. Where 1 John lacks practical expressions of love, the other Catholic Epistles have an abundance. As the reader familiarises themselves with the collection, the various practices to which love is related elsewhere begins to coalesce to create a composite picture of the life of love. Love involves prayer (especially for the sick and wayward, cf. Jude 20-23), favouritism (cf. James 2:2-3, 8), financial aid for the poor (cf. 1 John 3:17), hospitality (cf. 2 John 5-6, 10-11). In conclusion, while 1 John does not offer examples of love in action, the Catholic Epistles express what it means to "not love in word or talk, but in work and truth" (1 John 3:18).

5 Restoration in the Catholic Epistles

5.1 Introduction

In chapter 3, we applied our collective reading strategy to mimesis, a motif common in Greco-Roman ethical discourse. Then, in chapter 4, we considered love, paying particular attention to what effect a collective approach to the Catholic Epistles might have upon the highly contested issue of love's scope in the Johannine Epistles. Now, in this chapter, we consider a motif that only comes into its full prominence within the context of the Catholic Epistle collection: the restoration of an errant believer. The importance of this theme has already been foreshadowed as a literary or structural element of the collection by David R. Nienhuis, Robert W. Wall, and Darian Lockett, who have all recently called for treating the collection as a meaningful hermeneutical context of the Catholic Epistles.[1] Interestingly, while these three scholars are united in their identification of James 5:19-20 as crucial to the motif, they bring different passages within the collection into dialogue (namely, 1 John 5:14-16 [Nienhuis] and Jude 22-23 [Nienhuis/Wall and Lockett]). Furthermore, each of their treatments, rather than exploring the motif as it functions within the collection, only offers an account for its presence within the collection. These very differences in their treatment invite a further consideration of the motif that, at the very least, takes all three of these passages into consideration, and also further explores the presence and permutations of the motif across the collection.

This chapter takes these three recent works as its starting point. We will analyse the three major passages to which these scholars have drawn our attention in their contexts, namely: James 5:13-20; 1 John 5:14-18 and Jude 20-25. Our discussion of these passages will focus primarily upon the scope and agency of the envisioned restoration, issues which have received treatment in the existing literature. Consequently, this chapter will provide the first sustained treatment of these three passages from the perspective of the collection, tracing the resonances that exist between these passages and exploring the interpretive possibilities generated by our collective approach.

[1] Nienhuis, *Not by Paul Alone*, 198-203; Nienhuis and Wall, *Reading the Epistles*, 47; Lockett, *Letters from the Pillar Apostles*, 192-196.

5.2 Review of Recent Literature

As noted above, in the existing scholarly literature three passages have been identified as the nodes of this motif: James 5:19-20, 1 John 5:16 and Jude 22-23. They are presented together below for the sake of convenience:

James 5:19-20	[19]Ἀδελφοί μου, ἐάν τις ἐν ὑμῖν πλανηθῇ ἀπὸ τῆς ἀληθείας καὶ ἐπιστρέψῃ τις αὐτόν, [20]γινωσκέτω ὅτι ὁ ἐπιστρέψας ἁμαρτωλὸν ἐκ πλάνης ὁδοῦ αὐτοῦ σώσει ψυχὴν αὐτοῦ ἐκ θανάτου καὶ καλύψει πλῆθος ἁμαρτιῶν.	[19]My brothers, if anyone among you is deceived from the truth and someone turns them back, [20]let them know that the one who has turned a sinner back from the error of their way will save their soul from death and cover a multitude of sins.
1 John 5:16	[16]Ἐάν τις ἴδῃ τὸν ἀδελφὸν αὐτοῦ ἁμαρτάνοντα ἁμαρτίαν μὴ πρὸς θάνατον, αἰτήσει καὶ δώσει αὐτῷ ζωήν, τοῖς ἁμαρτάνουσιν μὴ πρὸς θάνατον. ἔστιν ἁμαρτία πρὸς θάνατον· οὐ περὶ ἐκείνης λέγω ἵνα ἐρωτήσῃ.	[16]If anyone sees their brother committing a sin that does not result in death, he should ask and he will give life to them – to those whose sin does not result in death. There is a sin that results in death, I do not say that they should ask concerning that sin.
Jude 22-23	[22]καὶ οὓς μὲν ἐλεᾶτε διακρινομένους, [23]οὓς δὲ σῴζετε ἐκ πυρὸς ἁρπάζοντες, οὓς δὲ ἐλεᾶτε ἐν φόβῳ μισοῦντες καὶ τὸν ἀπὸ τῆς σαρκὸς ἐσπιλωμένον χιτῶνα.	[22]And, show mercy to those who dispute, [23]save others by snatching them from the fire, and show mercy to others with fear, hating even the garment stained by the flesh.

Figure 20 - James 5:19-20; 1 John 5:16; Jude 22-23

5.2.1 David Nienhuis (2007)

David R. Nienhuis' 2007 monograph, *Not by Paul* Alone, is the first of these works that presents the collection as a significant hermeneutical context for interpreting the Catholic Epistles.[2] Nienhuis argues that James is a consciously composed introduction to the Catholic Epistle collection. One of the literary links that Nienhuis uses to anchor James to the rest of the collection is the exhortation to restore an errant believer, which he finds in James 5:13-20 and 1 John 5:14-16.

Nienhuis notes that both James and 1 John show sustained interest in the topic of prayer throughout their letters (cf. James 1:5-8; 4:1-3; 5:13-20 and 1 John 3:18-22; 5:16-17), with the conclusions of both (James 5:19-20 and 1 John 5:14-16) containing a number of points of contact. Nienhuis observes eight intersections between James 5:19-20 and 1 John 5:14-16:

[2] Nienhuis, *Not by Paul Alone*.

1. Both prayers are prayers of request.
2. Both are prayers on behalf of another believer.
3. The power of prayer is described by calling it "confident" (1 John 5:14, ἡ παρρησία) or "faithful" (James 5:15, τῆς πίστεως).[3]
4. The efficacy of such faithful/confident prayers is assured in both passages.
5. The 'recipient' of both prayers is identified as a "sinner."
6. The result of both prayers is described as a soteriological restoration.
7. In both passages, the salvation is a deliverance from "death."
8. Both letters end with a reference to falling into 'error' (James) or idolatry (1 John).[4]

A number of Nienhuis' above points of contact will be identified as resonances and be discussed below in greater detail.[5] Nienhuis does not explain the presence of these links by appealing to some form of shared "traditional source material"; rather he offers these links as corroborating evidence for his proposal that the Epistle of James has "a second century origin" and was consciously composed with the intention of linking it with other existent Catholic Epistles (in this instance, 1 John).[6] Nienhuis says: "Our hypothetical author [of James] found much in 1 John with which to echo in agreement."[7]

While Nienhuis argues that James is based on 1 John's exhortation to restoration, he contends that the author of James diverges from his 1 John source text in a significant way, namely, in terms of the scope of the concern. He says:

> Where both make it clear that believers can affect another's status before God, 1 John draws a limit to the communal concern… The author of James, by contrast, will not allow believers to think that errant siblings are to be left alone. His closing exhortation (as well as his entire letter) is an open-ended exhortation to seek and save those in the community who have gone astray.[8]

In other words, Nienhuis sees James as reversing 1 John's limited intra-communal concern. However, Nienhuis' language in his claim that James' scope is broader than that of 1 John, lacks precision, to such a degree that it undercuts his own argument. He says:

> The author of James, by contrast, will not allow believers to think that errant siblings are to be left alone. His closing exhortation (as

[3] Nienhuis overlooks the fact that παρρησία in 1 John 5:14 is a noun that describes the characteristic of the one praying, rather than the prayer itself. Nevertheless, the certainty of the prayer is supported by the argument in 1 John 5:14-15, rather than any particular word.
[4] For a fuller discussion of these points, see: Nienhuis, *Not by Paul Alone*, 202-203.
[5] As described in chapters 2 and 3, the major difference between the present work and that of Nienhuis' is: whereas Nienhuis was concerned with explaining the historical origins of the literary links between James and the other Catholic Epistles, this project's goal is to explore the resonances that exist among the Catholic Epistles, once the collective perspective is adopted.
[6] Nienhuis, *Not by Paul Alone*, 164.
[7] Nienhuis, *Not by Paul Alone*, 227.
[8] Nienhuis, *Not by Paul Alone*, 203.

> well as his entire letter) is an open-ended exhortation to seek and save those in the community who have gone astray.[9]

Nienhuis' language and argument implies that 1 John would allow believers to think that "errant siblings" or "those in the community who have gone astray" should be left alone and not sought after, a position which James 5:19-20 then reverses. But, Nienhuis' own discussion of 1 John 5:16 demonstrates that this is not his interpretation of 1 John. He highlights that 1 John "draws a limit to the communal concern."[10] He identifies those who are excluded from the concern as "the children of the devil" (3:10), because "they are of the world" (4:5) and "the whole world is in the power of the evil one" (5:19).[11] It seems that the limit of the restorative concern, according to Nienhuis, is the boundaries of the community, i.e. those who are of the world and are outside of the community are outside the limits of restorative care in 1 John 5:16. If this is the case, then Nienhuis' assertion that James expands the scope of concern from 1 John to encompass "errant siblings" and "those within the community who have gone astray", is not actually an expansion at all, but merely a reinforcing of the limitation already set by 1 John. In fact, Nienhuis' own argument seems to assume that the scope of 1 John 5:16 and James 5:19-20 is the same, because three of Nienhuis' eight points of contact between James 5:13-20 and 1 John 5:16 are based upon the fact that both passages are discussing the restoration of the same kind of person.[12] The imprecision of his language at this point undermines his assertion that James expands on the scope of 1 John.[13]

To further support his suggestion that James exhorts the believer to adopt a broad scope of concern, Nienhuis discusses James' "allusion to the proverb found in 1 Peter 4:7-8."[14] Nienhuis states that Peter alludes to Proverbs 10:12, and that his allusion occurs in what he calls an "overtly communal" context (i.e. the allusion is immediately preceded by an exhortation to intra-communal "love" [τὴν εἰς ἑαυτοὺς ἀγάπην ἐκτενῆ ἔχοντες, "earnestly have love for one another"] and followed by an exhortation towards generous

[9] Nienhuis, *Not by Paul Alone*, 203.
[10] Nienhuis, *Not by Paul Alone*, 203.
[11] Nienhuis, *Not by Paul Alone*, 203.
[12] Points 2 ("The prayer spoken of is on behalf of *another believer*"), 5 ("The recipient of prayer in both passages is identified as a *sinner*") and 6 ("Both describe a soteriological restoration of the brother"). Nienhuis, *Not by Paul Alone*, 202, emphasis original.
[13] Our discussion of James 5:13-20 and 1 John 5:14-18 will consider the issue of the scope of restoration again.
[14] Nienhuis, *Not by Paul Alone*, 203.

hospitality [v. 9]).[15] For Nienhuis, this communal context solves the "notoriously difficult" problem of "determin[ing] whose sins are covered in this proverb: the one who loves or the one who is loved."[16] The communal context renders the perception that it is necessary to choose between the two parties as "mistaken to require such an individualistic decision."[17] Rather than one or the other, Nienhuis suggests that, in 1 Peter, love covers sin in the communal sense that it refuses to "hold a grudge" and is constant in "its commitment to hospitality."[18]

Nienhuis' argument then reaches its conclusion when he argues that James alludes to the same proverb as 1 Peter, with the implication that the scope of the 'covering' is the same in James 5:20 as it is in 1 Peter 4:8, i.e. communal.[19] He says, "The author of James appears to have alluded to the same proverb found in 1 Peter at the very end of his letter in a similar spirit, asserting that communal concern should be oriented toward the restoration of God's people through the forgiveness of sins."[20] Nienhuis' language seems to have slipped here again. He contends that James 5:19-20 represents a conscious expansion of the intra-communal restorative concern of 1 John 5:16, to some broader concern in James. He suggests that James accomplishes this expansion by means of an allusion to a proverb present in 1 Peter, and yet, he describes the James passage as "asserting that communal concern should be oriented toward the restoration of *God's people*."[21] In other words, Nienhuis' argument is that the author of James transformed the intra-communal restoration of 1 John, by expanding its scope to encompass God's people. It is unclear then, in what sense the expansion to God's people is actually an expansion.

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[15] Nienhuis, *Not by Paul Alone*, 202.
[16] Nienhuis, *Not be Paul Alone*, 203.
[17] Nienhuis, *Not by Paul Alone*, 203.
This is the same approach as Elliot who says, "Whether the 'covering' of forgiveness involves the sins of the one who loves… or of those loved… is not a relevant issue here, since the mutuality of Christian relations is in view and the forgiving of *all* sins is implied." Elliott, *1 Peter*, 751.
[18] Nienhuis, *Not by Paul Alone*, 203.
These are actions (forgiveness and hospitality) that Nienhuis finds in the context of 1 Peter's allusion to this proverb in 1 Peter 4:8b and v. 9, respectively.
[19] While restoration of a sinner is not specifically in view in 1 Peter 4:8, in our previous chapter we argued that because of the network of associations surrounding the love command in 1 Peter 4:8 that the exhortation to restore an errant believer becomes a strand of the love network that is activated at this point.
[20] Nienhuis, *Not by Paul Alone*, 203. In order to understand the logic of this argument, Nienhuis' broader thesis must be kept in mind. He is arguing that James is a second-century, pseudepigrapha, which purpose is to act as a frontispiece of an already existent group of Catholic letters, introducing them by means of creating literary and thematic connections.
[21] Nienhuis, *Not by Paul Alone*, 203, emphasis added.

The lack of clarity concerning the scope of the original exhortation that James is expanding, as well as the scope of the expansion, undermines Nienhuis' argument.

Nonetheless, Nienhuis' work is important for our purposes because it represents an attempt to use the collective approach in solving the critical issues surrounding the exhortation to restore an errant believer in the Catholic Epistles. Nienhuis helpfully raises the issue of scope in relation to restoring an errant believer, even if his arguments for an expansive view of restoration in James 5:19-20 appear less than clear. Moreover, as will become evident in what follows, the way in which Nienhuis brings the passages together does not give due consideration to a broader network of resonances between these (and other) passages in the collection. These resonances place the passages into a network which serves to amplify particular interpretive possibilities, even to the degree that other possibilities are therefore dampened. As we will argue below, concerning the scope of restoration and James 5:19-20, the intra-communal interpretive possibility amplified by 1 John 5:16.

5.2.2 David Nienhuis and Robert Wall (2013)

David Nienhuis and Robert Wall, in their co-authored volume, observe conceptual parallels between James 5:19-20 and Jude 22-23.[22] Concerning the concluding exhortation of Jude, Nienhuis and Wall write:

> Significantly, James concludes with a similar statement that to rescue believers who 'stray from the truth' is to save their 'souls from death' (Jas 5:19-20); and in fact this orientation to the congregations internal spiritual welfare will become an organizing theme of the entire collection… the conclusions of both letters call the church to rescue its members who have wandered from the truth (James 5:19-20; Jude 22-23).[23]

The appearance of these twin exhortations towards restoring an errant believer in the conclusions of both James and Jude is significant for Nienhuis and Wall, because these epistles stand at the bookends of the Catholic Epistle collection in its final form, and therefore, contribute to the "aesthetic excellence" of the collection.[24] By "aesthetic

[22] Nienhuis and Wall, *Reading the Epistles*, 48.
[23] Nienhuis and Wall, *Reading the Epistles*, 48.
[24] Nienhuis and Wall, *Reading the Epistles*, 43-49. Concerning this "Aesthetic Principle," Nienhuis and Wall say, "The phenomenon of collection-building within the bounds of the canonical process appears to

excellence" Nienhuis and Wall essentially mean the function they perceive that the collection played in the canon within which it was received. The motif of the restoration of the errant believer supports the "aesthetic excellence" of the collection to the extent that it contributes to the use of the Catholic Epistle collection within the biblical canon as the facilitator of orthodox interpretation of the existing Pauline Epistle collection.[25] In light of this, they argue that the call to pursue an errant believer is not only the reader's vocation but also, "apropos to the collection's motive and role within the biblical canon."[26] In other words, for Nienhuis and Wall, not only do the Catholic Epistles call their readers to pursue one another from straying into error, the Catholic Epistle collection itself was formulated as a canonical collection with the very purpose of pursuing Christians from the errors of Pauline misinterpretation. Beyond this brief, high-level discussion though, Nienhuis and Wall do not examine the points of resonance between the passages.[27]

Interestingly, Nienhuis and Wall barely address 1 John 5:14-16, which played such a major role in Nienhuis' earlier monograph.[28] Instead, they only discuss the placement of James and Jude "as the literary brackets of the entire collection," and

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follow a general pattern by which a body of individual writings or smaller collections … is finally stabilised, completed, and arranged as a whole collection. Moreover, the community's recognition of a collection's final shape is functional, measured by the overall effectiveness of its performances as a biblical canon in the formation and practice of Christian faith. We suggest that the aesthetic excellence of the CE collection, perhaps symbolised by its sevenfold membership, is evinced by several properties inherent in its final redaction that would seem to suggest its theological coherence and intended use within the biblical canon." (p. 43)

Then, after listing their seven properties of aesthetic excellence, they say, "Sharply put, then, each of these various 'properties' of a final redaction evinces historical moves that in some sense 'complete' and make more effective (with respect to the church's intentions for its Scripture) an earlier form of the collection." (p. 48)

[25] Nienhuis and Wall, *Reading the Epistles*, 38-39. Concerning the orthodox interpretation of the Pauline Epistles, they say, "Given the pervasive concern about protecting a right, 'catholic' reading of Paul against his many heretical champions, they [that is, third century tradents of the Catholic Epistle collection] would have received this collection as a kind of *unifying* safeguard against the many aspects of Paul's letters that are "hard to understand, which the ignorant and unstable twist to their own destruction, as they do the other Scriptures" (2 Peter 3:16)." (p. 39)

[26] Nienhuis and Wall, *Reading the Epistles*, 47-48. We will discuss this same theme in the Conclusion of this chapter (§5.6), when we identify a variety of other places within the collection where the Catholic Epistles show concern for the salvation of their readership.

[27] Nienhuis and Wall, *Reading the Epistles*, 9-10, 247-272; Robert W. Wall, "A Unifying Theology of the Catholic Epistles: A Canonical Approach", in *The Catholic Epistles and the Tradition*, BETL, 174, ed. J. Schlosser (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 2004), 13-40.

[28] The only evidence of the connections between 1 John 5:14-16 and the rest of the collection appears in the conclusion of their chapter on 1 John, in which they say, "The prayers for the restoration of straying Christians (5:14-16) are thematic of the rescue missions encouraged in the conclusions of James and Jude." Nienhuis and Wall, *Reading the Epistles*, 215.

especially James 5:19-20 and Jude 24-25 as "the conclusions of both letters."[29] This represents a limited treatment of the motif because it does not incorporate the other parts of the collection in which the motif is present. Moreover, their treatment also lacks specificity. For example, in their attempt to highlight the similarities between James 5:19-20 and Jude 22-23, they classify both exhortations as "a call [to] the church to rescue its members who have wandered from the truth."[30] While "rescu[ing] its members" may be an adequate description of the exhortation in James, the scope of Jude's restorative concern is more difficult to pin down, and, as we will demonstrate below, may well be directed towards outsiders (that is, the false teachers/opponents) rather than the members of the church.[31] If this is the case, then Nienhuis and Wall's description does not take into account the scope of both passages, but only James 5:19-20.

5.2.3 Darian Lockett (2017)

In a similar vein, Darian Lockett also notes the conceptual similarity present in the conclusions of James (5:19-20) and Jude (22-23), which he too observes stand as the first and last books of the collection.[32] Lockett understands these passages as framing devices identified and utilised by the early compilers of the collection.[33] Therefore, for Lockett, the commonalities that exist between the exhortations are evidence of early collection consciousness within the readers of the Catholic Epistles. He says:

> Taking this network of associations between the … concluding commands for restoration … it is plausible that the compiler(s) of the collection placed these two letters in first and last position in order to bookend the Catholic Epistles as a coherent collection.[34]

As a result of Lockett's interest in uncovering early collection consciousness in the reception of the Catholic Epistles, the motif of the restoration of an errant believer is not so much recognised as a "thematic connection" within the collection, but as a literary

[29] Nienhuis and Wall, *Reading the Epistles*, 47-48.
[30] Nienhuis and Wall, *Reading the Epistles*, 48.
[31] We will treat this topic more fully in §5.5 below, but for now we note that a number of commentators and recent scholars have identified the object of the exhortation in Jude 22-23 as Jude's opponents. See: Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter*, 115; Alicia J. Batten, "The Letter of Jude and Graeco-Roman Invective", *HvTSt* 70, no. 1 (2014): 1-7; Lockett, *Letters from the Pillar Apostles*, 196; Alexandra Mileto Robinson et al., "Showing Mercy to the Ungodly and the Inversion of Invective in Jude", *NTS* 64, no. 2 (2018): 194-212; Robinson, *Jude on the Attack*; Lockett, *Letters for the Church*, 208-209.
[32] Lockett, *Letters from the Pillar Apostles*, 188-189.
[33] Lockett, *Letters from the Pillar Apostles*, 196.
[34] Lockett, *Letters from the Pillar Apostles*, 229.

"framing device" at the bookends of the collection.[35] In other words, Lockett's concern when highlighting the connections between these passages is their structural significance for the collection, rather than a substantive analysis of them, which, prevents him from including 1 John 5:16 (for example) in his treatment.[36] In view of the fact that elsewhere Lockett discusses several "thematic connections"[37] across the Catholic Epistles, his omission of the "restoration of errant believers" from that discussion means that his comments are underdeveloped.

Moreover, unlike Nienhuis and Wall above, Lockett argues that the scope of the "command for restoration" between James 5:19-20 and Jude 22-25 is different. Lockett interprets James 5:19-20 as an exhortation towards restoring those within the community,[38] while Jude 22-25 is a command to show mercy to the intruders within the community.[39] Our discussion below will essentially agree with Lockett's in terms of identifying the scope of restoration in these passages.

5.2.4 Conclusion to Review of Recent Literature

Nienhuis' work (and to a lesser extent that of Nienhuis/Wall and Lockett) has flagged two significant issues that will guide our analysis of the major passages below: the scope of restoration (both who is called to the act of restoration and whom they are called to restore) and the agency of the restoration (through whom the restoration takes place). The works of the above scholars indicate that the motif of the restoration of an errant believer is important to the Catholic Epistle collection, but its significance for them is generally limited to certain reconstructions of the formation of the collection. This latter concern is beyond the scope of the current project; instead, this chapter intends to offer a more thoroughgoing analysis of the collection's teaching on this theme, which will enable

[35] Lockett, *Letters from the Pillar Apostles*, 229.
[36] In Lockett's commentary on the Catholic Epistles that adopts a collective approach, his analysis omits 1 John 5:16 from the conversation in two ways. First, in his discussion of Jude 22-23, he notes that James 5:19-20 and Jude 22-23 form an *inclusio* of the collection, and he discusses the function of Jude's doxology within the Catholic Epistle collection. He even presents a sidebar discussing the connections between James 5:19-20 and Jude 22-23, a discussion from which 1 John 5:16-17 is absent. (pp. 208-209) Second, his discussion of 1 John 5:16-17, also lacks any references to other members of the Catholic Epistle collection, such that it bears no significant difference to any other historical critical approach to the passage. (pp. 166-167) Lockett, *Letters for the Church*, 166-167, 208-209.
[37] Lockett, *Letters from the Pillar Apostles*, 196-229.
[38] Lockett, *Letters from the Pillar Apostles*, 193-194.
[39] Lockett, *Letters from the Pillar Apostles*, 196.

us to include in our analysis all the relevant passages within the Catholic Epistle collection.[40] Consequently, one of the primary contributions of this chapter is the treatment of these three passages alongside one another, the matter to which we now turn, beginning with James 5:13-20.

5.3 James 5:13-20

As outlined above, James 5:19-20 has been recognised in the literature as a key passage in the consideration of the motif of restoring the errant believer. It reads:

> [19]Ἀδελφοί μου, ἐάν τις ἐν ὑμῖν πλανηθῇ ἀπὸ τῆς ἀληθείας καὶ ἐπιστρέψῃ τις αὐτόν, [20]γινωσκέτω ὅτι ὁ ἐπιστρέψας ἁμαρτωλὸν ἐκ πλάνης ὁδοῦ αὐτοῦ σώσει ψυχὴν αὐτοῦ ἐκ θανάτου καὶ καλύψει πλῆθος ἁμαρτιῶν.
> [19]My brothers, if anyone among you is deceived from the truth and someone turns them back, [20]let them know that the one who has turned a sinner back from the error of their way will save their soul from death and cover a multitude of sins.

This passage is the last of four scenarios presented in verses 13-20 concerning the community's responses to its members' physical and spiritual ailments.

5:13a	Κακοπαθεῖ **τις ἐν ὑμῖν;**	Is anyone among you suffering?
5:13b	εὐθυμεῖ **τις;**	Is anyone cheerful?
5:14	ἀσθενεῖ **τις ἐν ὑμῖν;**	Is anyone among you weak?
5:19	ἐάν **τις ἐν ὑμῖν** πλανηθῇ ἀπὸ τῆς ἀληθείας…	If anyone among you is deceived from the truth…

Figure 21 - The Four Scenarios of James 5:13-20

The first two of these scenarios has engendered little scholarly controversy, but the third has split scholars into two camps, with every conceivable permutation between the camps.[41] The third scenario envisions someone calling the elders of the church to

[40] Fred Craddock, in his 1995 commentary on Jude, put together James 5:19-20, 1 John 5:16-17 and Jude 22-23 for the first time, predating any of the scholars reviewed above by over a decade. However, Craddock's treatment is far from an attempt to read the Catholic Epistles collectively. Craddock doesn't put Jude 22-23 into conversation with James 5:19-20 and 1 John 5:16 because they all belong to the Catholic Epistle collection, he chooses these passages to highlight the importance placed upon the motif of restoring wayward members in the early days of Christianity. After concluding that "the continuing faithfulness of its members… was critical to the life and witness of the church" Craddock's analysis of Jude moves forward in a typical historical critical manner, without any further references to James or 1 John. Fred B. Craddock, *First and Second Peter and Jude*, WEBC (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1995), 148-150.

[41] Andrew Bowden has recently classified the variety of approaches to the third scenario of James 5 (vv. 13-18) into five categories (he presents seven categories, but the final two categories avoid the debate altogether, by either asserting the disunity of verses 13-18, or classifying the verses as a health wish). Bowden classifies the existing scholarship based on "two basic questions: (1) What is the nature of the sickness described by James? and (2) What is the nature of the healing described by James?" (p. 68)

come and pray for them because of their weakness. The sickness here (ἀσθενεῖ in v. 14 and κάμνοντα in v. 15) need not be limited to physical sickness, but could also signify a kind of spiritual weakness.[42] The immediate context of James 5:14-15 does little to resolve the issue of whether we have here a reference to physical sickness or spiritual weakness, because there are references to both physical anointing with oil (v. 14) and the mutual confession of sin and prayer (v. 16). As we will see below, reading this passage within the collection of the Catholic Epistles will have an affect here even apart from the particular verses (19-20) identified by Nienhuis, Wall and Lockett.

The fourth scenario of James 5:13-20 shifts from one's individual physical sickness and/or spiritual weakness, to the observed sin of a brother. When witnessing a brother wandering into error, the readers are exhorted to return them to the truth from which they have wandered. In this way, there are two related, though different situations in view in James 5:14-20. In the first (vv. 14-18), an individual recognises their own need (whether physical or spiritual) and asks for prayer, while in the second (vv. 19-20), someone observes another's sin and brings them back to the truth. Having sketched the basic contours of James 5:13-20, we are now able to comment on the scope and agency of the restoration, as well as the resonances James 5:13-20 shares with other passages within the collection.

5.3.1 The Scope of Restoration in James 5:13-20

The passage calls believers within the community of faith to show concern for the salvation of other believers within the community. Four factors indicate that the concern to be shown is intra-communal in scope. First, the passage is addressed to "My brothers" (Ἀδελφοί μου), implying that those who are called to restore sinners from the error of

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The various positions include:

1. The sickness is physical, the healing is physical
2. The sickness is physical, the healing is spiritual
3. The sickness is physical, the healing is both physical and spiritual
4. The sickness is spiritual, the healing is spiritual
5. The sickness and healing are both spiritual and physical

For the scholars who subscribe to each of these views, see: Andrew M. Bowden, "An overview of the interpretive approaches to James 5.13-18", *CurBR* 13, no. 1 (2014): 68-76.

[42] BDAG lists this as a possible meaning of ἀσθενέω, although it classifies the usage in James 5:14 as the simpler physical illness. Similarly, the most common usage of κάμνω is to refer to a sort of fatigue or weariness of soul, although (again), BDAG classifies the usage in James 5:15 as the simpler, but rarer physical weakness. Frederick William Danker et al., *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and other Early Christian Literature*, 3rd ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 142 and 506.

their ways belong to the faith community being addressed by James.[43] Second, the object of the community's pursuit and restoration is τις ἐν ὑμῖν ("someone among you"). The prepositional phrase ἐν ὑμῖν ("among you"), suggests that the person who is deceived and in need of repentance is and/or was a member of the community, even given their current state of deception.[44] Third, this individual's wandering is said to be ἀπὸ τῆς ἀληθείας ("from the truth"). This implies that, at one time, these people were to be located *in* the truth, from which they have now been led astray. Sticking with the locative idea implied by the preposition ἀπὸ, the use of the verb ἐπιστρέφω, in both verses 19 and 20, suggests that the sinner is being returned *to* the truth, that is they are not being converted to the faith for the first, but being led in repentance, back to their faith. Lockett, for instance, adopts this view:

> Furthermore, the terms of "wandering", "bring back", and "error of his way" indicate that James' concern is not for conversion but, along with the imperative verbal form "you should know" [γινωσκέτω] in 5:20, this final aphorism conveys an admonition to the community to reclaim the wayward—to win back those already converted from wandering from the truth.[45]

The use of spatial language (such as ἀπὸ and ἐπιστρέφω in verses 19 and 20) yields us an additional observation though in terms of the scope of the exhortation. Given that the wanderer is being "returned *from* the error of their way" (v. 20) *to* the truth from which they have departed (v. 19), this would require that the restorer is also a member of the community of faith.

Finally, the opening phrase τις ἐν ὑμῖν (followed by a third person imperative) is the fourth and final repetition of a sequence of four scenarios started in James 5:13, as noted above. The renewal of the literary pattern indicates that verses 19-20 has some level

[43] Allison Jr., *James*, 782.
[44] Davids, *James*, 198.
[45] Darian Lockett has argued that the inconclusive results of the long-standing scholarly search for the literary structure of the book of James can be remedied by instead seeking out the "overall (theological) message" (p. 269), what Lockett calls "James' communicative intent." (p. 272) Lockett posits that James utilises the Two Ways motif throughout his work, and especially here at 5:19-20, the closing command. The use of the word ὁδοῦ in verse 20, and the insertion of an additional ὁδοῦ τῆς in the manuscript tradition (ℵ, 𝔓^{74}, 33, 81, 623, 1846 and 2426) modifying truth in 5:19 (i.e. "being deceived from *the way of* truth"), indicates that the text contains, and the early tradents of the text recognised the influence of, the Two Ways motif. Lockett, "Structure or Communicative Strategy", 278-279.

of conceptual continuity with the previous passage (vv. 13-18).[46] In other words, given that the referents of verses 13-14 seem to be members of the community, indicated by the fact that they are capable of praying (v. 13a), singing psalms (v. 13b) and calling the elders of the church to pray for them (v. 14a), I conclude that it seems likely that the referent of verse 19, the individual who turns the sinner back, is also a member of the community. Therefore, it seems that the scope of concern in 5:19-20 is intra-communal, that is, both the restorer and the errant believer are members within the community of faith being addressed. Having identified the scope of James 5:13-20 as intra-communal, we now turn to discuss the agency through which the restoration takes place.

5.3.2 The Agency of Restoration in James 5:13-20

At first glance, the passage appears to credit the salvation of the sinner's soul from death and the covering over of their sins to the believer who has acted in restoration, without any reference to God working in the restoration, salvation or forgiveness.[47] As Dale Allison states:

> It is noteworthy that at the end, James speaks of correcting the errant from 'the human side, as if it were a service, a favour or accommodation which one could grant another, to convert him.' Even though the subject is eschatological salvation, all the verbs have human beings as their subjects. God is not named, and there is not even a divine passive here.[48]

[46] On a very different basis, Dale Allison suggests that verses 13-18 should be connected to verses 19-20 through the traditional association between healing (in vv. 13-18) and repentance (vv. 19-20). Dale C. Allison, "A Liturgical Tradition behind the Ending of James", *JSNT* 34, no. 1 (2011): 3-18; Allison Jr., *James*, 784.

[47] Another vexing issue not treated directly here is the identity of whose soul is saved/whose sins are covered (or even whether these two actions might apply to different parties, i.e. the restorer and the wayward). While the most intuitive reading of the passage seems to be that it is the wayward believer's soul which is saved and whose sins are covered, the history of interpretation presents other options. Additionally, Dale Allison uncovers a strong insistence within other early Jewish and Christian sources "that one's sins can be forgiven through good works or helping others." Allison cites: LXX Dan 4.24; Tob 4.10; 12.9; Ecclus 3.30; Mt 5.7; Did. 4.6; 2 Clem. 15.1 (cf. 19.1; 1 Tim 4.16); 17.2; Pol. Phil. 10.2; Barn. 19.10; Pistis Sophia 104; m. 'Abot 5.18. He goes on to say:

"No less importantly, there seems to have been an interpretive tradition that referred 'will cover a multitude of sins' to one's own sins, not the sins of others. While one finds the latter application in Prov 10.12; 1 Pet 4.8; and 1 Clem. 49.5, the words have to do with atonement for one's own sins in 2 Clem. 16.4; Clement of Alexandria, Quis div. 38; and Origen, Hom. Lev. 2.4." See: Moo, *James*, PNTC, 319; Allison Jr., *James*, 787-789, quote from 789.

[48] Allison, *James*, 781-782.

In light of the lack of divine agency in the passage, the use of the verbs σώσει and καλύψει, in the context of death and sin respectively, are particularly striking. Both of these statements echo the testimonies of God's salvific intervention in the Psalms.[49]

James 5:20	Psalms
σώσει **ψυχὴν αὐτοῦ ἐκ θανάτου** "He will save his soul from death"	Psalm 33[32]:19 ῥύσασθαι **ἐκ θανάτου τὰς ψυχὰς αὐτῶν** To deliver their souls from death.
	Psalm 56:13 [55:14] ὅτι ἐρύσω **τὴν ψυχήν μου ἐκ θανάτου,** Because you delivered my soul from death.
	Psalm 116:8 [114:8] ὅτι ἐξείλατο **τὴν ψυχήν μου ἐκ θανάτου,** Because you have brought my soul from death.
καλύψει πλῆθος **ἁμαρτιῶν** "He will cover a multitude of sins."	Psalm 32[31]:1 Μακάριοι … ὧν **ἐπεκαλύφθησαν αἱ ἁμαρτίαι** "Blessed is … the one whose sins are covered."
	Psalm 85:2 [84:3] **ἐκάλυψας τὰς ἁμαρτίας** αὐτῶν. "You covered their sins."

Figure 22 - James 5:20 and the Psalms

In these Psalms, it is the LORD who is praised for the salvation from death and the covering/forgiveness of sins. This makes the statement of James 5:20 that, in the instance of one believer pursuing another believer's repentance from sin, the salvation and forgiveness come through the restorer, even more surprising.

Nevertheless, this apparent contrast between the divine agency of salvation and forgiveness in the Psalms and that of James 5:20 is mitigated somewhat by the context of James 5. As argued above, James 5:19-20 should be read in the context of James 5:13-18, not only because verses 13-18 form the literary context of verses 19-20, but also because the latter passage resumes the literary pattern of vv. 13-14ff (ἐάν τις ἐν ὑμῖν, "if anyone among you"). For our current discussion, it is important to see that in verses 15-16, salvation and forgiveness are attributed to the Lord. James 5:15-16 read:

[49] Commentators on James 5:20 will regularly point to the 'parallel' passage in 1 Peter 4:8, claiming that both are allusions to Proverbs 10:12 (see our earlier discussion in §6.1). But we agree with Patrick Hartin's summary of the situation, who, after noting the differences between James 5:20, 1 Peter 4:8 and the versions of Prov 10:12, says, "These differences show that neither Peter nor James can be said to be quoting Prov 10:12 directly. *First Clement 49:5* and *Second Clement 16:4* also show the usage of this phrase that occurs in 1 Pet 4:8. Perhaps the best solution to the relationship among these texts is to see James and Peter as using a saying that derives from the Scriptures but has become part of oral culture in a popular way." Hartin, *James*, 285.

As opposed to an allusion to Proverbs, we have here identified a strong verbal connection between the conclusion of James and the Psalms. Dan McCartney identifies the parallels between the covering of sins in James 5:20 and Psalms 32 and 85, however he misses the parallels between the saving souls from death and Psalms 33, 56 and 116. See: Dan G McCartney, *James*, BECNT (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2009), 263.

> καὶ ἡ εὐχὴ τῆς πίστεως σώσει τὸν κάμνοντα καὶ ἐγερεῖ αὐτὸν ὁ κύριος· κἂν ἁμαρτίας ᾖ πεποιηκώς, ἀφεθήσεται αὐτῷ. **16** ἐξομολογεῖσθε οὖν ἀλλήλοις τὰς ἁμαρτίας καὶ εὔχεσθε ὑπὲρ ἀλλήλων, ὅπως ἰαθῆτε.
> [15]And the prayer of faith will save the one who is sick and the Lord will raise him up; and if he has done sin, it will be forgiven him. [16] Therefore, confess your sins to one another and pray on behalf of one another, in order that you might be healed.

Verse 15 contains two verbs that conceptually parallel the verbs of verse 20.

James 5:15	James 5:20
καὶ ἡ εὐχὴ τῆς πίστεως **σώσει** τὸν κάμνοντα καὶ ἐγερεῖ αὐτὸν ὁ κύριος· κἂν ἁμαρτίας ᾖ πεποιηκώς, **ἀφεθήσεται** αὐτῷ.	**σώσει** ψυχὴν αὐτοῦ ἐκ θανάτου καὶ **καλύψει** πλῆθος ἁμαρτιῶν.
"And the prayer of faith **will save** the one who is sick and the Lord will raise him and if he has done sin, **it will be forgiven** him."	"He **will save** his soul from death and **he will cover** a multitude of sins."

Figure 23 - Verbal and Conceptual Resonances between James 5:15 and 5:20

In view of the parallelism in Ps 32:1 [31:1] and 85:2 [84:3] between "covering sin" and "forgiving transgressions" (ἀνομία), a similar conceptual overlap is highly plausible here.[50] Thus, in verse 15, the same concepts seem to be in focus as verse 20, but here the agency is attributed to God in three ways. First, it is the prayer of faith (and thus, by extension, the one to whom the prayer and faith are directed) which saves the sick. Second, the concept of the forgiveness of sins is communicated by means of the passive verb ἀφεθήσεται, which is the "divine passive" that Dale Allison noted was missing from verses 19-20.[51] Third, 5:15 explicitly identifies "the Lord" as the subject who raises up the sick person, and by extension the agent through whom the salvation and forgiveness come. Thus, in verse 15 the same concepts as verse 20 are treated, but whereas verse 20 attributed the restoration (and its consequent salvation and forgiveness) to the restorer, verse 15 locates the agency for salvation and forgiveness squarely in God.

Verse 16 arbitrates between the human agency observed in verse 20 and the divine agency of verse 15. Here, believers are commanded to confess their sins to one another and pray for one another (v. 16a), the purpose for which is that they might be healed (again, another divine passive).[52] Here, we see both the human agent and the divine coming together; believers are to confess and pray for one another, so that God might

[50] See: Wilhelm Mundle, "Hide, Conceal; καλύπτω, κρύπτω", in *NIDNTTE* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2014), 611-620, esp. section 4 on p. 615; John Goldingay, *Psalms*, BCOTWP (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2006), 453. Mitchell Dahood even goes so far as to say that translating the Hebrew כִּסִּיתָ with the English word "cover" actually "obscures the real meaning," because it means "remit." Mitchell Dahood, *Psalms II: 51-100*, AB (New York: Doubleday, 1968), 286.
[51] Allison Jr., *James*, 768.
[52] Blomberg and Kamell, *James*, 245.

bring healing.[53] Having identified the scope of James 5:13-20 as intra-communal, and the cooperative agency of both the human and divine actors, we will now explore some of the connections this passage has with other parts of the collection.

5.3.3 Resonances around James 5:13-20

For many interpreters, James 5:13-18 and 19-20 have been separated from one another, on the assumption that the former passage deals with physical sickness and the latter with sin and restoration.[54] However, Andrew Bowden[55] (and to a lesser extent Dale Allison)[56] have argued on internal grounds that verses 13-18 are concerned with spiritual weakness, not physical sickness, and therefore, are closely associated with verses 19-20. This section will consider what the collective approach can contribute to the discussion concerning the issue of the nature of the "sickness" in James 5.

I suggest that the possibility of interpreting James 5:14-16 as referring to spiritual weakness (an interpretive possibility already present on internal grounds), is amplified when this passage is read in the context of the collection. Here we will demonstrate that resonances with 1 Peter 2:24-25 and 1 John 5:14-16 amplify the sense of spiritual weakness in James 5:14-15.

First Peter 2:24-25 resonates with James 5 in a number of ways.

James 5:16a, 19-20	1 Peter 2:24-25
16ἐξομολογεῖσθε οὖν ἀλλήλοις τὰς **ἁμαρτίας** καὶ εὔχεσθε ὑπὲρ ἀλλήλων, ὅπως **ἰαθῆτε**.	**24**τὰς **ἁμαρτίας** ἡμῶν αὐτὸς ἀνήνεγκεν ἐν τῷ σώματι αὐτοῦ ἐπὶ τὸ ξύλον, ἵνα ταῖς **ἁμαρτίαις** ἀπογενόμενοι τῇ δικαιοσύνῃ ζήσωμεν, οὗ τῷ

[53] Another issue for the interpreter of James, outside of the purview of the above discussions (scope and agency), is the fact that James does not prescribe a method for returning a straying believer to the truth. Allison notes three options that have been proposed for the practical application of this text: ecclesiastical procedure (akin to something like Matthew 18:15ff), works of charity with right words, and prayer for others. While 5:19-20 is silent concerning the method by which "someone turns [a sinner]" (ἐπιστρέψῃ τις αὐτόν), if verse 16 is considered, as we have argued it should be, then it would seem that it is by means of regular, communal confession and intercessory prayer that the wayward are restored from error.

[54] For a useful introduction to the variety of issues at play in this passage, see: Bowden, "Approaches to James 5:13-18", 67-81. According to Bowden, the viewpoint that the sickness of James 5:13-18 is spiritual is the clear minority amongst scholars.

[55] Bowden argues that the verb ἀσθενέω was often used in the LXX for stumbling, in the sense of moral and spiritual failure to keep God's Law, and thus as a metaphor for sin, rather than to refer to physical ailments (cf. Jer 18:23; 27:32; Isa 7:429:4; Hos 5:5; Mal 3:11). Bowden goes on to suggest that given James' frequent allusions to the Septuagintal prophetic literature in the latter chapters of his epistle, it is likely that James is using ἀσθενέω as a metaphor for stumbling into sin. Andrew Bowden, "Translating Ασθενέω in James 5 in light of the prophetic LXX", *BT* 66, no. 1 (2015): 95-101.

[56] Dale Allison suggests that the motifs of healing for the sick and the restoration of the wayward had long been connected in the traditions of Israel and endured into Early Christianity. Allison, "Liturgical Tradition"; Allison Jr., *James*, 747-748, 780, n. 270. Allison connects the two motifs (healing of the sick and restoration of the wayward) and the two passages (James 5:13-18; 19-20). Allison Jr., *James*, 754-755.

19Ἀδελφοί μου, ἐάν τις ἐν ὑμῖν **πλανηθῇ** ἀπὸ τῆς ἀληθείας καὶ **ἐπιστρέψῃ** τις αὐτόν, **20** γινωσκέτω ὅτι ὁ **ἐπιστρέψας** ἁμαρτωλὸν ἐκ **πλάνης** ὁδοῦ αὐτοῦ σώσει **ψυχὴν** αὐτοῦ ἐκ θανάτου καὶ καλύψει πλῆθος ἁμαρτιῶν.	μώλωπι **ἰάθητε**. **25**ἦτε γὰρ ὡς πρόβατα **πλανώμενοι**, ἀλλ' **ἐπεστράφητε** νῦν ἐπὶ τὸν ποιμένα καὶ ἐπίσκοπον τῶν **ψυχῶν** ὑμῶν.
16Therefore, confess your sins to one another and pray on behalf of one another, in order that you might be healed. **19**My brothers, if anyone among you is deceived from the truth and someone turns him, **20**let him know that the one who turned a sinner from the error of his way will save his soul from death and will cover a multitude of sins.	**24**He bore our sins in his body on the tree, in order that we might die to sin and live for righteousness, you were healed by his wound. **25**For you were straying as sheeps, but now you have been returned to the shepherd and overseer of your souls.

Figure 24 - Verbal Resonances between James 5:16, 19-20 and 1 Peter 2:24-25

In the table above, we observe a number of resonances exist between James 5 and 1 Peter 2:24-25, involving ἁμαρτία, ἰάομαι, πλανάω, ἐπιστρέφω and ψύχή. Of most significance for our discussion is the fact that 1 Peter 2:24b contains the only other use of the word ἰάομαι in the Catholic Epistles, and while it is accompanied by the seemingly physical word μώλωψ ("bruise/wound"),[57] the immediate literary context makes it abundantly clear that the "wound" from which one is healed is spiritual, and not physical, in nature. The first half of verse 24 says, "He bore our sins in his body on the tree, in order that dying to our sins we might live for righteousness" (τὰς ἁμαρτίας ἡμῶν αὐτὸς ἀνήνεγκεν ἐν τῷ σώματι αὐτοῦ ἐπὶ τὸ ξύλον, ἵνα ταῖς ἁμαρτίαις ἀπογενόμενοι τῇ δικαιοσύνῃ ζήσωμεν). Clearly, the spiritual healing wrought for the believer through Jesus' death on the cross is spiritual in nature and not physical. Therefore, given the verbal resonances between James 5 and 1 Peter 2:24-25, the spiritual healing present in 1 Peter 2:24b amplifies the spiritual healing interpretive option within James 5:14-16. This amplification, consequently, also dampens the physical healing interpretive option present within James 5, which is also the most common interpretation of the passage.[58]

1 John 5:14-16 will receive full treatment below in the following section, but on this point, it is worth noting that immediately prior to the exhortation towards prayer for the one who has sinned (1 John 5:16), the author assures the readers that God hears and answers their prayers (vv. 14-15).

	James	1 John
Assurance	**15**The prayer of faith will save the one who is weary and the Lord will raise him; and if he has done sin, it will be forgiven to him.	**14**And this is the confidence which we have to him, that is we ask anything according to his will he hears us. **15**And

[57] BDAG, 663.

[58] The distinction between physical sickness and spiritual sickness (and also physical healing and spiritual healing) was not as clearly defined in Early Christianity, and still remains a blurred area for many contemporary Christians.

	[16]Therefore, confess your sins to one another and pray for one another, in order that you might be healed. The prayer of a righteous person is very strong in its working. (5:15-16)	if we know that he hears us whatever we ask, we know that we have the requests which we asked from him. (5:14-15)
Exhortation	[19]My brothers, if anyone among you is deceived from the truth and someone turns him, [20]let him know that the one who turned a sinner from the error of his way will save his soul from death and will cover a multitude of sins. (5:19-20)	[16]If anyone sees his brother sinning a sin not to death, he will ask and he will give to him life, to the one who sins not to death. There is sin to death, I do not say that he should ask about that one. (5:16)

Figure 25 - Assurance and Exhortation in James 5 and 1 John 5

These two passages exhibit a parallel structure to one another. Both present an assurance of restoration in response to intercessory prayer (James 5:15-16; 1 John 5:14-15), immediately before delivering an exhortation towards restorative action (unspecified in James, cf. James 5:19-20, and prayer in 1 John, cf. 1 John 5:16). This conceptual parallelism means that the relatively clear reference in 1 John 5:14-16 (to restoration from sin) amplifies this meaning in the parallel passage, which is on internal grounds is more ambiguous. Thus, the interpretive possibility of understanding the "weakness" in James 5:14-16 as spiritual in nature is amplified by the parallel passage (1 John 5:14-16), while the interpretive option of physical sickness is dampened.

On this view, James, 1 Peter and 1 John provide their readers with assurance that when prayers are offered on behalf of those who stumble in sin, God hears and answers. I turn now to a more thorough examination of the passage in 1 John 5, focusing upon scope and agency.

5.4 1 John 5:14-18

Towards the end of 1 John, the author exhorts the readers to restorative prayer for those who have committed a sin which "does not result in death." (v. 16) Verse 16 reads:

> [16]Ἐάν τις ἴδῃ τὸν ἀδελφὸν αὐτοῦ ἁμαρτάνοντα ἁμαρτίαν μὴ πρὸς θάνατον, αἰτήσει καὶ δώσει αὐτῷ ζωήν, τοῖς ἁμαρτάνουσιν μὴ πρὸς θάνατον. ἔστιν ἁμαρτία πρὸς θάνατον· οὐ περὶ ἐκείνης λέγω ἵνα ἐρωτήσῃ.
> [16]If anyone sees their brother committing a sin that does not result in death, he should ask and he will give life to them – to those whose sin does not result in death. There is a sin that results in death, I do not say that they should ask concerning that sin.

The exhortation of this passage is clear, when a believer sees another believer committing a sin (that is not to death), they should pray (v. 16). Our discussion of this passage will follow the same format as our discussion of James 5:13-20. We will discuss the scope

and agency of the restoration within 1 John 5, before turning to consider the resonances that 1 John 5:14-16 shares with James 5:13-20 and Jude 20-25, as well as other parts of the Catholic Epistle collection. The issue of a sin that "results in death" or "does not result in death" raises the question of the scope of the restoration envisioned by the passage.

5.4.1 The Scope of Restoration in 1 John 5:14-18

In its immediate context, 1 John 5:16 identifies the audience it is addressing as, "those who believe in the name of the Son of God" (τοῖς πιστεύουσιν εἰς τὸ ὄνομα τοῦ υἱοῦ τοῦ θεοῦ, v. 13) In addition to identifying the audience as believers/members of the community, the passage also indicates that the wayward individual is a believer, as it calls them "his brother" (τὸν ἀδελφὸν αὐτοῦ), that is, the brother of the addressed audience (who believes in the name of the Son of God). These two observations seem to clearly imply that in terms of scope, 1 John 5:16 envisions a believer interceding on behalf of another believer who has fallen into sin.

While the scope of the passage seems clear enough given our above discussion, the wider context of 1 John complicates the issue. Verse 18 seems to indicate that it is impossible for a brother/believer to fall into sin: "We know that everyone who has been born of God does not sin" (Οἴδαμεν ὅτι πᾶς ὁ γεγεννημένος ἐκ τοῦ θεοῦ οὐχ ἁμαρτάνει). This kind of statement is present elsewhere in 1 John as well:

1 John 3:6	πᾶς ὁ ἐν αὐτῷ μένων οὐχ ἁμαρτάνει· πᾶς ὁ ἁμαρτάνων οὐχ ἑώρακεν αὐτὸν οὐδὲ ἔγνωκεν αὐτόν.	Everyone who remains in him does not sin; everyone who sins has not seen him, nor knows him.
1 John 3:9	Πᾶς ὁ γεγεννημένος ἐκ τοῦ θεοῦ ἁμαρτίαν οὐ ποιεῖ, ὅτι σπέρμα αὐτοῦ ἐν αὐτῷ μένει, καὶ οὐ δύναται ἁμαρτάνειν, ὅτι ἐκ τοῦ θεοῦ γεγέννηται.	Everyone who has been born of God does not commit sin, because his seed remains in him, and he is not able to sin, because he has been born from God.

Figure 26 - Statements about the Believer and Sin in 1 John (3:6, 9)

According to a surface reading of 1 John 3:6, 9 and 5:18, believers cannot sin. However, here in 5:16, John presents his readers with the scenario of an individual who has fallen into sin. This raises the question of whether the individual portrayed, although called a "brother", has truly been born of God and is really a "brother."

The most common solution to this issue lies in the distinction that John seems to draw around the kind of sin that is in view in 5:16.[59] Perhaps there is a kind of sin that believers cannot commit (which John calls a sin that "results in death", i.e. apostasy/unbelief), but here the text is talking about other kinds of sin (sins that do "not result in death").[60] This is an elegant solution, which is capable of particularly accounting for the difficult discussion of sins to/not to death in verses 16 and 17. This reading is also able to integrate the sayings earlier in the letter, that everyone has sinned (cf. 1:8, 10), and yet, believers no longer sin (cf. 3:6, 9). In other words, believers are capable of committing all manner of sins, and there are a host of sins that do not result in death (v. 17). But there is a sin that results in death (i.e. apostasy/unbelief), and it seems that believers are unable to commit that particular sin (cf. v. 18, to be discussed below).

Even with the complicating discussions of sin in 5:18 and elsewhere in 1 John,[61] it appears that 1 John 5:16 addresses a situation within which a believer has committed a sin (that is, anything shy of unbelief/defection from the community) which is visible to others in the community. It is on behalf of this fallen believer, that the passage exhorts others within the community to intercede. Thus, the scope of intercession, and consequently restoration, in 1 John 5:16 would be intra-communal.

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[59] This solution is adopted by many commentators on this passage. See: Smalley, *1, 2, 3 John*, 285; Karen H. Jobes, *1, 2 and 3 John*, ZECNT (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2014), 232-237. Colin Kruse, following the work of Raymond E. Brown, distinguishes his view from the one adopted above, suggesting that the difference between the sin to death and the sin not to death is not the sin itself, but the identity of the one who does the sin. A non-believer's sin is to death, because they do not have life, whereas a believer's sin is not to death, because they have life. He says, "This suggests that the sin that does not lead to death is the sin of the belier. If this is the case, then the sin that does lead to death is most likely that of the unbeliever." (p. 194) Regardless though, even in Kruse's formulation, the key determinative factor is the presence or absence of faith or unbelief. For commentators who adopt the above approach see: Kruse, *1-3 John*, 194; Brown, *1-3 John*, 612-619.

[60] Identifying the "sin that results in death" is often considered the most pressing issue to be solved in the passage. Karen Jobes, for example, surveys five proposals for understanding the "sin to death" as opposed to the "sin not to death." These include:

1. "Deliberate vs. unintentional sin (cf. Lev 4:2; 5:1; Num 15:30-31; 18:22),
2. "Mortal sins," to use the Roman Catholic terminology, such as murder, adultery, and idolatry, vs. "venial sins",
3. Blasphemy against the Holy Spirit (cf. Mark 3:28-30),
4. Apostasy, such as discussed in Heb 6:4-6,
5. The deliberate and persistent rejection of the truth in Christ."[60]

Jobes also relates the sin to death to the historical context/occasion of the composition of 1 John – i.e. the departure of a group of people from the community of faith (cf. 2:19).
See: Jobes, *1, 2 and 3 John*, 234-235.

[61] For the complexities of the believer's relationship to sin in 1 John see: Van Der Watt, "Ethics in First John", 495-508. See especially: 1 John 1:7-10; 2:1-12; 3:4-9; 5:16-18.

The intra-communal scope of the passage is further heightened by the author's apparent prohibition concerning prayer for those who have committed the sin to death (1 John 5:16).[62] Randall Tan describes the majority view of this 'prohibition' as follows: "John does not positively forbid intercession, but abstains from commanding it."[63] However, even if this were the case, Judith Lieu perceptively comments: "the result is little different."[64] Whether John is explicitly prohibiting this form of intercessory prayer, or he is merely drawing the reader's attention to the fact that he is not directly commanding them to pray for these people, the rhetorical effect on the reader is the same.[65]

5.4.2 The Agency of Restoration in 1 John 5:14-18

The means of the restoration of the errant believer is the prayer of their brother. When seeing a brother commit a sin, the believer is exhorted to "ask" (αἰτήσει). The text then goes on to state immediately "and he will give to him life" (καὶ δώσει αὐτῷ ζωήν). The lack of an explicit shift in subject from the verb αἰτήσει to the verb δώσει has led to ambiguity concerning the agent through whom the life is given to the sinner.[66] Unlike James 5:15 above, here the verb is not passive in form, which would allow us to interpret it as a divine passive, which would solve the ambiguity. Thus, from a grammatical point of view, there is nothing in the text to suggest that the subject of δώσει should be different to that of αἰτήσει. Nonetheless, many major English translations translate the subject of δώσει as different to that of αἰτήσει with the latter being identified as God and not the intercessor, as in the former.[67] This reading is more coherent, theologically speaking, with

[62] Randall Tan himself argues that this entire dichotomy is misguided. He argues that John is not prohibiting any forms of prayer, but rather he is merely describing the subject of his current discussion, and the purpose of that discussion. Tan's argument involves two major grammatical observations, and three contextual factors. Randall K. J. Tan, "Should we pray for straying brethren?: John's confidence in 1 John 5:16-17", *JETS* 45, no. 4 (2002): 603-608. However, Tan's attempt to bypass the debate, by arguing that John is merely choosing to not talk about the "sin that results in death", he is nevertheless acknowledging that there is such a thing as a "sin that results in death."

[63] Tan, "John's Confidence in 1 John 5:16-17", 599-600, n. 3.

[64] Lieu, *1, 2, 3 John*, 226.

[65] Lieu's above comment would equally apply to Randall Tan's argument as well. Whether John is: a) prohibiting extra-communal intercession, b) explaining that he is not prohibiting his readers from extra-communal intercession, or c) delineating the subject matter of his discussion as sins to death rather than sins not to death, the result is the same.

[66] Jobes, *1, 2 and 3 John*, 233-234.

[67] This produces the following sense: "he [the petitioner] shall ask, and he [God] will give life to him [the sinner]." The NIV, ESV, NASB, HCSB, ASV, NRSV and NET all supply a divine subject for δώσει. On the other hand, the KJV and NKJV maintain the ambiguity by translating the subjects of both verbs as "he."

our author's perspective of God as the ultimate source of life (cf. 5:11); however, grammatically speaking, it is not immediately obvious.[68]

One element of the construction, however, might supplement the human agency of the restoration, so that it becomes more cooperative. Elsewhere in the Catholic Epistles, the semantic domains of "asking" and "giving", when in close proximity to one another, seem to demand a shift in subject. Person A *asks* for something, implying that they ask someone else (Person B), and Person B *gives* the thing which was asked for to Person A (James 1:5, in which God is referred to as "the giving God" [τοῦ διδόντος θεοῦ]; 1 John 5:14-15; cf. James 1:6-7; 4:2-3). Furthermore, the immediately preceding verses in 1 John establish this as the paradigm of prayer. Verses 14 and 15 say:

> [14]καὶ αὕτη ἐστὶν ἡ παρρησία ἣν ἔχομεν πρὸς αὐτόν, ὅτι ἐάν τι αἰτώμεθα κατὰ τὸ θέλημα αὐτοῦ ἀκούει ἡμῶν. **15** καὶ ἐὰν οἴδαμεν ὅτι ἀκούει ἡμῶν ὃ ἐὰν αἰτώμεθα, οἴδαμεν ὅτι ἔχομεν τὰ αἰτήματα ἃ ἠτήκαμεν ἀπ᾽ αὐτοῦ.
> And this is the boldness which we have with him, that whatever we ask according to his will, he hears us. And if we know that he hears us, whatever we ask, we know that we have the things which we have asked from him.

This passage provides the prerequisite understanding that when believers ask for something, they are asking God, who hears them and gives them what is asked for, if it is according to his will. Thus, when we read in 1 John 5:16 "αἰτήσει καὶ δώσει αὐτῷ ζωήν", we understand first, that semantically a shift in subject is warranted by the verbs "ask" and "give", and second, that contextually the shift must be from the human asker to the divine giver. Thus, the agent through whom restorative life comes to the sinner is God, on account of the prayers of the intercessor.

5.4.2.1 The Ongoing Preservation of Believers in 1 John 5

Our passage naturally transitions from the topic of restoration of an errant believer (v. 16) to the topic of the preservation of a faithful believer (v. 18). The issue of ongoing preservation is important because it addresses the problem of how believers will continue to avoid the sin that "results in death." In verse 18, the agency by which the believer's preservation comes about is ambiguous: "The one who was born of God keeps him/self and the evil one does not touch him." (ὁ γεννηθεὶς ἐκ τοῦ θεοῦ τηρεῖ ἑαυτὸν καὶ ὁ πονηρὸς

[68] Smalley, *1, 2, 3 John*, 287.

οὐχ ἅπτεται αὐτοῦ.) The identity of "the one who was born of God" here is hotly debated,[69] and even caused problems for the earliest copyists of the text.[70] The reflexive accusative pronoun provided above in our citation of the passage reflects the NA28 text, though in previous editions of the Nestle-Aland text the simple accusative αὐτόν was preferred.[71] This textual variant is the result of the ambiguity of the referent of ὁ γεννηθεὶς ἐκ τοῦ θεοῦ. If the referent of ὁ γεννηθεὶς ἐκ τοῦ θεοῦ is Jesus, then a simple accusative pronoun is required by the syntax of the sentence, and the sense of the passage is that Jesus keeps (i.e. protects) believers faithful, preserving them from the sin of unbelief. But, if the referent is the believer, then the reflexive pronoun is necessary, and the sense of the passage is that believers must keep themselves from this sin.

In favour of seeing Jesus as the agent of the believer's perseverance, is the passive voice of the participle γεννηθείς. The verb γεννάω occurs ten times in 1 John, eight of which are middle in form (1 John 2:29; 3:9 [twice]; 4:7; 5:1 [twice], 4, 18), one is active (5:1) and here at 5:18 is the only occurrence in the passive voice. 1 John 5:1 is an interesting case, because the verbal root γεννάω occurs three times in quick succession, shifting voice each time. 1 John 5:1 reads:

> Πᾶς ὁ πιστεύων ὅτι Ἰησοῦς ἐστιν ὁ Χριστὸς ἐκ τοῦ θεοῦ γεγέννηται, καὶ πᾶς ὁ ἀγαπῶν τὸν γεννήσαντα ἀγαπᾷ καὶ τὸν γεγεννημένον ἐξ αὐτοῦ.
> Everyone who believes that Jesus is the Christ has been born of God, and everyone who loves the one who gave birth also loves the one who has been born from him.

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[69] For a succinct presentation of the arguments, which concludes that the referent is the believer, see: John A. McLean, "An exegetical study of 1 John 5:18-21", *BSac* 169, no. 673 (2012): 70-75. Another who adopts this position is: Lockett, *Letters for the Church*, 167-168.

On the other hand, those who argue that the "one who was born of God" should be identified as Jesus, include: G. Strecker et al., *The Johannine Letters: A Commentary on 1, 2, and 3 John* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1996), 208-209; Smalley, *1, 2, 3 John*, 302-303; Lieu, *1, 2, 3 John*, 230; Kruse, *1-3 John*, 195; T.F. Johnson, *1, 2, and 3 John* (Peabody: Hendrickson, 1995), 138; Jobes, *1, 2 and 3 John*, 237-238.

Raymond Brown preferred to leave the ambiguity unresolved, opting to translate τηρεῖ ἑαυτὸν as: "is protected." Brown, *1-3 John*, 620-622.

Others, in light of the parallels with John 17:11-12 and 15, have chosen to see God as the protector of believers, even though God is not explicitly present in the passage. For this view, see: Painter, *1, 2 and 3 John*, 323-325. Painter is followed by: Dirk G. Van der Merwe, "'Those who have been born of God do not sin, because God's seed abides in them': soteriology in 1 John", *HvTSt* 68, no. 1 (2012): 3-4.

[70] The ambiguity of the referent of ὁ γεννηθεὶς ἐκ τοῦ θεοῦ, led to a commensurate textual variant in the transmission of the passage. According to Metzger, because "The Committee understood ὁ γεννηθείς to refer to Christ" they "therefore adopted the reading αὐτόν." On the other hand, "Copyists who took *ὁ γεννηθείς* to refer to the Christian believer… naturally preferred the reflexive *ἑαυτόν*." Metzger, *Textual Commentary*, 650.

[71] Witnesses that preserve the reflexive pronoun, include: ℵ A^c K P Ψ 33 81 1739.
Witnesses that preserve the simple pronoun, include: A* B 330 614 it^r vg syr^h cop^{bo}.

The shift of voice in 5:1 marks the difference between: the one who "has been born" (γεγέννηται, middle indicative), "the one who gave birth" (γεννήσαντα, active participle, i.e. God the Father) and "the one who has been born" (γεγεννημένον, middle participle, i.e. the children of God). The precision of 1 John's use of voice in 5:1 to express different referents using the root γεννάω suggests that 1 John's single use of the passive voice in 5:18 is not a haphazard occurrence. Similar to 5:1, 5:18 also has multiple forms of γεννάω appearing with different voices (γεγεννημένος, middle participle, i.e. "the one who has been born [of God]", and γεννηθεὶς, passive participle, i.e. "the one born from God"), further reinforcing the suggestion that 1 John uses the voice of the verb with precision. The shift in voice in 5:18 from the middle to the passive form most likely marks the difference between the children of God (γεγεννημένος, middle participle) and the one uniquely born of God (γεννηθεὶς, aorist passive participle), i.e. Jesus.[72] This suggests that in 1 John 5:18 the agent behind the believer's preservation is Jesus.

Alternatively, the broader context of 1 John might support the suggestion that the referent of the passive participle is the believer, whose responsibility it is to keep themselves. Earlier in the letter, the readers are exhorted to "purify [themselves]" (ἁγνίζει ἑαυτόν, 3:3), and in the immediate context, a few verses after our current passage, the readers are commanded to "keep yourselves from idols" (φυλάξατε ἑαυτὰ ἀπὸ τῶν εἰδώλων, 5:21). These commands elsewhere in 1 John indicate that it is the believer's responsibility to ensure their ongoing preservation in the faith. Later, we will see whether the collection would amplify this interpretive option, or dampen it. For now though, having discussed the scope and agency of the restoration in 1 John 5:16, we turn to consider resonances it shares with other portions of the Catholic Epistles.

5.4.3 Resonances around 1 John 5:14-18

In our discussion of the resonances surrounding James 5:19-20 (§6.2.3 above), we noted that James 5:13-20 parallels 1 John 5:14-18 not just conceptually, but also at the structural level. Here we observe that the agency of the exhortation towards restoration in James and 1 John possesses a similar parallelism. In the actual exhortations of both

[72] Jobes argues that even though this description sounds very appropriate of Jesus, especially with "our post-Nicene ears", this would be the sole reference to Jesus in the New Testament that takes this exact form. Even having noted that this descriptor of Jesus is unusual for the NT, Jobes still accepts it as the most likely interpretation of the passage. See: Jobes, *1, 2 and 3 John*, 237-238.

passages (James 5:20 and 1 John 5:16) we saw that the role of human agency, in restoring the errant believer, is particularly pronounced. The clear insistence on the human agency of the restoration is a point of conceptual resonance between James 5 and 1 John 5. However, in both cases, human agency is balanced by a clear articulation, in the immediately preceding verses, of the divine agent who stands as the ultimate source of life and restoration (cf. James 5:15-16; 1 John 5:14-15). The affirmation that God is the ultimate source of life, which comes through the intermediate agents of the intercessors, marks another point of conceptual resonance between these passages.

In addition to the resonance identified above between two of the major nodes of the motif identified at the outset of the chapter (James 5:19-20 and 1 John 5:16), there are a number of points of minor resonance between the discussion of preservation in 1 John 5:18 and other passages within the Catholic Epistles, including: James 1:27; 2 John 8 and Jude 20-21.

1 John 5:18	James 1:27	2 John 8	Jude 20-21
ὁ γεννηθεὶς ἐκ τοῦ θεοῦ **τηρεῖ ἑαυτὸν**	ἄσπιλον **ἑαυτὸν τηρεῖν** ἀπὸ τοῦ κόσμου	βλέπετε **ἑαυτούς**, ἵνα μὴ ἀπολέσητε ἃ εἰργασάμεθα	ἐποικοδομοῦντες **ἑαυτοὺς** τῇ ἁγιωτάτῃ ὑμῶν πίστει… **ἑαυτοὺς** ἐν ἀγάπῃ θεοῦ **τηρήσατε**
The one who has been born of God keeps himself…	… to keep yourselves unstained from the world.	Watch yourselves, lest you lose what we worked for.	Building yourselves up in your most holy faith… keep yourselves in the love of God.

Figure 27 - Self Preservation in the Catholic Epistle Collection

Our above discussion on 1 John 5:18 merely surveyed the two positions on the agency of preservation (i.e. Jesus keeps the believer or the believer keeps themselves), offering arguments internal to 1 John for both, concluding that it is the believer's responsibility. However, elsewhere in the collection, we find a strong insistence upon the believer's responsibility to preserve themselves, twice using the word τηρέω (Jas 1:27; Jude 21). Thus, in the context of the collection, the interpretive possibility that 1 John 5:18 asserts the believer as the agent of their own preservation is further amplified. On the other hand, though, the interpretive possibility that 1 John 5:18 asserts that Jesus is the agent of our preservation is dampened. As noted above, the immediate, internal context of 1 John further supports this amplification, in that, verse 21 also emphasises the believer's responsibility to keep themselves (from idols), although it does employ the verb φυλάσσω rather than τηρέω.

While the above resonance emphasises the believer's self-preservation, the use of φύλασσω in 1 John 5:21 activates another resonance which nuances this self-preservation.

Jude 24 assures its readers that ultimately it is God who protects them and their faith. This may explain the shift from τηρέω in Jude 21 to φυλάσσω in verse 24. While believers are to keep themselves (τηρέω), their decisive protection (φυλάσσω) rests in God.[73] Having already briefly discussed the closing lines of Jude here in connection with 1 John, we now begin our analysis of Jude 20-25 in full.

5.5 Jude 20-25

After delivering a final warning to his readers concerning the opponents who have infiltrated the church (vv. 17-19), the author of Jude exhorts his readers to "keep themselves in the love of God" (v. 21, ἑαυτοὺς ἐν ἀγάπῃ θεοῦ τηρήσατε), by building themselves up, praying, and waiting for the mercy of Jesus (vv. 20-21). Thus, having urged the readers to contend for their own faith in verses 20-21 (cf. v. 3), the author turns to consider how the readers ought to relate to the faith of others in verses 22-23.

> [22]καὶ οὓς μὲν ἐλεᾶτε διακρινομένους, [23]οὓς δὲ σῴζετε ἐκ πυρὸς ἁρπάζοντες, οὓς δὲ ἐλεᾶτε ἐν φόβῳ μισοῦντες καὶ τὸν ἀπὸ τῆς σαρκὸς ἐσπιλωμένον χιτῶνα.
> [22]And, show mercy to those who dispute, [23]save others by snatching them from the fire, and show mercy to others with fear, hating even the garment stained by the flesh.

The interpretive issues in this text are legion, as will be outlined below, but Jude seems to be urging its readers towards the restorative pursuit of others, who presumably bear some relation to the false teachers. Such pursuit is by nature fraught with danger, and so, Jude urges caution as the readers labour to turn others back (v. 23).

5.5.1 The Scope of Restoration in Jude 20-25

There are a number of indicators that the addressees of the passage, those exhorted to extend mercy, are believers within a community of faith. In verse 20, the author addresses the readers as "beloved" (ἀγαπητοί), refers to "[their] holy faith" (τῇ ἁγιωτάτῃ

[73] 1 Peter 1:4-5 similarly emphasises God's decisive protection of the believer, while also underscoring the believer's role in their own preservation. The passage states that the inheritance of God's people is "being kept" (τετηρημένην, 1:4) for them safe "in heaven" (ἐν οὐρανοῖς, 1:4). Moreover, that inheritance is being kept "imperishable and undefiled and unfading." (ἄφθαρτον καὶ ἀμίαντον καὶ ἀμάραντον, 1:4). Furthermore, not only is the inheritance of God's people secure, but 1:5 says that Gods' people themselves are being "guarded" (φρουρουμένους, 1:5) by God's power (ἐν δυνάμει θεοῦ). But, verse 5 also highlights the believer's role in their own preservation, in so much that, the participle φρουρουμένους is accompanied by the prepositional phrase διὰ πίστεως ("through faith", 1:5) which explicates the means by which the "guarding" takes place. It is by means of the believer's faith, that they receive God's guardianship.

ὑμῶν πίστει) and exhorts them to "keep themselves in the love of God" (ἑαυτοὺς ἐν ἀγάπῃ θεοῦ τηρήσατε) by means of "praying in the Holy Spirit" (ἐν πνεύματι ἁγίῳ προσευχόμενοι). Taken together, these remarks indicate that the subjects of the exhortation are believers, from within a community of faith.

A final factor confirms that it is a believer who is in view here. The text seems to assume some level of correspondence between the mercy extended by the readers in verses 22-23 and the mercy received by the readers in verse 21 (cf. v. 2).[74] This implies that those who are to extend mercy are those who themselves have received mercy (v. 2) and are waiting for the mercy of Jesus (v. 21), that is, believers.[75]

While the identity of the subject of the exhortation seems a relatively settled issue, as outlined above, identifying the group/s to which mercy is to be shown is a more difficult matter.[76] The matter is closely tied to the issue of whether we should understand Jude 22-23 as containing two clauses or three. Our discussion will not centre upon the number of clauses in verses 22-23, but rather the number of groups in the purview of the exhortation.[77]

Number of Groups	Number of Clauses	Identity of Groups
One	Two	Opponents
	Three	Wavering Members of the Community
Two	Two	1. Opponents 2. Wavering Members of the Community
Three	Three	1. Wavering Members of the Community 2. Members who have Fallen into Error 3. Opponents
		1. Recipients who Respond with Disputation 2. Recipients who Respond with Repentance 3. Opponents

Figure 28 - The Clauses and Groups of Jude 22-23

[74] Frey, *Jude and 2 Peter*, 152. Frey says, "The compassion required of the addressees even toward the unrepentant, as difficult as it may be, corresponds with the mercy they themselves have experienced and continue to experience (v. 2) and which they may expect from the coming Lord (v. 21)."

[75] Darian Lockett finds this principle, that is, the reception of mercy leads to the extension of mercy, in both James 5:19-20 and 2:12-13. However, in the latter, he finds it expressed in the negative sense, that "judgement is without mercy to the one who has shown no mercy." (2:13) Lockett, *Letters from the Pillar Apostles*, 194-196.

[76] The task of saying anything exegetically significant about these concluding lines of Jude is complicated immensely by the complex task of even establishing the text in question. Carroll D. Osburn describes this passage as "one of the most corrupt passages in NT literature." Carroll D. Osburn, "Text of Jude 22-23", *ZNW* 63, no. 1-2 (1972): 139.

[77] While our discussion will not delve fully into the textual difficulties of Jude 22-23, Wasserman's recent monograph has capably covered the material, see: Tommy Wasserman, *The Epistle of Jude: Its Text and Transmission*, ConBNT (Stockholm: Almsqvist & Wiksell, 2006), 196-199, 320-331, esp. 320.

The first view is that there is only one group in view throughout verses 22-23, this requires either a two-clause or a three-clause construction.[78] Within this view, there are two positions concerning the identity of those to whom the readers are to extend mercy: either the opponents who have infiltrated the church, or those within the church who have been swayed by the opponents. The interpretive options above are the result of the semantic possibilities of the designation διακρινομένους, used for those to whom mercy is to be shown. If διακρινομένους is thought to refer to the opponents, then it should be translated as "disputers" (i.e. those with whom the author is disputing or are themselves causing disputes among the audience);[79] however, if it refers to those who are being swayed by the opponents, then it should be translated as "doubters" (i.e. those who are doubting the apostolic community's faith and wavering towards error).[80]

In favour of the latter view (and against the former view), that διακρινομένους is a reference to believers who have been persuaded by the opponents is the fact that the double command to show mercy (ἐλεᾶτε in verses 22 and 23b), seems better directed towards those within the community who are doubting, rather than the opponents. The letter of Jude is infamously vitriolic towards its opponents, conforming to both standard Jewish polemical and Greco-Roman invective practices.[81] Therefore, a command to extend mercy to these opponents seems surprising, even out of place. As Wasserman says, "The very polemic nature of Jude as a whole makes it difficult to accept Spitaler's suggestion that the recipients, towards the end of the epistle, are exhorted to show mercy to the opponents."[82]

In favour of the view that διακρινομένους refers to the opponents is the fact that "doubt/waver" as a meaning of διακρίνω is attested quite late, only arising within the NT itself, while the "disputing/differentiating/evaluating" meaning is much more widely

[78] Recently, this position has been articulated and defended with great clarity by Alexandra Robinson, opting that διακρινομένους refers to the opponents. See Robinson, *Jude on the Attack*, 12-16.
[79] Peter Spitaler, "Doubt or dispute (Jude 9 and 22-23): rereading a special New Testament meaning through the lense of internal evidence", *Bib* 87, no. 2 (2006): 201-222; Robinson, Llewelyn and Wassell, "The Inversion of Invective in Jude", 194-212; Robinson, *Jude on the Attack*, 12-16; Lockett, *Letters for the Church*, 206-208.
[80] Joel S. Allen, "A New Possibility for the Three-Clause Format of Jude 22-23", *NTS* 44, no. 1 (1998): 133-143..
[81] See: Batten, "Jude and Invective", 1-7; Robinson, *Jude on the Attack*.
[82] Wasserman, *Jude*, 327. Jorg Frey has a similar, if not harsher criticism on this point, "It is hardly plausible that the community should still treat these people with mercy, after their presence has been so harshly condemned." Frey, *Jude and 2 Peter*, 151.

attested.[83] Moreover, understanding διακρινομένους as referring to the opponents makes good sense out of the warning in v. 23b about showing mercy "with fear, hating even the garment stained by the flesh."[84] The readers are to extend mercy to the opponents, with the purpose of snatching them out of the fire (v. 23a), with fear, knowing that these people are very capable of corrupting others by means of their conduct and their message (cf. v. 4, 12, 19). The reference to garments "stained by the flesh" echoes descriptions of the opponents earlier in the letter (cf. v. 8 and 12), further corroborating the conclusion that it is the opponents who are in view in these verses. In response to the charge that extending mercy to the opponents seems "out of place" for Jude, a number of scholars have recently argued that just such a reversal of expectations, a so-called "inversion of invective", is exactly what takes place at the conclusion of Jude.[85]

The only reason given by scholars to commend the view that the single group is wavering believers is the fact that the other view (which understands the false teachers as the object of mercy) seems difficult to stomach in the context of Jude. This objection is not definitive for many. Therefore, it seems that if a single group view is adopted, then on internal grounds, it is more likely that the διακρινομένους should be understood as the opponents who are "disputing", rather than wavering believers who are "doubting".

A second view, requiring a two-clause construction, argues that the passage refers to two groups of individuals: "doubters" (vv. 22-23a, i.e. those who, in light of the influence of the opponents, are wavering in their commitment to apostolic faith) and the opponents (v. 23b).[86] This view takes the options of the one-group theory and suggests that both are present within the passage. In this view, it is the doubters who are being snatched out of the fire, because the second clause οὓς δὲ σῴζετε ἐκ πυρὸς ἁρπάζοντες (Jude 23a) becomes dependent on the initial clause of verse 22. This view suffers the weaknesses that it requires a late meaning of διακρίνω, and it uses the same verb ἐλεᾶτε for the audience's treatment of both their wavering fellow believers as well as the

[83] BDAG, 231.
[84] For a parallel warning, see: Galatians 6:1.
[85] Robinson, *Jude on the Attack*, 15-16; Robinson, Llewelyn and Wassell, "The Inversion of Invective in Jude", 194-212. From a different perspective, Lockett has defended this position, arguing that Jude's exhortation towards showing mercy to the false teachers aligns with a judgement-salvation reversal present in the Prophets of Israel. Darian Lockett, "Objects of mercy in Jude: the prophetic background of Jude 22-23", *CBQ* 77, no. 2 (2015): 322-336.
[86] Sara C. Winter, "Jude 22-23: A Note on the Text and Translation", *HTR* 87, no. 2 (1994): 216-217; Charles Landon, *A Text-Critical Study of the Epistle of Jude*, JSNTSup 135 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1996), 131-134, esp. 133.

opponents. This latter criticism persists for Wasserman also, who comments, "The question remains why the author used a double ἐλεᾶτε."[87]

A third view, this time requiring the passage be read as a three-clause construction, perceives three groups in the passage.[88] Within this view, the final group is consistently regarded as the opponents, while the identifications of the first two groups (the διακρινομένους and those snatched from the fire) varies. Frey reconstructs the text and, following Bauckham, suggests that the two groups are to be distinguished based upon their response to the reproof of this epistle, and the consequent rebukes of other believers.[89] Those who accept the reproof and respond appropriately are snatched from the fire, while those who do not accept the reproof of the letter (or of other believers) are those who dispute with the author's perspective, and those within the community who continue the author's ministry of reproof.

On the other hand, Wohlenberg, distinguishes the first two groups based upon the degree to which they have been influenced by the opponents.[90] The διακρινομένους are those who are merely wavering between the community and the false teacher's perspectives, and call out for the aid of the readers.[91] Those who are snatched out of the fire are those who have embraced the teaching of the false teachers to such a degree that they now need to be snatched out of the fire.[92]

Critically though, regardless of which of the above views is adopted (with the exception of the one-group view in which wavering believers are the object of mercy, which was argued against on internal grounds), the false teachers to whom the author is opposed are *within* the scope of the exhortation. Thus, Jude exhorts its readers to extend

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[87] Wasserman, *Jude*, 326.

[88] Scholars who see three groups operative in the passage include: Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter*; Frey, *Jude and 2 Peter*; G. Wohlenberg, *Der erste und zweite Petrusbrief und der Judasbrief* (Leipzig: Deichert, 1915).

[89] Bauckham, and consequently Frey, construct the text of Jude 22-23 as follows:

καὶ οὓς μὲν ἐκ πυρὸς ἁρπάσατε
διακρινομένους δὲ ἐλεεῖτε ἐν φόβῳ
μισοῦντες καὶ τὸν ἀπὸ τῆς σαρκὸς ἐσπιλωμένον χιτῶνα

Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter*, 115; Frey, *Jude and 2 Peter*, 151-152.

[90] Wohlenberg, *Der erste und zweite Petrusbrief und der Judasbrief*, 330-1.

[91] Wohlenberg describes the false teachers as "welchen durch das Vorgehen der Irrlehrer der Boden ihres Glaubens wieder schwankend geworden ist…" He goes on to describe how these individuals are not so far gone as to be unaware of their need for aid, "daß sie selbst nach einer rettenden Hand sich ausstrecken." Wohlenberg, *Der erste und zweite Petrusbrief und der Judasbrief*, 330.

[92] In contrast to the previous group, Wohlenberg suggests that Jude implicitly indicates that these individuals are not even aware of their need to be saved. He says, "wenngleich — das wird zwischen den Zeilen zu lesen sein — sie nicht einmal um Hilfe rufen." Wohlenberg, *Der erste und zweite Petrusbrief und der Judasbrief*, 330.

their concern to those who although inhabiting the same space as the community are certainly not part of the community (1:4, cf. vv. 8, 10-16, 19). Indeed, they are those who (at least from the author's point of view) stand opposed to the well-being of the community (1:4, 12, 19). In the resonance section below (§5.5.3), we will return to this issue to consider how the scope of Jude 22-23 contrasts with the scope of James 5:19-20 and 1 John 5:16, which are both explicitly intra-communal.

5.5.2 The Agency of Restoration in Jude 20-25

Jude 23a exhorts the readers to "save some by snatching them out of fire" (οὓς δὲ σῴζετε ἐκ πυρὸς ἁρπάζοντες). The usage of the verb σῴζω with the readers as the subject resonates with the identical usage in James 5:20, discussed above in §5.3.2, as well as the conceptually similar statement in 1 John 5:16 that the believer "gives life" to the sinner. In a way that recalls our discussions of these passages, Jude locates the agency for the restoration of those who are straying in the believer doing the restoration.

The fact that it is the believer's responsibility to see others restored from error is corroborated by the fact that the author also offers them a warning when doing so. While providing no other advice concerning the means by which believers should engage in this restorative work,[93] verse 23b does warn the readers to show mercy "with fear, hating even the garment stained by the flesh" (ἐν φόβῳ μισοῦντες καὶ τὸν ἀπὸ τῆς σαρκὸς ἐσπιλωμένον χιτῶνα).[94] This seems to be a warning that while showing mercy to these false teachers, their flesh-stained garments (see Jude 8 and 12 for descriptions of the false teachers that employ these terms) have the capacity to stain the readers, and thus, there needs to be a degree of critical distance in their restorative efforts. The cautionary tone of

[93] Frey, *Jude and 2 Peter*, 150 and 152.

[94] According to Frey, the "fear" here could refer to one of two things. It could be fear of the risk of spiritual/moral contamination that might result from engagement with these false teachers, or the fear of God (i.e. pursuing the repentance of others while being very conscious of God's final judgement upon sinners). Bauckham takes the former view, while Frey takes the latter.
Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter*, 117; Frey, *Jude and 2 Peter*, 152.

The views however, are not mutually exclusive. It would be quite possible that the reader is to engage in this restorative ministry, fully aware and appropriately fearful of the sinfulness of the false teachers and their own corruptibility, but that fear is largely based upon a greater fear of God's righteous anger. In other words, the only reason to fear the sin of the false teachers, is because of the fear of God's judgement.

Additionally though, there is a contrast here between the fear that believers are to exercise and the fearlessness of the false teachers expressed in v. 12. The false teachers participate in the life of the community, eating among the believers, "without fear" (ἀφόβως). On the other hand, believers are to approach encounters between themselves and the false teachers "with fear" (ἐν φόβῳ).

the exhortation, highlighting the dangers of restoration, supports the suggestion that the onus for restoration lies with the believer, and not with God.

Out of the major nodes in the collection concerning this motif (James 5:19-20; 1 John 5:16 and Jude 22-23), Jude's call to restorative pursuit is unique, in so far that it does not describe the agency of restoration as a cooperative effort between the restorer and God. Jude exclusively presents restoration as an activity achieved by the restorer. The same thing, however, cannot be said about Jude's understanding of the ongoing preservation of the believer.

5.5.2.1 The Ongoing Preservation of Believers in Jude 20-25

Just as 1 John 5:16-18 transitioned from restoration of a sinner to the preservation of believers, so too Jude 22-25 makes the same transition. In Jude, the topic arises due to the significant threat that pursuing the restoration of the false teachers poses to the well-being of the restorer. Consequently, in the immediate context of the exhortation (vv. 22-23), there are numerous supporting exhortations, warnings and even a promise, concerning the issue of the believer's ongoing preservation.

Two elements of Jude's conclusion emphasise the believer's responsibility to preserve themselves. First, the author recommends strong caution when engaging in the work of restoration (expressed as: fear and hatred of the opponent's clothing), in light of the associated dangers for the believer. This supports the idea that the burden for a believer's ongoing preservation in the faith lies in their own hands.

Verse 20a	ἐποικοδομοῦντες ἑαυτοὺς τῇ ἁγιωτάτῃ ὑμῶν πίστει,	Building yourselves up in your most holy faith,
Verse 21a	ἑαυτοὺς ἐν ἀγάπῃ θεοῦ τηρήσατε	Keep yourselves in the love of God.
Verse 23b	οὓς δὲ ἐλεᾶτε ἐν φόβῳ μισοῦντες καὶ τὸν ἀπὸ τῆς σαρκὸς ἐσπιλωμένον χιτῶνα.	But have mercy in fear, hating even the garment stained by the flesh.
Verse 24	Τῷ δὲ δυναμένῳ φυλάξαι ὑμᾶς ἀπταίστους καὶ στῆσαι κατενώπιον τῆς δόξης αὐτοῦ ἀμώμους	Now, to the one who is able to keep you from stumbling and to present you blameless before his glory…

Figure 29 - The Ongoing Preservation of the Believer in the Conclusion of Jude

Second, in verse 21, the author commands the readers to "keep [them]selves in the love of God" (ἑαυτοὺς ἐν ἀγάπῃ θεοῦ τηρήσατε). This exhortation is accompanied by three participial clauses that convey the means by which believers keep themselves: "building yourselves up in your most holy faith" (ἐποικοδομοῦντες ἑαυτοὺς τῇ ἁγιωτάτῃ ὑμῶν πίστει), "praying in the Holy Spirit" (ἐν πνεύματι ἁγίῳ προσευχόμενοι) and "waiting for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ" (προσδεχόμενοι τὸ ἔλεος τοῦ κυρίου

ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ). The central exhortation and accompanying participles affirm that it is the believer's responsibility to preserve themselves in the faith.

Darian Lockett nuances our understanding of self-preservation in Jude even further, when he observes that the verb τηρέω (v. 21) has appeared at other key points in Jude.[95] In verse 1, the letter was addressed to those "who have been kept for Jesus Christ" (τοῖς… Ἰησοῦ Χριστῷ τετηρημένοις) and, in verse 6, the angels who did not "keep" (τηρήσαντας) their own positions of authority have been "kept" (τετήρηκεν) for judgement. Lockett says:

> In Jude 1, 6 the verbs are divine passives, which stress that God is the one who keeps believers for Jesus Christ and the angels for final judgment. In Jude 21, the readers are instructed to "keep [tērēsate] yourselves," now stressing the action of believers to remain in the love of God. The instruction for believers to keep themselves in God's love for them is couched in the reminder that God has already kept them "for Christ" (Jude 1) and that God is able "to keep" believers from stumbling (Jude 24).[96]

Lockett observes that the command for the believers to preserve themselves is bookended by the promises that they are already kept (τετηρημένοις, v. 1) and will be guarded (φυλάξαι, v. 24) so that they are preserved until the final day. This indicates the cooperative agency of preservation in Jude. We see that believers are to be actively involved in their own preservation, while also being aware of God's perfect capability to preserve them.

5.5.3 Resonances around Jude 20-25

In sections §5.3.1 and §5.4.1, we argued that the scope of the exhortations towards restoration in James 5:19-20 and 1 John 5:16 (respectively) was intra-communal. Indeed, 1 John was quite emphatic that intercession should be directed only towards those within the community (5:16). However, in our discussion of the scope of Jude, we identified that it is more likely that Jude 22-23 represents an exhortation to pursue the salvation of the false teachers. This renders the scope of Jude as extra-communal, whereas James and 1 John are intra-communal.

[95] Lockett, *Letters for the Church*, 207.
[96] Lockett, *Letters for the Church*, 207. The final "keep" Lockett identifies in verse 24 is not actually τηρέω, but φυλάσσω.

Previously, we have used the collective approach to adjudicate between interpretive options, noting which interpretive option is most amplified by other parts of the collection. In §5.5.1 we outlined a number of interpretive options for the scope of Jude 22-23, and using the collective approach, it would seem that the intra-communal, single-group view, in which mercy is directed exclusively towards wavering believers, is amplified by the intra-communal exhortations of James 5:19-20 and 1 John 5:16. Interestingly then, the collective approach actually amplifies the least likely (on internal grounds) of all the views on the scope of Jude 22-23. This is a danger within the collective approach to focus on the points of amplification at the expense of the evidence of internal analysis. This, in turn, results in the drowning out of differences between the constituent parts of the collection, and therefore, the collective approach has an inclination towards emphasising homogenisation of the collection's teaching on a given issue, rather than highlighting the differences.

At the same time though, the collective approach highlights the extra-communal teaching of Jude. Given that the internal grounds for understanding Jude 22-23 as extra-communal is so strong, the possibility of harmonising the passage, that is allowing the intra-communal scope of James and 1 John to amplify the possibility here in Jude as well, should be rejected. Instead, the intra-communal teaching of James and 1 John, throws the extra-communal emphasis of Jude into sharp relief.[97]

5.6 Minor Resonances of the Motif

In this section, we will explore two further 'resonances', which become available once the more central network of associations between James 5:19-20, 1 John 5:16 and Jude 22-23 has been established. First, we will suggest another node of this motif within the collection (1 Peter 5:10), before exploring an interpretive 'pun' that arises between Jude 24 and 1 John 5:18.

1 Peter, like James, 1 John and Jude concludes with a hint towards this motif in 5:10,[98] which reads:

[97] An emphasis which already on internal grounds is surprising for many interpreters.

[98] Note that all of the key passages analysed in this chapter have been present at the conclusion of their respective letters (e.g. James 5:14-20; 1 John 5:14-18; Jude 22-25). Whether such a feature constitutes a resonance between these letters or not is unclear, but the fact that a number of the Catholic Epistles conclude with this motif in various ways is noteworthy.

> [10]ὁ δὲ θεὸς πάσης χάριτος, ὁ καλέσας ὑμᾶς εἰς τὴν αἰώνιον αὐτοῦ δόξαν ἐν Χριστῷ ὀλίγον παθόντας αὐτὸς καταρτίσει, στηρίξει, σθενώσει, θεμελιώσει.
> [10]But the God of all grace, who called you into his eternal glory in Christ, after suffering a little while, will himself restore, confirm, strengthen and establish [you].

1 Peter, at its conclusion, assures its readers that after they have "suffered for a little while (ὀλίγον, cf. 1 Peter 1:6) God himself will restore, confirm, strengthen and establish" (καταρτίσει, στηρίξει, σθενώσει, θεμελιώσει) them (1 Peter 5:10). Commentators have not reached a consensus on whether these verbs, though future in form, take place at the eschatological consummation, or in the present.[99] When read in the context of the collection though, Jude 22-25, and its emphasis on the ultimate preservation that the believer has in God, amplifies the sense that these verbs in 1 Peter 5:10 are affirmations of God's ongoing commitment to the preservation of his people, whether at the consummation or in this life.

Other than the conceptual parallel identified above, there are two other points of resonance between 1 Peter 5:10 and the other major nodes in this chapter. The great threat in 1 Peter against which God's people need protection is the Devil, who prowls around like a lion looking to devour someone (1 Peter 5:8). 1 John 5:18 similarly highlights the "evil one" as a great threat against which God's people need protection.

Moreover, the third of the four overlapping verbs, σθενώσει ("to strengthen"), also occurs in James 5:14, although there it occurs with an alpha-privative, describing the one who has wandered in their faith, and is, as such, described as "weak" (ἀσθενεῖ τις ἐν ὑμῖν, Jas 5:14). In light of the broader context of the James passage, an additional interpretive possibility presents itself for the interpretation of 1 Peter 5:10. The greatest threat facing

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[99] Goppelt argues that these verbs are not eschatological in nature, but rather take place "now in the brief time of affliction." Leonhard Goppelt, *A Commentary on 1 Peter* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1993), 365.

Scholars who conclude that the verbs are fully eschatological include: Michaels, *1 Peter*, 302; Forbes, *1 Peter*, 180.

Forbes claims that Peter H. Davids interprets 1 Peter 5:10 is this manner as well, however his reading of Davids is incorrect. Davids understands 1 Peter 5:10 as an eschatological promise that has begun to be fulfilled in the ministry of the saints to one another. He says, "While the verbs involved are future (not the optatives found in most closing blessings), it is clear from their content that some of this is taking place even within their present suffering… What Peter has done is pile up a number of closely related terms that together by their reinforcing one another give a multiple underscoring of the good that God is intending for them and even now is producing in their suffering." Peter Davids, *The First Epistle of Peter*, NICNT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1990), 195-196.)\

Another scholar who understands these verbs as eschatological in essence, but available in the present is Karen Jobes, who suggests that they should be understood under the familiar "now, but not yet" paradigm. Jobes, *1 Peter*, 316-317.

the readers of 1 Peter, against which the author has been continually warning them, has been the pressure, that accompanies persecution, to compromise their Christian convictions, in favour of conforming to the world (cf. 1 Peter 2:11-12; 19-21; 3:13-17; 4:1-5, 12-16, 19). If an individual were to compromise their Christian faith due to the suffering to which they are being subjected, as seems very possible according to 1 Peter, James might describe them as someone who is 'weak' (ἀσθενεῖ τις ἐν ὑμῖν, James 5:14, recall our earlier discussion of ἀσθενέω as a metaphor for spiritual weakness). In this way, the restoration (καταρτίσει, στηρίξει, σθενώσει, θεμελιώσει) promised in 1 Peter 5:10 could be closer to the restoration from sin that is in view in places like James 5:14-20 and 1 John 5:16. In other words, when 1 Peter 5:10 is read collectively alongside James 5:14 the following interpretation emerges: "After you have suffered for a little while (and if you've wandered from the truth because of that suffering), God himself will restore, confirm, strengthen and establish you."

Finally, there is a suggestive connection between the promises of preservation in Jude's doxology (vv. 24-25) and 1 John 5:18. According to 1 John 5:18, the evil one is unable to "touch" (ἅπτεται) the believer. Jude's doxology declares that God is able to keep his people "free from stumbling" (ἀπταίστους). The words ἅπτεται and ἀπταίστους are not similar enough to constitute a verbal resonance, but once the network of associations between the passages in 1 John and Jude are recognised, the connection becomes more suggestive.

1 John 5:18	Jude 21
Οἴδαμεν ὅτι πᾶς ὁ γεγεννημένος ἐκ τοῦ θεοῦ οὐχ ἁμαρτάνει, ἀλλ' ὁ γεννηθεὶς ἐκ τοῦ θεοῦ **τηρεῖ ἑαυτὸν** καὶ ὁ πονηρὸς οὐχ **ἅπτεται** αὐτοῦ. We know that everyone who has been born of God does not sin, but the one who was born of God keeps him/himself and the evil one does not touch him.	**ἑαυτοὺς** ἐν ἀγάπῃ θεοῦ **τηρήσατε** Keep yourselves in the love of God.
1 John 5:21	**Jude 24**
Τεκνία, **φυλάξατε ἑαυτὰ** ἀπὸ τῶν εἰδώλων. Children, keep yourselves from idols.	Τῷ δὲ δυναμένῳ **φυλάξαι** ὑμᾶς **ἀπταίστους** καὶ στῆσαι κατενώπιον τῆς δόξης αὐτοῦ ἀμώμους Now to him who is able to keep you from stumbling and to present you blameless before his glory.

Figure 30 - The Conclusions of 1 John and Jude

Once the network of associations between these passages has been observed, the significance of the connection between ἅπτεται in 1 John 5:18 and ἀπταίστους in Jude 24 can be appreciated. At the time when the collection was brought together, the use of

aspiration was declining in the Greek language, and so, the verb ἅπτεται and the adjective ἀπταίστους would have sounded quite similar. Both words communicate physical/kinetic concepts (i.e. touching and stumbling), which when read together create an interpretive pun. God's people are safeguarded "from stumbling" (Jude 24) in that they are never "touched" by "the evil one" (1 John 5:18). This paronomasia is only perceptible once a reader adopts a collective approach to the Catholic Epistles, and then recognises the network of associations that exist between these passages. Such an observation illustrates the interpretive possibilities that attend a collective approach to the Catholic Epistles.

5.7 Conclusion

Previous scholarship has identified three passages as significant for the motif of the restoration of an errant believer (James 5:19-20; 1 John 5:16; Jude 22-23). We analysed each of these passages and by tracing the resonances out from each passage in turn, we mapped a network of associations that enveloped a much wider array of passages from the Catholic Epistles than what is treated by the existing literature, including: James 1:27; 2:13; 5:13-18; 1 Peter 2:24-25; 4:8; 5:8, 10; 1 John 3:6, 9; 5:14-15, 18, 21; 2 John 8; Jude 1, 20-21, 24-25. In our initial examinations of the major nodes of the motif, we explored their teaching on the scope and agency of the restoration, our findings are tabulated below.

	James 5:13-20	1 John 5:14-18	Jude 20-25
Scope	Intra-Communal	Intra-Communal	Extra-Communal (False Teachers)
Agency of Restoration	Cooperative	Cooperative	Human
Agency of Preservation	N/A	Cooperative	Cooperative

Figure 31 - Summation of Restoration/Preservation in the Catholic Epistles

The scope of restoration in Jude is particularly striking. Not only does Jude's reputation as the most vitriolic of the Catholic Epistles precede it, making the extra-communal focus surprising, but, if we were to use the parallel passages in James and 1 John to identify the scope of restoration in Jude, as we did to similar issues elsewhere in this chapter, it would actually amplify an intra-communal scope of restoration, and dampen the extra-communal scope. This marks a significant limitation of the collective approach. While the approach does give interpreters another context in which to read the Catholic Epistles

and adjudicate difficult interpretive issues, the collection can dampen exegetical options, which may be preferable from an internal point of view.

We used the collective approach to amplify two additional elements, that are not categorised in the above chart. First, the possibility of interpreting ἀσθενεῖ as referring to "spiritual weakness" (an interpretive option already available on internal grounds, as outlined in our earlier discussion) is amplified by two other passages: 1 Peter 2:24-25 and 1 John 5:14-16.

Second, the agent of the believer's preservation in 1 John 5:18 could be either Jesus, or the believer themselves. There are a number of passages which insist upon the believer's self-preservation (Jas 1:27; 2 John 8). But, close connections between 1 John 5:18, 1 John 5:21, Jude 20-21 and Jude 24-25, amplified the interpretive possibility of understanding the believer's self-preservation as mediatory of God's ultimate preservation.

Our use of the collective approach also uncovered two new insights into the collection's teaching on the motif of the restoration of an errant believer. First, 1 Peter 5:10 was brought into the discussion, as a minor node of the motif, emphasising God's commitment to restoration and preservation. Second, an interpretive pun between Jude 24 and 1 John 5:18 was discovered. As we labour to keep ourselves from being touched by the evil one (1 John 5:18), we can have confidence that it is God who keeps us from stumbling (Jude 24).

Finally, it is worth considering the ways that the Catholic Epistles do not merely exhort their readers to restore others to salvation and preserve themselves from sin, or even just promise that God is committed to such things, indeed, the majority of the Catholic Epistles themselves are involved in just such restorative and preservatory ministry. So prominent is this element of their teaching that Nienhuis and Wall even claim, on the basis of James 5:19-20 and Jude 22-23, that the motif of "safeguarding those who might 'stumble' into false teaching or immoral lifestyle" is "an organising theme of the entire collection."[100] This chapter has demonstrated that the motif is present in more of the Catholic Epistles than just James and Jude, and has more nuance than previously understood.

[100] Nienhuis and Wall, *Reading the Epistles*, 47.

Lauri Thurén has suggested that James 5:19-20 is a veiled reference to the author's own purpose in writing.[101] He supports this claim by appealing to James 1:16, in which the author himself explicitly addresses the readers and warns them to "not be deceived" (Μὴ πλανᾶσθε). Regardless of whether Thurén's thesis about 5:19-20 is correct or not, his argument that James is writing to safeguard his readers from being deceived and walking into sin is surely correct. Moreover though, when read in the context of the collection, James' warning in 1:16 resonates with other warnings throughout the Catholic Epistle collection, especially 1 John (2:26 and 3:7).

James 1:16	**Μὴ πλανᾶσθε**, ἀδελφοί μου ἀγαπητοί.	Do not be deceived, my beloved brothers.
1 John 2:26	Ταῦτα ἔγραψα ὑμῖν περὶ **τῶν πλανώντων ὑμᾶς.**	I write these things to you concerning those who are deceiving you.
1 John 3:7	Παιδία, **μηδεὶς πλανάτω** ὑμᾶς·	Children, let no one deceive you.
2 John 8	**βλέπετε ἑαυτούς**, ἵνα μὴ ἀπολέσητε ἃ εἰργασάμεθα ἀλλὰ μισθὸν πλήρη ἀπολάβητε.	Watch yourselves, lest you destroy that which we worked for, but may receive a full reward.
2 Peter 3:17	Υμεῖς οὖν, ἀγαπητοί, προγινώσκοντες **φυλάσσεσθε**, **ἵνα μὴ τῇ** τῶν ἀθέσμων **πλάνῃ** συναπαχθέντες ἐκπέσητε τοῦ ἰδίου στηριγμοῦ,	You, therefore, beloved, knowing this beforehand, keep yourselves, lest you be led away into the error of lawless people, and you lose your own stability.

Figure 32 - The Catholic Epistles Restore/Preserve their Readers

In addition to the resonances between James 1:16 and the two passages in 1 John (which all use πλανάω), the passages from 2 John and 2 Peter are also conceptually resonant, in that they both exhort the readers to watch themselves (βλέπετε ἑαυτούς, 2 John 8, and φυλάσσεσθε, 2 Peter 3:17), lest they lose their own salvation. Therefore, in addition to James and 1 John, we can say that the salvation of their readers, and more importantly, the attempts to deceive their readership is a major concern for 2 John and 2 Peter.

Among the Catholic Epistles, the threat of deception, and the consequent need to safeguard the readers, plays the largest role in the Epistle of Jude. In fact, it seems as though the entire letter was composed due to a growing threat that the author of Jude detected amidst the readers:

> [3]Αγαπητοί, πᾶσαν σπουδὴν ποιούμενος γράφειν ὑμῖν περὶ τῆς κοινῆς ἡμῶν σωτηρίας ἀνάγκην ἔσχον γράψαι ὑμῖν παρακαλῶν ἐπαγωνίζεσθαι τῇ ἅπαξ παραδοθείσῃ τοῖς ἁγίοις πίστει. **[4]**παρεισέδυσαν γάρ τινες ἄνθρωποι, οἱ πάλαι προγεγραμμένοι εἰς τοῦτο τὸ κρίμα, ἀσεβεῖς, τὴν τοῦ θεοῦ ἡμῶν χάριτα μετατιθέντες

[101] Lauri Thurén, "Risky Rhetoric in James", *NovT* 37, no. 3 (1995): 274. Thurén calls this disguised reference to the purpose of James a "sligh[t]ly veiled ἔγραψα formula."

> εἰς ἀσέλγειαν καὶ τὸν μόνον δεσπότην καὶ κύριον ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦν Χριστὸν ἀρνούμενοι.
> [3]Beloved, although I was very eager to write to you about our common salvation, I found it necessary to write appealing to you to contend for the faith that was once for all delivered to the saints. [4]For certain people have crept in unnoticed who long ago were designated for this condemnation, ungodly people, who pervert the grace of our God into sensuality and deny our only Master and Lord, Jesus Christ.

In light of the threat that the opponents posed to the salvation of the readers, Jude exhorts them to "build [them]selves up in [their] most holy faith" (ἐποικοδομοῦντες ἑαυτοὺς τῇ ἁγιωτάτῃ ὑμῶν πίστει, v. 20) and "keep [them]selves in the love of God" (ἑαυτοὺς ἐν ἀγάπῃ θεοῦ τηρήσατε, v. 21).

Not only do the Catholic Epistles urge their readers to pursue one another's salvation (as well as preserve their own), while also assuring them of God's commitment to such restorative and preservatory work, a number of the Catholic Epistles themselves have this very same goal. This strengthens the sense that the Catholic Epistles are centrally concerned with the issue of restoration of errant believers, and not just at the structural or organisational level (as Nienhuis, Wall and Lockett have argued) – but at the level of individual exhortation, epistolary aims and collective network of resonance.

6 Conclusion

6.1 Reading the Catholic Epistles as a Collection

The purpose of this thesis was to advance the current scholarly discussion about interpreting the Catholic Epistles as a collection in two specific ways. First, it provided a method for interpreting the Catholic Epistles, and second, it tested the productivity of such an approach exegetically in the field of ethics. The development of our hermeneutical approach marks the principal contribution of this thesis. While a number of recent studies have advocated for the collective approach to the Catholic Epistles, none have articulated a clear method for performing such a reading, with the exception of the claim that the arrangement of the collection is important for its interpretation. But, how exactly the arrangement of the collection was supposed to influence interpretation of the letters remained unclear. Therefore, the development of a reading method to govern our interpretation of this collection is the most fundamental of the contributions made by this thesis.

My reading method focuses upon the identification of resonances across the collection, without conscious reference to the collection's arrangement. The arrangement of the collection was deemed largely irrelevant to the ongoing interpretation of the collection due to the reality that, for a reader of the collection, the arrangement of the letters is only an important factor for their initial encounter with the collection. Subsequent encounters with the letters, by contrast, result in the reader retroactively relating passages that they have already encountered across the collection, in a non-sequential manner. In other words, as readers grow in their familiarity with the collection, the anticipated result is an increase in their capacity to notice and hear resonances across the collection.

These resonances are both verbal and conceptual in nature: verbal in the sense that they often share key words, which become the focal point of the interpretive potential of the approach, and conceptual in the sense that they concern similar subject matter. Both elements of the resonance are important for this collective reading to work. As argued in chapter 2 and seen repeatedly throughout the exegetical discussions in chapters 3-5, verbal resonance without a solid conceptual connection between the passages seems to be proof-texting. On the other hand though, a conceptual resonance without verbal

connection has difficulty establishing a solid link between the passages in question. Once a reader has identified a resonance (with both the verbal and conceptual levels complementing each other) between two passages, those passages become nodes in a network of associated passages. As readers hear the resonances between the identified nodes, they are drawn deeper into the collection, as they trace the verbal and conceptual resonances further to another passage and another. In this way, the network expands along certain key nodes to include more and more passages within its purview. As the network expands, the key nodes, which govern the shape of the network, begin to influence the reader's interpretation of other passages related to the network. The network is both based on the texts and built by the reader. It is based on the texts, because it is grounded in clear verbal overlaps between verses, which are contextualised within passages that are conceptually parallel. It is, at the same time, built by the reader in the sense that it is up to the reader to recognise those resonances (both verbal and conceptual) and formulate the network.

Having arrived at a reading strategy for approaching the Catholic Epistles as a collection, it was left to determine which topics around which to begin the search for conceptual and verbal resonances. The sub-field of ethics was chosen as the area in which to test this new approach to the Catholic Epistles, because it represents a missed opportunity of scholarship. A thematic approach was adopted towards ethics as it cohered more closely with the collective approach to the Catholic Epistles. That is, rather than analysing how each of the Catholic Epistles construct ethical material and then performing a comparative study or establishing some composite portrait of ethics in the collection, a thematic approach has been adopted, as it allows the interpreter to follow the theme, and its accompanying nodes of resonance, across the collection in an uninhibited way.

The themes chosen were ethical mimesis (Ch. 3), love (Ch. 4) and restoration of an errant believer (Ch. 5), as they showcase the capaciousness of the collective approach. These chapters demonstrate how my collective approach might handle: a motif that is near-universally acknowledged as pervasive in the Catholic Epistles (mimesis); a motif that many scholars consider inconsistent across the Catholic Epistles (love); and a motif, that is only recognised as significant once the collective approach has been adopted (restoration). In other words, when taken together, these chapters demonstrate that the

collective approach has the capacity to productively work on a wide set of problems that occupy scholars of the Catholic Epistles and beyond.

6.2 Key Findings

6.2.1 Mimesis

Mimesis is a prominent theme in Greco-Roman ethical discourse and has been recognised as a significant motif in 1 Peter and 1 John. Therefore, one of the goals of chapter 3 was to demonstrate the heuristic power of the collective approach. From the point of view of scholarship, there are two primary ways to identify the presence of mimetic teaching in ancient ethical discourse: first, the use of technical mimetic language (i.e. τύπος and μιμέομαι), and second, the presentation of narrative exemplars (i.e. Sodom and Gomorrah in 2 Peter 2:6 or Jude 7), which is often associated with the metaphor of walking and/or following. Recently, Friedrich Horn has argued that analysis of mimesis should not be limited to one or the other methods of identifying mimetic teaching, but should cast a wide net in its efforts to find mimetic material. Adopting this wide scope of mimetic material is not only in line with contemporary scholarship, but also gave space for my discussion to cover a considerable range of mimetic material present in the collection.

Our discussion began with 1 Peter 2:21 ("For, to this you were called, that Christ also suffered on your behalf leaving an example for you, so that you might follow in his footsteps"), as it contains both types of mimetic teaching (technical mimetic vocabulary and the presentation of a narrative exemplar), as well as the walking/following metaphor. From 1 Peter 2:21, the discussion branched out along the three forms of mimetic discussion, forming three lines of resonance, which incorporated a number of passages within the Catholic Epistles into a network of associated passages (James 5:10; 1 Peter 2:1, 22-23; 3:9, 10, 21; 4:1-2, 19; 5:3; 2 Peter 2:2, 6, 15; 1 John 1:7; 2:6; 3:2, 3, 7, 16; 4:17; 3 John 11; Jude 7, 11). Even though 1 John 1:7 ("If we walk in the light, as he is in the light") is not usually viewed as an instance of mimesis (due to the verbal shift between the exemplar [protasis] and imitator [apodosis]), this thesis demonstrated that a mimetic interpretation is amplified by the use of the walking metaphor.

Given the above network and its nodes, our discussion concluded with an analysis of Russell Pregeant's suggestion that τὴν πίστιν τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ τῆς

δόξης in James 2:1 (“My brothers, do not hold the faith… with favouritism”) is a subjective genitive, and consequently, an instance of the *imitatio Christi* motif. While the collection reverberates with mimetic teaching, none of the forms of mimetic teaching present throughout the rest of the Catholic Epistle collection are present. This dampens the possibility of reading James 2:1 as an instance of the *imitatio Christi* motif.

6.2.2 Love

While love is widely acknowledged as a primary theme of the Catholic Epistles, it is not without its interpretive problems, particularly in terms of the Johannine Epistles. According to contemporary scholarship, the love presented in the Johannine Epistles lacks normative application (i.e. it is vague and impractical) and is intra-communal, even sectarian, in scope. The goal of chapter 4 was to explore whether the collective approach, and the consequent network of associated passages that it generates by means of the verbal and conceptual resonances, might offer any means of addressing these problems associated with Johannine love.

Considering the scholarly concerns above, our exegetical discussion of love has three foci: primacy, scope and praxis. Starting from the quotation of the Levitical Love Command in James 2:8, the chapter proceeds by exploring love passages in the Catholic Epistles (James 2:1-13; 4:11-12; 1 Peter 1:22; 2:17; 3:8; 4:8; 2 Peter 1:5-11) under these headings. We argued that throughout the Catholic Epistles, love is presented as the chief characteristic of the Christian. The love envisaged is intra-communal throughout the entire collection. Although the Catholic Epistles do have an extra-communal focus, as expressed by the Petrine missional motif (cf. 1 Peter 2:12), this is not expressed in terms of love, but rather in terms of conduct and good works. Throughout the collection, the virtue of love was related to a number of practical expressions (care for the poor, prayer for the wayward, aversion to worldly wealth and worldliness, etc.), which together form a rich tapestry of applications of love for the reader.

These passages all concern love, and so are resonant with one another conceptually. More than just conceptual resonance, our discussion has demonstrated the wide range of verbal resonances shared between these passages. A significant example was the host of terms shared between James 2:5-11 and 2 Peter 1:5-11, including: ἐκλέγομαι (James 2:5; 2 Peter 1:10), πλούσιος (James 2:5; 2 Peter 1:11), πίστις (James

2:5; 2 Peter 1:5), βασιλεία (James 2:5 [cf. v. 8]; 2 Peter 1:11), ἀγαπάω (James 2:5, 8; 2 Peter 1:10), ποιέω (James 2:8; 2 Peter 1:10) and πταίω (James 2:10; 2 Peter 1:10). This serves as a good example of the kinds of passages that previous interpreters have not read together, but that the collective approach is able to bring together. Moreover, both of these passages are further connected to the network by means of other resonances they share with other passages, demonstrating how a collective reading that attends to networks of resonance opens up space for multiple cross-referential interpretive possibilities.

The chapter concludes with a consideration of how the network might amplify or dampen the primacy, scope and praxis of love in the Johannine Epistles. The primacy of love in the Johannine Epistles is amplified by the primacy of love throughout the collection. The intra-communal scope of love in the Johannine Epistles is also amplified by the collection. Rather than remedying the scholarly critique of love in the Johannine Epistles, namely, that it is not sufficiently extra-communal, the collective approach identified a network of associated passages all of which contain a resonant emphasis on intra-communal love. This network, therefore, does not function to dampen the intra-communal nature of love in the Johannine Epistles, but instead, amplifies it. On the other hand though, the vague and impractical nature of the praxis of love in the Johannine Epistles is mitigated largely by the collective approach. As the reader follows the resonances around the collection, they encounter a range of explicit, practical applications of love along the way, which function to fill that gap in 1 John's emphasis on practical love (cf. 1 John 3:18, "Children, let us not love in word or talk, but in work and truth") which nonetheless remains ambiguous throughout the rest of the letter.

6.2.3 Restoration

The final chapter of this work demonstrates the ability of the collective approach to generate a new area of inquiry, namely, the restoration of an errant believer. While this motif has been noticed by my predecessors (Nienhuis, Wall and Lockett), my collective approach is more robust in its treatment of the motif. Whereas these previous scholars identified three key passages (James 5:19-20; 1 John 5:16 and Jude 22-23), but only in smaller combinations, my approach is able to integrate them together. Moreover, by means of the conceptual and verbal resonances shared between these main texts and others in the collection, a range of other passages are integrated into the network (incl.

James 1:27; 5:13-18; 1 Peter 2:24-25; 5:10; 1 John 5:14-15, 18; 2 John 8; Jude 20-21, 24). The most significant of these inclusions is 1 Peter 5:10 ("The God of all grace, who called you into his eternal glory in Christ, after suffering a little while, will himself restore, confirm, strengthen and establish [you]"). I argue that in the context of the collection, the emphasis on restoration present in 1 Peter 5:10 is amplified and caught up in the larger motif, such that I suggest it constitutes a fourth major node of the collection's network of restoration.

The contours of our analysis of the restoration motif particularly focused on the scope and agency of the restoration. With the exception of Jude 22-23, the scope of the restoration was directed towards believers within the community who were falling away. In Jude, however, it appeared on internal grounds that the restoration was directed towards the opponents who had infiltrated the community. Scholarship has balked at the idea that Jude urges his readers to seek the restoration of the opponents, given the vitriolic discussion throughout his book. Herein lies a potential hazard of the collective approach (or benefit, depending on one's point of view). The collection would amplify the interpretive possibility that the objects of restoration in Jude are believers who are falling into sin, an interpretation that is in agreement with a majority of current scholarship. However, such an interpretive option is not the only (or even the most plausible) one available on internal ground. Those seeking to read the Catholic Epistles as a collection should therefore be aware of the capacity of this approach to amplify an otherwise less plausible interpretive option.

As the network sprawled out, it became clear that the restoration motif was intertwined with another concept, namely, that of a believer's preservation. Throughout the collection, the agency for a believer's preservation within the faith is attributed to both the believer (James 5:13-20; Jude 21) and to Jesus (Jude 24). This dual agency of preservation complicated the already difficult issue of determining the agency of preservation in 1 John 5:18. In the end, I concluded that the verbal resonances between the exhortations in Jude 21 and 1 John 5:18, amplify the believer as the referent of "The one born of God" in 5:18. This consideration of preservation also surfaced another possible interpretation. Jude 24 states that God keeps believers from ἀπταίστους while 1 John 5:18 states that the one born of God protects the believer from the touch (ἅπτεται) of the evil one. These are not "verbally resonant" terms, as we have used the phrase

throughout this project, but they are verbally similar, and I argue they constitute a "pun" of sorts. That is, believers do not stumble, because they are kept from the touch of the evil one. Again, this discussion illustrated the generative capacity of the collective approach.

6.3 Areas for Further Research

This thesis has carried forward the work of Nienhuis, Wall and Lockett in significant ways. Moreover, the approach described could be applied in a variety of ways. First, other topics (both ethical and non-ethical) within the Catholic Epistles could be explored by means of the collective approach. For example, there are a couple of passages in the Catholic Epistles which seem to suggest some form of Christian perfection, that is, that believers can/will/should live without sin (Jas 1:4; 1 Peter 4:2; 1 John 3:9). The standard approach to these passages is to quickly affirm that they do not mean what they say, with the support of an assortment of other passages in the Catholic Epistles which affirm the universal sinfulness of humanity (i.e. Jas 3:2; 1 John 1:8, 10; 3:6, 8-9). The collective approach could be employed to offer another perspective on whether such swift dismissals are warranted within the context of the collection, or to uncover whether perfection is a more prominent motif within the collection than previously perceived. An analysis of perfection in the Catholic Epistles might easily pick up existing discussions within scholarship, such as the strands of "completeness" in the Epistle of James (Jas 1:4, 17, 25; 2:8, 22; 3:2),[1] or the discussions in 1 John about a "perfect love" (1 John 4:18a) which is also able to perfect its practitioner (1 John 2:5; 4:12, 17-18).[2]

Less ethical and more theological concepts could also be traced across the collection. The Epistle of James, for example, is infamous for its lack of Christology (cf. James 1:1 and 2:1). The rest of the Catholic Epistle collection though is dripping in christological teaching. The collective approach offers a new avenue of examining the

[1] Patrick J. Hartin, "Call to Be Perfect through Suffering (James 1,2-4): The Concept of Perfection in the Epistle of James and the Sermon on the Mount", *Bib* 77, no. 4 (1996): 477-492; Patrick J. Hartin, *A Spirituality of Perfection: Faith in Action in the Letter of James* (Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 1999); Patrick J. Hartin, "Faith-in-Action: An Ethic of "Perfection"", *CCE* (2012): 20-28; Patrick J. Hartin, "Wholeness in James and the Q Source", in *James and 1 & 2 Peter, and Early Jesus Traditions*, LNTS 478, eds. A. J. Batten and J. S. Kloppenborg (London: Bloomsbury, 2014), 35-57; Seongjae Yeo, "Teleios in the Epistle of James", *PJT* 103 (2022): 1-12.

[2] Rensberger, "Completed Love", 237-271; Myers, "Remember the Greatest: Remaining in Love and Casting out Fear in 1 John", 50-61.

absence of christological material in James. For example, if there are verbal resonances between James 1:1, 2:1 and other parts of collection, the collective approach would suggest that the interpreter naturally finds themselves smuggling Christology into their reading of James.[3]

Second, other collections of the New Testament (i.e. the Letters of Paul and the Gospels) could be approached in this manner. In the case of the Gospels, one would certainly expect a high number of verbal resonances between the Synoptic Gospels, and perhaps a similarly high number of conceptual resonances between the Synoptics and John. Some consideration would need to be made of the fact that within the Synoptic Gospels there are obvious cases of literary dependence. For example, the interpreter would need to consider the relationship that might exist between a network of associated passages focusing on Matthew and Luke and the hypothesised source Q. Similarly, the interpreter would need to consider carefully whether the material contained in the triple tradition, for example, constitutes a verbal resonance or something else entirely. These would be important considerations in such a venture. Nonetheless, the differences in authorship, and especially of tone in the Fourth Gospel, might create space for my collective reading strategy to make a contribution.

In the case of the Pauline Corpus, the long-standing issue of the authentic, undisputed Pauline letters (Romans, Galatians, 1-2 Corinthians, Philippians, 1 Thessalonians and Philemon) and the so-called Disputed letters (Ephesians, Colossians, 2 Thessalonians, 1-2 Timothy and Titus) has prevented scholarship from reading the corpus as an integrated whole. However, with my collective approach, issues of authorship can be bracketed out to look at what might be gained (or lost) when the collection is taken as a whole.[4]

The collective approach may also offer new avenues of interpreting otherwise disparate ancient codices. For example, the collective approach could be applied to the Nag Hammadi codices or the Bodmer Miscellaneous codex, literary artifacts that contain

[3] Roelof Alkema has recently investigated the use of Jesus Traditions in the Catholic Epistles. His study concludes by considering the composite portrait of Jesus that emerges (pp.277-292). Roelof Klaas Alkema, "The Pillars and the Cornerstone: Jesus Tradition Parallels in the Catholic Epistles" (2018).

[4] Martin Wright interprets the Pauline Epistles in dialogue with one another to overcome this same obstacle (with Ephesians as a test case), which is an analogous approach to our reading strategy. Martin Wright, *The Dividing Wall: Ephesians and the Integrity of the Corpus Paulinum*, 1 ed. (London: T&T Clark, 2021).

a collection of disparate works, in order to determine how the collated works might speak together.[5]

6.4 Final Words

This thesis has offered a reading strategy for approaching the Catholic Epistles as a collection. It is more robust than the offerings of previous scholarship in its capacity to integrate a wide array of material within the Catholic Epistle collection. Additionally, it is a reading strategy that allows the inclusion of the Catholic Epistles into fields of wider discourse. This thesis has especially explored how the Catholic Epistles might make contributions to existing discussions within New Testament ethics, a field from which they have historically been marginalised. While not necessarily remedying the Catholic Epistles of all the criticisms leveraged by previous scholarship, the collective approach does demonstrate the richness of the Catholic Epistle collection. Lockett concluded his 2017 volume with the hope that it would inspire studies in the Catholic Epistles that adopt a collective approach. This thesis provides and evaluates strategies for just such an approach to the Catholic Epistles as a collection, while also extending the study of New Testament ethics to include more consideration of the largely neglected Catholic Epistles.

[5] David Horrell considers the presence of 1 Peter in the Crosby-Schøyen codex and the Bodmer Miscellaneous Codex. His concern lies with the "literary connections made with [1 Peter] and what early transmitters of the text of 1 Peter took to be its key themes." (p. 99) While Horrell is particularly interested in the paratextual evidence that these manuscripts provide, his approach opens up space for the application of my reading strategy to a codex. David G. Horrell, "The Themes of 1 Peter: Insights from the Earliest Manuscripts (the Crosby-Schøyen Codex MS 193 and the Bodmer Miscellaneous Codex containing P^{72})", in *The Catholic Epistles: Critical Readings*, ed. D. Lockett (London: T&T Clark, 2009), 99-115.

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