

Report on the Symposium

“From the *Book of Enoch* to Book IV of the *Sibylline Oracles*. Old Testament Apocrypha – between Tradition and Innovation”

Michał Klukowski

The John Paul II Catholic University of Lublin

michal.klukowski@kul.pl

 <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-1130-7406>

A symposium on the Old Testament Apocrypha, entitled “From the Book of Enoch to Book IV of the Sibylline Oracles. Old Testament Apocrypha – between Tradition and Innovation,” was held at the John Paul II Catholic University of Lublin on 23–24 November 2022. The symposium commemorated Rev. Prof. Ryszard Rubinkiewicz, SDB (1939–2011), an outstanding expert in apocryphal literature, whose life and academic career were predominantly associated with the John Paul II Catholic University of Lublin (KUL).

The organisers of the symposium were Henryk Drawnel, head of the Centre for the Study of Second Temple Judaism, and his assistants – Marcin Biegas and Michał Klukowski. The symposium was financed by the Polish Ministry of Education and Science as part of the programme “Perfect Science,” project no. DNK/SP/548468/2022. All the conference sessions were broadcast on Facebook, and recordings of the presentations and discussions were uploaded on the website of the KUL Centre for the Study of Second Temple Judaism (<https://starozytnyjudaizmkul.pl>).

The papers were delivered by scholars representing all of the major academic centres in Poland. The aim of the symposium was to chart new paths and directions for the development of research on apocryphal literature in Poland and to create a platform for the exchange of scientific opinions on the current state of research on individual apocryphal texts.

As the Old Testament apocrypha texts constitute an important conceptual and ideological background for the New Testament, it is important to compile and publish critical editions, translations and commentaries to them in Poland. The symposium was to give impetus to this task.

The symposium was divided into seven sessions, and the papers were arranged according to chronology of the ancient texts. There were four sessions on the first day (23 November) and three sessions on the second day (24 November). The symposium was opened by Przemysław Kantyka, Dean of the KUL Faculty of Theology, whereas the introduction, which included welcoming and introducing each of the speakers, was made by the head of Centre for the Study of Second Temple Judaism, Henryk Drawnel.

The first session of the symposium, chaired by Prof. Drawnel, was dedicated to the Qumran texts. Wojciech Kardys (Nicolaus Copernicus University in Toruń) delivered a paper entitled: “Exorcism in the Genesis Apocryphon (1Q20^{ar}) against the Background of the Demonology of the Old and New Testaments.” In his opinion, the *Genesis Apocryphon* is a kind of a bridge between the “moderate” demonology of the Old Testament and the elaborate teaching on evil spirits in the New Testament. Marcin Biegas’s presentation, entitled “David as Prophet in David’s Compositions (11Q5 xxvii 2–11) against the Background of Qumran Literature,” focused on the perception of the figure of David in the Qumran community. In turn, Michał Klukowski spoke on “The Problem of Mixed Marriages in Second Temple Period,” trying to prove that some authors of the post-exilic texts found justification for the absolute prohibition of various kind of intermarriages in the Deuteronomistic idea of Israel as a “holy people” (e.g. Deut 7:6), in Isaiah’s concept of the “holy seed” (Isa 6:13), and the prohibition of interbreeding between two different species (Lev 19:19 and Deut 22:9, 11).

During the second session, chaired by Marcin Kowalski (KUL), Prof. Drawnel presented the paper “The Flood in the Ethiopic Book of Proverbs (*1 En.* 89:1–9) in the Context of Ancient Mesopotamian Literature.” According to him, the redactor of the longer, Ethiopic version of the flood narrative, drew his images directly from the texts preserved in the epics of *Atra-ḫasis* and *Gilgamesh* (Tablet XI) and in other literary sources of ancient Mesopotamia. The next paper entitled “The God of the Jews of the Egyptian Diaspora in the Prayer of the High Priest Simon (*3 Macc* 2:1–20) and the Priest Eleazar (*3 Macc* 6:1–15),” presented by Sylwester Jędrzejewski (Pontifical University of John Paul II in Kraków), addressed the prayers of Simon and Eleazar, in which one can see indirect references to the Mosaic Covenant. The next speaker, Marek Parchem (Cardinal Stefan Wyszyński University in Warsaw) discussed “The Apocalyptic Character of the Testament of Moses,” especially its eschatological hymn in chapter 10.

The third session was presided over by Marcin Biegas. The first speaker, Marcin Kowalski, presented a paper entitled “The Apocalyptic Reading of Paul’s Opponents in 2 Cor 10–13”. As he stated, in several passages (2 Cor 10:3–6; 11:3, 12–15, 20; 12:20–21) Paul, depicting his opponents, could have referred to the concepts of ‘holy war’ and demonology present in Jewish apocryphal literature, e.g. *1 Enoch*, the *Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs* or the *Sibylline Oracles*. In the second paper, “Prince Mastema and His Angels in the Book of Jubilees,” Antoni Tronina (KUL) presented the broad range of aspects related to Prince Mastema’s role in the *Book of Jubilees*, which used the biblical (Gen 6:1–4) and Enochic (*1 En.* 1–36) traditions to explain the beginning of evil in the world.

Prof. Tronina chaired the last session of the first day of the symposium. The speakers included Dorota Muszytowska (Cardinal Stefan Wyszyński University of Warsaw), who focused on “The Meaning of the Metaphor ἀστέρες πλανῆται in Jude 13 in the Light of 1 Enoch”, and Łukasz Laskowski (Institute for Higher Theological Studies, Częstochowa), presenting “Revision of Biblical History in Pseudo-Philo”. Dr Laskowski showed how

an anonymous Jewish author revised some Old Testament pericopes, betraying his confrontational attitude towards Greco-Roman religiosity.

The first speaker of the session held on 24 November and chaired by Sylwester Jędrzejewski was Mirosław Wróbel (KUL). His paper was entitled "The Struggle for Power over Moses between the Angel and the Devil (Jude 9) in the light of the Old Testament Apocrypha." He claimed that the key to understanding the text of Jude 9 were the texts of Deut 34:1–9, Zech 3:1–5 and 2 Pet 2:11, as well as the following Apocrypha: the *Book of Jubilees*, the *Apocalypse of Abraham*, the *Testament of Moses* and the *Life of Moses*. In turn, Maria Miduch (Pontifical University of John Paul II in Krakow) tried to answer the question: "Who Wrote Book IV of the Sibylline Oracles? A Diaspora Jew or a <God-Fearing> Gentile?" In her opinion, the "God-fearing" was a group of pagans who had not been fully converted to Judaism but believed in one God and followed some Jewish customs. Przemysław Piwowarczyk (University of Silesia, Katowice) presented the paper "The Circulation of the OT Apocrypha in Coptic Literature," proving that the OT apocrypha were scarcely present in monastic libraries, and therefore in monastic readings. Most OT apocrypha that have survived date back to the early period of Coptic literature (4–5 centuries).

The next session was chaired by Mirosław Wróbel. The first speaker, Wojciech Kosior (Jagiellonian University in Kraków), presented the topic "Echoes of the Apocryphal Myth of the Fall of Angels and the Birth of Demons in the Babylonian Talmud from the perspective of *Elyonim veTachtonim*". The system of *Elyonim veTachtonim*, created by Dr Kosior, is a system of qualitative and quantitative analysis of literary traditions concerning supernatural beings, based on the assumptions of evolutionary psychology, cognitive theories of religion, cognitive linguistics and formal analysis.

Since Piotr Muchowski (Adam Mickiewicz University, Poznań) was ill, his paper entitled "The Assumption of Enoch (Gen. 5:24) in Karaite Exegesis" was read by Henryk Drawnel. The motif of Enoch's assumption is present in the work *Sefer eszkol hak-kofer* by Jehuda ben Elijah Hadassi as well as in the work *Sefer ham-miwchar we-tow ham-mischar* by Aaron ben Josef the Elder. The second speaker of this session, Dorota Rojszczak-Robińska (Adam Mickiewicz University, Poznań), presented the use of "The Torah in the Old Polish Apocrypha of the New Testament" by medieval Polish writers, proving their knowledge of the Law and Jewish customs. She also discussed the Polish authors' use of citations from the Torah.

Dorota Rojszczak-Robińska chaired the last session. The first speaker, Wojciech Stelmach (Adam Mickiewicz University, Poznań), discussed "The Figures of Adam and Eve in Old Polish Apocrypha of the New Testament". It turns out that these characters were very popular, as evidenced by the fact that they are mentioned more than twenty times in six out of nine Old Polish apocrypha: *The Gospel of Nicodemus*, *The Story of Three Kings*, *Przemysł Meditation*, *Comely Discourse about the Passion of Lord Christ*, *The Life of Lord Jesus Christ* and *Life of Saint Anne*. In turn, Zofia Bryłka (Adam Mickiewicz University, Poznań) presented "Typical Senses in the Old Polish Apocrypha of the New Testament" on the example of *History of the Three Kings* [Polish: *Historia Trzech Króli*], an Old Polish apocryphon

that was included in *The Code of Wawrzyniec from Łask* written in 1544, a translation of the Latin *Historia Trium Regum* by John of Hildesheim.

The symposium was summed up and closed by Henryk Drawnel. He thanked the speakers and co-organisers for their participation and willingness to exchange ideas, hoping for future cooperation in the popularisation of the biblical apocryphal texts. In the post-pandemic era, it was important for the organizers to be able to meet the scientific community in person in one place. As usual, the value of the symposium is not only the discussions taking place in the conference room, but above all the behind-the-scenes conversations.