

# Rediscovering the Apocryphal Continent

New Perspectives on Early Christian and  
Late Antique Apocryphal Texts and Traditions

Edited by  
PIERLUIGI PIOVANELLI  
and TONY BURKE

*Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen  
zum Neuen Testament*

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and Tony Burke

With the collaboration  
of Timothy Pettipiece

Mohr Siebeck

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*This volume is dedicated  
to the memories of  
Pierre Geoltrain (1929–2004) and  
François Bovon (1938–2013),  
without whom nothing of this  
would have been possible.*



## Acknowledgments

The essays published in this volume are revised versions of the papers presented at a series of conferences held in Groningen (Netherlands), Edinburgh (Scotland, U. K.), and Ottawa (Ontario, Canada) in 2004 and 2006. We would like to thank not only the authors who accepted our invitation to publish their contributions in the present volume, but also all the colleagues who participated in the events. The conferences in Groningen and Edinburgh were part of the Society of Biblical Literature International Meetings organized under the supervision of Kent H. Richards (SBL Executive Director). The workshop in Ottawa was generously funded by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada and the University of Ottawa. Our gratitude for the assistance received in organizing the Ottawa workshop goes especially to Lesley Strutt (Research Facilitator), Geoffrey Greatrex (Chair of the Department of Classics and Religious Studies), George Lang (Dean of Arts), and Robert Major (Vice-president, Academic). Rajiv Bhola and Robert M. Edwards, graduate students in the Department of Classics and Religious Studies, helped us in editing some of the articles, while Timothy Pettipiece prepared a first draft of the complete manuscript. Among the colleagues and friends who have constantly encouraged us, we wish to thank Ann Graham Brock, Lorenzo DiTommaso, André Gagné, Jean-Daniel Kaestli, Simon C. Mimouni, Enrico Norelli, Louis Painchaud, Anne Pasquier, Paul-Hubert Poirier, Jean-Michel Roessli, and Claudio Zamagni. We are also deeply grateful to Jörg Frey, Henning Ziebritzki, and all Mohr Siebeck's editorial staff for their kindness and competence in making this publication possible. Last but not least, this volume is dedicated to the memories of the late Pierre Geoltrain and François Bovon, the founders of the Association pour l'étude de la littérature apocryphe chrétienne, to whom all of us are so indebted.

Ottawa and Toronto, January 7, 2015

Pierluigi Piovanelli  
Tony Burke



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# I. Introduction



# The Christian Apocryphal Texts at the Society of Biblical Literature International Meetings (2004–2006) and the Ottawa International Workshop (2006): Retrospects and Prospects

Pierluigi Piovanelli

## 1. Fostering a new approach to Christian apocryphal texts

In November 2003, at the Annual Meeting of the Society of Biblical Literature (SBL) in Atlanta (Ga.), Kent H. Richards, who was at that time the executive director of the SBL and with whom I had already collaborated on the organization of the SBL International Meeting in Lausanne (Switzerland) in 1997, asked me if I would be interested in taking the direction of the Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha Section of the SBL International Meeting for the next three years. I accepted his offer with enthusiasm and as soon as I returned to Ottawa I started making plans for the next international conference to be held in Groningen, July 25–28, 2004.

Originally, the focus of that section was on Jewish Second Temple deuterocanonical (the so-called Apocrypha) and apocryphal texts (the so-called Pseudepigrapha). However, because of the ambivalent nature of many so-called Old Testament Pseudepigrapha (such as the *Life of Adam and Eve*, the *Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs*, the *Testament of Job*, the *Ascension of Isaiah*, and the *Paraleipomena of Jeremiah*) that, in spite of their apparently Jewish aspect, were written (or rewritten) by (Jewish) Christians, I felt that the time was ripe to also take into account the phenomenon of the Jewish pseudepigraphic traditions written and/or appropriated by Christian authors.<sup>1</sup> Moreover, on account of the

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<sup>1</sup> In the wake of the researches carried out by M. de Jonge, R. A. Kraft, E. Norelli, and a few others. See especially M. de Jonge, *Pseudepigrapha of the Old Testament as Part of Christian Literature: The Case of the Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs and the Greek Life of Adam and Eve* (SVTP 18; Leiden 2003); idem, "The Authority of the 'Old Testament' in the Early Church: The Witness of the 'Pseudepigrapha of the Old Testament,'" in *The Biblical Canons* (ed. J.-M. Auwers and H. J. de Jonge; BETL 163; Leuven 2003), 459–86; R. A. Kraft, "Setting the Stage and Framing Some Central Questions," *JSJ* 32 (2001): 371–95, reprinted in idem, *Exploring the Scripturesque: Jewish Texts and Their Christian Contexts* (JSJSup 137; Leiden 2009), 35–60; E. Norelli, *Ascension du prophète Isaïe* (Apocryphes 2; Turnhout 1993); idem, *L'Ascensione di Isaia. Studi su un*

absence of any specific international section devoted to the study of Christian apocryphal texts and in order to stress the continuity existing between Jewish and Christian parabiblical writings,<sup>2</sup> I chose to open, for the first time in its history, the Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha International Section to specialists of early Christian apocryphal literature.

An *ad hoc* call for papers was then sent to the members of the SBL, the Canadian Society of Biblical Studies (CSBS), the Associazione italiana per lo studio del giudaismo (AISG), the Enoch Seminar, and the Association pour l'étude de la littérature apocryphe chrétienne (AELAC). This initiative was so welcomed that at the meeting in Groningen we were able to organize no less than four panels devoted, respectively, to Second Temple Jewish Apocrypha<sup>3</sup> and Pseudepigrapha,<sup>4</sup> their Christian rewritings and/or counterparts,<sup>5</sup> and Christian apocryphal texts.<sup>6</sup> After an interlude in Singapore in 2005, which only a handful of specialists was able to attend,<sup>7</sup> four other sessions were organized once again in

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*apocrifo al crocevia dei cristianesimi* (Origini, n.s. 1; Bologna 1994). More recently, see R. Nir, *The Destruction of Jerusalem and the Idea of Redemption in the Syriac Apocalypse of Baruch* (SBLJL 20; Atlanta, Ga. 2003) (even if Nir's hypothesis of a Christian authorship for 2 *Baruch* is hardly receivable, her provocative monograph still contains many insightful and useful observations on the permeable boundaries of late Second Temple Jewish and early Christian pseudepigraphic literature); J. R. Davila, *The Provenance of the Pseudepigrapha: Jewish, Christian, or Other?* (JSJSup 105; Leiden 2005); T. Elgvin, "Jewish Christian Editing of the Old Testament Pseudepigrapha," in *Jewish Believers in Jesus: The Early Centuries* (ed. O. Skarsaune and R. Hvalvik; Peabody, Mass. 2007), 278–304; P. Piovanelli, "In Praise of 'The Default Position,' or Reassessing the Christian Reception of the Jewish Pseudepigraphic Heritage," *NedTT* 61 (2007): 233–50.

<sup>2</sup> As I argued in P. Piovanelli, "Rewritten Bible ou Bible in Progress? La réécriture des traditions mémoriales bibliques dans le judaïsme et le christianisme anciens," *RTP* 139 (2007): 295–310.

<sup>3</sup> M. A. Christian, "Reading Tobit Backwards and Forwards: In Search of 'Lost Halakhah'; S. Beyerle, "'Release Me to Go to My Everlasting Home' (Tob. 3:6): A Belief in an After-Life in Late Wisdom Literature?"; E. T. Noffke, "Adam, Man of Glory or First Sinner? The figure of Adam in the Book of Sirach."

<sup>4</sup> H. Eshel, "*Divevei ha-Me'orot* and the 'Apocalypse of Weeks'; H. C. Kim, "An Apology for God: *Psalms of Solomon* 11 and Its Jerusalem Tradition"; B. Embry, "The Name Solomon as a Prophetic Hallmark in Jewish and Christian Apocryphal Texts"; D. Patterson, "'Mother, Embrace Your Children': Maternal Imagery and the Corporate Community in 2 Esdras."

<sup>5</sup> J. R. Davila, "Did Christians Write Old Testament Pseudepigrapha that Appear to be Jewish?"; J. R. C. Cousland, "The Gospel of Adam and Eve: The *Latin Life of Adam and Eve* as Gospel Antetype"; K. Coblenz Bautch, "The *Pseudo-Clementines'* Use of Jewish Pseudepigrapha."

<sup>6</sup> P. Luomanen, "The Nazoreans' Commentary on Isaiah"; M. Laine Heimola, "Christians, Jews and Gentiles: Inter-faith Relationships and Identity in the *Gospel of Philip*"; T. Nicklas, "The Death of Peter"; P. Piovanelli, "Why Peter? The Authoritative Role of Peter in the Monophysite Collections of the Apocryphal Acts of the Apostles"; C. Horn, "Children as Literary Device in the Canonical and Apocryphal Acts"; V. Hovhanessian, "The *Rest of the Evangelist John* and the Armenian Bible."

<sup>7</sup> H. C. Kim, "The Key Signifier of 'Forever' in *Psalms of Solomon* 11"; M. Harding, "The Destruction of Jerusalem: Guilt and Hope in the Baruch Tradition and Josephus"; R. Nir, "The Struggle Between 'The Image of God' and Satan in the *GLAE* (10–12)"; J. M. Asgeirsson, "The Framing of the *Gospel of Thomas: Logion* 2"; J. W. Ludlow, "Notions of Death and Afterlife in

Edinburgh in 2006 on “Second Temple Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha,”<sup>8</sup> “More Old Testament Pseudepigrapha,”<sup>9</sup> “Christian Reception and Apocryphicity,”<sup>10</sup> and “Christian Apocryphal Texts.”<sup>11</sup>

As it happens, in the course of my triennial mandate as chair of the Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha International Section there were no less than thirty-two papers presented on Jewish Apocrypha (Tobit, Sirach, additions to Esther) and Pseudepigrapha (*1 Enoch*, *Jubilees*, *Psalms of Solomon*, Pseudo-Philo’s *Biblical Antiquities*, *4 Ezra*, *2 Baruch*), Christian pseudepigraphic (re)writings (*Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs*, *Joseph and Aseneth*, *Life of Adam and Eve*, *Odes of Solomon*) and apocryphal texts (*Gospel of Thomas*, *Gospel of Philip*, *On the Origin of the World*, *Jewish Christian Gospels*, *Pseudo-Clementine Homilies*, *Apocryphal Acts of the Apostles*), as well as some transversal themes (such as pseudepigraphy and apocryphicity, resurrection, sacred space, and children). Some from among the best and most engaged young specialists of Jewish Second Temple and early Christian literature contributed to those panels and several of those lectures were eventually published.<sup>12</sup>

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the *Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs*”; E. Israeli, “The Messiah’s Expiatory Death in the Fourth Vision of IV Ezra (9:26–10:59).”

<sup>8</sup> M. Tait, “Glorious and Resplendent? The Resurrection and the Resurrection Body in the Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha”; D. A. Fiensy, “Sacred Space in the Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha”; I. Fröhlich, “The Temple as a Theme in the Book of Tobit”; P. J. Jordaán, “Text, Ideology and Body in the Additions to Esther”; J. T. A. G. M. van Ruiten, “Chronological and Spatial Symmetry in the *Book of Jubilees*”; J. Hopkins, “The Description of Sacrificial Worship in the *Book of Jubilees*: Its Interpretation by and Authoritative Status for the Dead Sea Scrolls Movement.”

<sup>9</sup> A. T. Wright, “Philo and the Book of Watchers”; M. H. McDowell, “Jael in Pseudo-Philo’s *Liber Antiquitatum Biblicarum*: A Comparative and Intertextual Approach”; R. Cousland, “When, Where, and Why: Space and Time in the *Books of Adam and Eve*”; J. R. Davila, “More Jewish Pseudepigrapha.”

<sup>10</sup> B. J. Embry, “A Story of Love? Use of Song of Songs in the *Odes of Solomon*”; R. Nir, “The Conversion of Aseneth in a Christian Context”; P. Piovanelli, “Christian Apocryphal Texts for the New Millennium: Achievements, Prospects, and Challenges”; I. Czachesz, “Cognitive Constructs of the Divine in Apocryphal Literature.”

<sup>11</sup> P. Luomanen, “Jewish-Christian Gospels: A New Reconstruction”; B. van Os, “The Date and Provenance of the *Gospel of Philip*”; J. Brankaer, “Myth as Demonstration: The Program of *On the Origin of the World* (NHC II, 5; XIII, 2)”; V. Hovhannessian, “The Apocryphal *Acts of Thomas*: A Glance at a Lost Original or an Orthodox Revision?”; J. M. Asgerisson, “Between the God of the Hebrews and the God of the Sun: Building the Kingdom of Heaven in the Latin Passio-Version of the *Acts of Thomas*”; P. G. Schneider, “The Johannine Origins and Purpose of the Lord’s Secret Sacrament in the *Acts of John*.”

<sup>12</sup> See H. Eshel, “*Dibre Ham’orot* and the Apocalypse of Weeks,” in *Things Revealed: Studies in Early Jewish and Christian Literature in Honor of Michael E. Stone* (ed. E. G. Chazon, D. Sartran and R. A. Clements; JSJSup 89; Leiden 2004), 149–54; S. Beyerle, “‘Release Me to Go to My Everlasting Home . . .’ (Tob 3:6): A Belief in an Afterlife in Late Wisdom Literature?” in *The Book of Tobit: Text, Tradition, Theology. Papers of the First International Conference on the Deuterocanonical Books, Pépa, Hungary, 20–21 May, 2004* (ed. G. G. Xeravits and J. Zsengeller; JSJSup 98; Leiden 2005), 71–88; B. J. Embry, “The Name ‘Solomon’ as a Prophetic Hallmark in Jewish and Christian Texts,” *Henoch* 28 (2006): 47–62; M. A. Christian, “Reading Tobit Backwards and Forwards: In Search of ‘Lost Halakhah,’” *ibid.*, 63–95; B. van Os, “Was the *Gospel of Philip* Written

The release, then, of the second volume of the *Écrits apocryphes chrétiens* in 2005, edited by the late Pierre Geoltrain (1929–2004) and Jean-Daniel Kaestli on behalf of the AELAC, and hosting a wide selection of apocryphal texts produced in a variety of milieus and at different epochs,<sup>13</sup> provided a splendid occasion for organizing an international workshop on “Christian Apocryphal Texts for the New Millennium: Achievements, Prospects, and Challenges,” held in Ottawa (On.), September 29–30 and October 1<sup>st</sup>, 2006.<sup>14</sup> Twelve of the twenty-three papers presented there were devoted to three main areas of research – (1) the shadowy interface between Jewish Pseudepigrapha and Christian Apocrypha;<sup>15</sup> (2) some methodological problems in the study of Christian apocryphal texts;<sup>16</sup> and (3) Pseudo-Clementine literature as a privileged source for the history of the relations between Jews, Christians, and their cultural environment in late antique Syria<sup>17</sup> – all inspired by, or related to, the guiding principles and textual choices of the Pléiade volume, while the remaining papers addressed specific texts and/or traditions.<sup>18</sup>

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in Syria?” *Apocrypha* 17 (2006): 87–93; E. Noffke, “Man of Glory or First Sinner? Adam in the Book of Sirach,” *ZAW* 119 (2007): 618–24; R. Nir, “Did Adam and Eve Have Sex in the Garden of Eden? The Pseudepigraphic-Apocalyptic Tradition Between Judaism and Christianity,” *Henoch* 36 (2014): 1–14. See also D. Arbel, J.R.C. Cousland and D. Neufeld, “... And So They Went Out”: *The Lives of Adam and Eve as Cultural Transformative Story* (London and New York 2010); V.D. Arbel, *Forming Femininity in Antiquity: Eve, Gender, and Ideologies in the Greek Life of Adam and Eve* (Oxford and New York 2012).

<sup>13</sup> P. Geoltrain and J.-D. Kaestli, eds., *Écrits apocryphes chrétiens*, vol. 2 (Bibliothèque de la Pléiade 516; Paris 2005). It was preceded by F. Bovon and P. Geoltrain, eds., *Écrits apocryphes chrétiens*, vol. 1 (Bibliothèque de la Pléiade 442; Paris 1997).

<sup>14</sup> Thanks to a generous grant of the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada and with the support of both the Faculty of Arts and the University of Ottawa.

<sup>15</sup> L. DiTommaso, “Jewish Pseudepigrapha and Christian Apocrypha: Definitions, Boundaries, and Points of Contact”; J.R. Davila, “More Christian Apocryphal Texts”; R. Phenix, Jr., “The Problem of the Source of Balai’s Sermons on Joseph and the *Nachleben* of Pseudepigraphical Joseph Material.”

<sup>16</sup> T. Burke, “Researching the New Testament Apocrypha in the Twenty-First Century”; I. Henderson, “The Usefulness of Christian Apocryphal Texts in the Research on the Historical Jesus”; C. A. Evans, “The Apocryphal Jesus: Assessing the Possibilities and Problems”; P. Piovaneli, “Using Labels and Categories in a Responsible Way: The Making and Evolution of Early Christian Apocryphal Texts with the *Gospel of Mary* as a Test Case”; M. Kaler, “Gnostic Irony and the Adaptation of the Apocalyptic Genre.”

<sup>17</sup> A. Y. Reed, “New Light on ‘Jewish-Christian’ Apocrypha and the History of Jewish/Christian Relations”; N. Kelley, “Pseudo-Clementine Polemics against Sacrifice: A Window onto Religious Life in the Fourth Century?”; F. S. Jones, “Jewish Tradition on the Sadducees in the *Pseudo-Clementines*”; D. Côté, “Orphic Theogony and the Context of the *Clementines*.”

<sup>18</sup> T. Beech, “Unraveling the Complexity of the *Oracula Sibyllina*: The Value of a Socio-Rhetorical Approach in the Study of the *Sibylline Oracles*”; L. Painchaud, “À propos de la redécouverte de l’*Évangile de Judas*”; P.-H. Poirier, “La *Prôtennoia trimorphe* (NH XIII,1), le *Livre des secrets de Jean* et le Prologue johannique”; P. W. Dunn, “The *Acts of Paul* as an Experimental Control for the Criticism of the Acts of the Apostles”; F. Bovon, “The *Revelation of Stephen* or the Invention of Stephen’s Relics (Sinaiticus graecus 493)”; D.R. MacDonald, “The *Gospel of Nicodemus* (or, the *Acta Pilati*) as a Christian Iliad and Odyssey”; C. Horn, “From Model

The novelty of the AELAC approach, concretized in the different publications of the Association,<sup>19</sup> including the two-volume anthology, is essentially the blurring and breaking of the traditional boundaries between Old Testament Pseudepigrapha and New Testament Apocrypha, as well as early Christian and late antique/early medieval texts, in order to rediscover the continuity of the production of new memorial traditions and narratives about Christian origins.<sup>20</sup> Consequently, renewed attention is also paid to texts as late as, e.g., the *Pseudo-Clementine Homilies* and *Recognitions*<sup>21</sup> or to regional rewritings such as the Coptic, Arabic, and Ethiopic collections of the *Apocryphal Acts of the Apostles* or the Syriac *Life of the Virgin*, texts which are normally marginalized in the usual introductions or anthologies of translations devoted to Christian apocryphal literature.<sup>22</sup>

Contrary to common belief, the production of new apocryphal narratives did not come to an end somewhere in the third century to be replaced by a new wave of hagiographic or, perhaps more appropriately, homiletic texts.<sup>23</sup> Actually, those early Christian traditions and texts that did not become canonical, be they more or less “Jewish Christian,” “gnostic,” “encratite,” “proto-orthodox” – a series

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Virgin to Maternal Intercessor: Mary, Children, and Family Problems in Late Antique Infancy Gospel Traditions”; S. J. Shoemaker, “Mary in Early Christian Apocrypha: Virgin Territory”; T. de Bruyn, “The Power of Apocryphal Narratives in Late Antiquity: The Testimony of Amulets”; T. Pettipiece, “Manichaeism ‘Apocrypha’? From Mani to Manichaeism”; A. Bara, “The Convergence between Canonical Gospels, Apocryphal Writings and Liturgical Texts in Nativity and Resurrection Icons in Eastern Churches.”

<sup>19</sup> Nineteen volumes of the Corpus Christianorum Series Apocryphorum, three volumes of Instrumenta, fourteen volumes of the paperback series Apocryphes – the most recent one devoted to the Syriac version of the *Pseudo-Clementine Recognitions* translated into English –, twenty-five issues of the journal *Apocrypha*, and twenty-one fascicles of the *Bulletin de l’AELAC* published since 1983.

<sup>20</sup> On this and other “paradigmatic changes” introduced by the AELAC, see the insightful comments of T. Niklas, “‘Écrits apocryphes chrétiens’: ein Sammelband als Spiegel eines Weitreichenden Paradigmenwechsels in der Apokryphenforschung,” *VC* 61 (2007): 70–95. One should not think, however, that such a new perspective was adopted without long and sometimes stormy debates between rather conservative and more progressive scholars.

<sup>21</sup> Besides the integral translation of the Greek and Latin texts in the second Pléiade volume, see also the impressive volume of proceedings published by F. Amsler et al., eds., *Nouvelles intrigues pseudo-clémentines – Plots in the Pseudo-Clementine Romance. Actes du deuxième colloque international sur la littérature apocryphe chrétienne, Lausanne–Genève, 30 août–2 septembre 2006* (PIRSB 6; Lausanne 2008).

<sup>22</sup> In this regard, the monograph of S. J. Shoemaker, *Ancient Traditions of the Virgin Mary’s Dormition and Assumption* (OECs; Oxford and New York 2002), focused on both late antique and early medieval rewritings of the Dormition traditions, is quite exemplary.

<sup>23</sup> A phenomenon that I have especially discussed and highlighted in two complementary studies: P. Piovaneli, “What Is a Christian Apocryphal Text and How Does It Work? Some Observations on Apocryphal Hermeneutics,” *NedTT* 59 (2005): 31–40; idem, “Qu’est-ce qu’un ‘écrit apocryphe chrétien,’ et comment ça marche? Quelques suggestions pour une herméneutique apocryphe,” in *Pierre Geoltrain, ou comment “faire l’histoire” des religions. Le chantier des “origines,” les méthodes du doute, et la conversation contemporaine entre disciplines* (ed. S. C. Milmouni and I. Ullern-Weité; BEHESR 128; Turnhout 2006), 173–86.

of problematic labels that we use only for the sake of convenience<sup>24</sup> – or others, underwent a constant process of recycling and rewriting which occurred at every moment of the historical evolution from early to late antique Christianity and beyond. Thus, during the first three centuries c.e. the various groups and communities in dialogue and competition seem to develop rather different apocryphal genres (such as apocalypses, revelatory dialogues, ascents to heaven, acts of the apostles, etc.) and adopt different sets of characters in order to build their own narratives of their origins.<sup>25</sup> Originally produced to promote different understandings of what constitutes the essence of Christian identity, by the fourth century these writings were inherited by a new generation of more “globalized” Christians, who progressively transformed them into a new collection of more or less “orthodox” stories. Then, when centrifugal forces led to the emergence of new, regional churches, local editions and compilations of apocryphal texts started to see the light – and it took until the new, great globalization of the nineteenth and twentieth century to rediscover the extraordinary alterity of those late antique and medieval cultural artifacts.<sup>26</sup>

If these were among the new perspectives that brought us together in Groningen, Edinburgh, and Ottawa between 2004 and 2006, two recent developments in the study of early Christianity and Christian literature have since then emerged to challenge too conventional understandings of our apocryphal texts. The first concerns the unceasing need to reassess, on the one hand, the enthusiastic allegations of the specialists who think that newly discovered texts are necessarily as ancient and meaningful as, for example, the Gospel of Mark or the *Gospel of Thomas*, and on the other hand, the apologetic counterclaims of those who dismiss every extra-canonical text as desperately late, secondary, and

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<sup>24</sup> One should consider, for example, the extreme difficulty in categorizing an early Christian text as elusive as the *Paraleipomena of Jeremiah*: is it to be regarded as the outcome of a Jewish Christian, a proto-orthodox, a heterodox Johannine, or an early Valentinian circle? See Piovanelli, “In Praise of ‘The Default Position,’” 248–49.

<sup>25</sup> A. G. Brock, *Mary Magdalene, the First Apostle: The Struggle for Authority* (HTS 51; Cambridge, Mass. 2003), has drawn attention to the tendency to polemically emphasize, in both canonical and extra-canonical texts, the roles played by different heroes of the Jesus movement.

<sup>26</sup> I have described some aspects of such a complicated process in P. Piovanelli, “Le recyclage des textes apocryphes à l’heure de la petite ‘mondialisation’ de l’Antiquité tardive (ca. 325–451). Quelques perspectives littéraires et historiques,” in *Poussières de christianisme et de judaïsme antiques. Études réunies en l’honneur de Jean-Daniel Kaestli et Éric Junod* (ed. A. Frey and R. Gounelle; PIRSB 5; Lausanne 2007), 277–95; idem, “The Reception of Early Christian Texts and Traditions in Late Antiquity Apocryphal Literature,” in “*The Reception and Interpretation of the Bible in Late Antiquity: Proceedings of the Montréal Colloquium in Honour of Charles Kannengiesser, 11–13 October 2006*” (ed. L. DiTommaso and L. Turcescu; *The Bible in Ancient Christianity* 6; Leiden 2008), 429–39. Also see, in more general terms, P. Piovanelli, “Apocriphi e pseudepigrifi del Nuovo Testamento,” in *Dizionario del sapere storico-religioso del Novecento* (ed. A. Melloni; 2 vols.; Bologna 2010), 1:43–52; idem, “La réécriture des traditions mémoriales des origines dans le judaïsme et le christianisme anciens,” *Annuaire de l’École pratique des hautes études, Section des sciences religieuses* 121 (2014): 205–7.

biased. As more accurate textual, literary, and historical analyses demonstrate, the situation is rarely that simple and, even if early Christian texts are relatively rare, late antique apocryphal (re)writings can still preserve earlier and invaluable traditions and, so much as modern forgeries, may still have a lot to teach us.<sup>27</sup> The second aspect we need to take into account is the “disintegration” of not only the traditional category of “Gnosticism” as a distinct religious phenomenon – to be eventually replaced with “Two Powers in Heaven” Jewish mysticism and “Sethian,” “Valentinian,” and other varieties of gnostic, intellectual, and/or mystical Christianities<sup>28</sup> –, but also the notion of a clear-cut separation between the faithful belonging to two well-defined religious entities called “Judaism” and “Christianity” before, at least, the fourth century C.E.<sup>29</sup> There should be no doubt that the progressive dismantling of these and other dubious categories is going to have a considerable impact on our understanding of the web of socio-rhetorical relations between the different texts and groups. This will certainly contribute, in

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<sup>27</sup> In this very subjective domain I prefer to direct the reader to my own researches, regardless of how personal and debatable they might be. See P. Piovanelli, “Pre- and Post-canonical Passion Stories: Insights into the Development of Christian Discourse on the Death of Jesus,” *Apocrypha* 14 (2003): 99–128 (on the *Gospel of Peter*); idem, “L’Évangile secret de Marc trente trois ans après, entre potentialités exégétiques et difficultés techniques,” *RB* 114 (2007): 52–72, 237–54; idem, “Une certaine ‘Keckheit, Kühnheit und Grandiosität’... La correspondance entre Morton Smith et Gershom Scholem (1945–1982). Notes critiques,” *RHR* 228 (2011): 403–29; idem, “Halfway Between Sabbatai Tzevi and Aleister Crowley: Morton Smith’s ‘Own Concept of What Jesus “Must” Have Been’ and, Once Again, the Questions of Evidence and Motive,” in *Ancient Gospel or Modern Forgery? The Secret Gospel of Mark in Debate. Proceedings from the 2011 York University Christian Apocrypha Symposium* (ed. T. Burke; Eugene, Or. 2013), 157–83; idem, “‘Un gros et beau poisson.’ L’Évangile selon Thomas dans la recherche (et la controverse) contemporaine(s),” *Adamantius* 15 (2009): 291–306; idem, “Thomas in Edessa? Another Look at the Original Setting of the *Gospel of Thomas*,” in *Myths, Martyrs, and Modernity: Studies in the History of Religions in Honour of Jan N. Bremmer* (ed. J. Dijkstra, J. Kroesen and Y. Kuiper; Numen Book Series 127; Leiden 2010), 443–61; idem, “Thursday Night Fever: Dancing and Singing with Jesus in the *Gospel of the Savior* and the *Dance of the Savior around the Cross*,” *Early Christianity* 3 (2012): 229–48.

<sup>28</sup> See the groundbreaking monographs of M. A. Williams, *Rethinking Gnosticism: An Argument for Dismantling a Dubious Category* (Princeton, N. J. 1996); K. L. King, *What Is Gnosticism?* (Cambridge, Mass. 2003); I. Dunderberg, *Beyond Gnosticism: Myth, Lifestyle, and Society in the School of Valentinus* (New York 2008); D. Brakke, *The Gnostics: Myth, Ritual, and Diversity in Early Christianity* (Cambridge, Mass. 2010). Needless to say, as P.-H. Poirier, “Comment les gnostiques se sont-ils appelés? Comment doit-on les appeler aujourd’hui?” *SR* 33 (2004): 209–16, aptly reminds us, the target of such a constructive criticism should be more the traditional way of looking at Gnosticism than the reality of the phenomenon itself.

<sup>29</sup> Called especially into question by D. Boyarin, *Border Lines: The Partition of Judaeo-Christianity* (Divinations; Philadelphia 2004), and many contributors to the collective volume edited by A. H. Becker and A. Y. Reed, *The Ways That Never Parted: Jews and Christians in Late Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages* (TSAJ 95; Tübingen 2003; 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., Minneapolis 2007). A stimulating discussion of Boyarin’s theses can be found in *Henoch* 28 (2006): 7–30 (interventions of V. Burrus, R. Kalmin, H. Lapin and J. Marcus) and 30–45 (Boyarin’s response). Also see D. Boyarin, “Rethinking Jewish Christianity: An Argument for Dismantling a Dubious Category (to Which Is Appended a Correction of My *Border Lines*),” *JQR* 99 (2009): 7–36.

the end, to the relativization of the boundaries between literary corpora as artificial and conventional as the Old Testament Pseudepigrapha, the New Testament Apocrypha, and the Gnostic/Nag Hammadi Scriptures.<sup>30</sup> In the meantime, just after the much-awaited publication of the first volume of the seventh edition of the prestigious Hennecke and Schneemelcher's *Neutestamentliche Apokryphen in deutscher Übersetzung* under the new, highly significant title of *Antike christliche Apokryphen in deutscher Übersetzung*,<sup>31</sup> and the first volumes of the equally momentous *Old Testament Pseudepigrapha: More Noncanonical Scriptures* and *New Testament Apocrypha: More Noncanonical Scriptures*,<sup>32</sup> these new perspectives cannot but increase our expectations.

## 2. The present volume

Because of the high quality and thematic coherence of the Groningen and Ottawa papers, my original intention was to have them published as two different proceedings. However, in spite of numerous attempts and announcements, this was not possible. In 2007 I became the chair of our department of Classics and Religious Studies and, for the following five years, most of my energies were spent in dealing with administrative matters, an activity on behalf of the common good that I do not regret, but that did not leave me much space for the completion of major research and publication projects. As a result, the Groningen and Ottawa proceedings remained, so to speak, on the shelves until I had the chance to meet with Henning Ziebritzki, Mohr Siebeck's editorial director for theological and Jewish studies, at the occasion of the SBL Annual Meeting in San Francisco in 2011. Henning suggested submitting the plan of the volume to Jörg Frey, the editor in chief of the prestigious *Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament* series, who readily accepted to publish it. My heartfelt gratitude goes to both of them. Finally, in September 2013, at the occasion of the second Christian Apocrypha Symposium organized by Tony Burke at York University,

<sup>30</sup> On the artificiality of such collections, see J.-C. Picard, "L'apocryphe à l'étroit. Notes historiographiques sur les corpus d'apocryphes bibliques," *Apocrypha* 1 (1990): 69–117 (reprinted in idem, *Le continent apocryphe. Essai sur les littératures apocryphes juive et chrétienne* [Instrumenta Patristica 36; Turnhout 1999], 13–51); A. Y. Reed, "The Modern Invention of 'Old Testament Pseudepigrapha,'" *JTS* 60 (2009): 403–36.

<sup>31</sup> C. Marksches and J. Schröter, in collaboration with A. Heiser, eds., *Antike christliche Apokryphen in deutscher Übersetzung. I. Band: Evangelien und Verwandtes* (2 vols.; Tübingen 2012). The guiding principles of this new edition have been anticipated by C. Marksches, "'Neutestamentliche Apokryphen': Bemerkungen zu Geschichte und Zukunft einer von Edgar Hennecke im Jahr 1904 begründeten Quellensammlung," *Apocrypha* 9 (1998): 97–132.

<sup>32</sup> R. Bauckham, J. Davila and A. Panayotov, eds., *Old Testament Pseudepigrapha: More Noncanonical Scriptures, Volume 1* (Grand Rapids, Mich. 2013); T. Burke and B. Landau, eds., *New Testament Apocrypha: More Noncanonical Scriptures, Volume 1* (Grand Rapids, Mich. forthcoming).

Toronto (On.), Tony agreed to become the coeditor of the volume, thus securing its publication in an effective way with a reasonable delay.

Obviously enough, it was no longer a question of editing the proceedings of a couple of conferences of the past, but instead of selecting the most representative papers given over a four-year period by a small group of scholars driven by similar interests and concerns for a meaningful renewal of studies on Christian apocryphal literature.<sup>33</sup> Thus, the majority of the essays included in the present volume derive from a choice of the papers presented at the Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha International Section held in Groningen in 2004 and at the Ottawa workshop in 2006, while a few others come from occasional lectures hosted by the Department of Classics and Religious Studies of the University of Ottawa in 2007.

The twenty essays in this volume (with two exceptions, previously unpublished)<sup>34</sup> are arranged in a series of thematic and chronological sequences.<sup>35</sup>

By way of introduction, Tony Burke's "Entering the Mainstream: Twenty-five Years of Research on the Christian Apocrypha" insightfully maps the sometimes overlapping territories of North American and "continental" scholarship, the former being more concerned, for obvious theological reasons, with situating Christian apocryphal texts as early as possible in service to the ever-changing quest for the historical Jesus, while the latter is more sensitive to the never-ending development of early as well as late antique, medieval, and/or modern Christian narratives, their literary forms and ideological contents. Burke also provides a critical survey of the newly discovered and/or published texts, the most significant studies on Christian apocryphal literature, the major collections of texts in translation, as well as an extremely useful overview of the resources available on the Internet and in other media. "The Usefulness of Christian Apocryphal Texts in Research on the Historical Jesus" is, then, directly addressed by Ian Henderson, who advocates for a new, non-positivistic understanding of the

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<sup>33</sup> Comparable, in scope, to the volume edited by A. D. DeConick, *Paradise Now: Essays on Early Jewish and Christian Mysticism* (SBLSymS 11; Atlanta, Ga. 2006), which contains a number of papers delivered by the members of the Early Jewish and Christian Mysticism Group at the occasion of the SBL Annual Meetings since 1996.

<sup>34</sup> Davila's paper, presented in 2004 at the SBL International Meeting in Groningen, was later expanded to become the second chapter of his 2005 monograph *The Provenance of the Pseudepigrapha*, while Painchaud's essay was initially published in French in 2006.

<sup>35</sup> References to primary and secondary sources have been standardized according to the guidelines set up by P. H. Alexander et al., eds., *The SBL Handbook of Style: For Ancient Near Eastern, Biblical, and Early Christian Studies* (Peabody, Mass. 1999). Abbreviations not found there – e. g., ASE = *Annali di storia dell'esegesi*; BEHESR = Bibliothèque de l'École des Hautes Études, Sciences religieuses; JCTCRS = Jewish and Christian Texts in Contexts and Related Studies; OECGT = Oxford Early Christian Gospel Texts; PIRSB = Publications de l'Institut romand des sciences bibliques; SAAA = Studies on the Apocryphal Acts of the Apostles; SECA = Studies on Early Christian Apocrypha; TENTS = Texts and Editions for New Testament Study – will be easily identifiable through a simple search on any online database.

historiographic nature of both canonical and apocryphal early traditions about Jesus and biographies of Jesus: “the most important contribution of increased knowledge of non-canonical gospels to historical understanding of Jesus” – so Henderson argues in the footsteps of Klaus Berger’s renewed “form-criticism” and Vernon Robbins’ socio-rhetorical analysis – “is a broadened understanding of the generic character not only of text-production and text re-production, but also of the underlying processes of narration, argumentation, tradition, and memory.”<sup>36</sup>

With James Davila’s programmatic study of the “Old Testament Pseudepigrapha That Appear to Be Jewish,” but were actually written by Christians, we make another path towards a new understanding of Christian apocryphal literature more englobing than the traditional – not to say reductionist – category of the New Testament Apocrypha. By the same token, we also open the Pandora’s box of the exact provenance of a number of “para-biblical” texts to which the previous generation of scholars was perhaps too quick to attribute the label of Jewish Pseudepigrapha<sup>37</sup> and too eager to use as an appropriate background for the study of the New Testament.<sup>38</sup> Such a dramatic change of perspective is concretized in the choice to include in the first volume of the *Old Testament Pseudepigrapha: More Noncanonical Scriptures* new anthology no less than eighteen texts whose Christian authorship goes (almost) without discussion.<sup>39</sup> While, on the one hand, specialists of both Second Temple and/or rabbinic Judaism and early and/or late antique Christianity should take this phenomenon into due account in order to avoid, at least, embarrassing anachronisms, on the other hand, those scholars who are involved in the study of Jewish-Christian relations should use it to question the pertinence of the old heresiological construction of “Jewish

<sup>36</sup> Henderson, “The Usefulness of Christian Apocryphal Texts,” in this volume, 54.

<sup>37</sup> See above, n. 1.

<sup>38</sup> As R. D. Chesnutt, “The Dead Sea Scrolls and the Meal Formula in *Joseph and Aseneth*: From Qumran Fever to Qumran Light,” in *The Bible and the Dead Sea Scrolls: The Second Princeton Symposium on Judaism and Christian Origins* (ed. J. H. Charlesworth; 3 vols.; Waco, Tex. 2006), 2:397–425 at 399, aptly notes about scholarship’s proclivity to find traces of Qumranic theological ideas in a variety of Old Testament Pseudepigrapha, “[a]lthough such connections are entirely possible and must be evaluated on a case-by-case basis, the number and nature of the proposals suggest that an infectious ‘Qumran fever’ has sometimes impaired scholarly judgment, blurred the distinction between similarities and actual connections, and predisposed some to find traces of Qumran in every nook and cranny of Judaism and early Christianity. This fever raged most intensely in the first two decades after the initial Qumran discoveries, but intermittent outbreaks have continued down to the present.”

<sup>39</sup> Notably, *Adam Octipartite/Sectipartite*, the so-called *Apocryphon of Seth* (actually, a citation of the *Revelation of the Magi*), the *Story* and the *Legend of Melchizedek*, the *Syriac History of Joseph*, the *Tiburtine Sibyl*, the *Selenodromion of David and Solomon*, the *Hygromancy of Solomon*, *The Questions of the Queen of Sheba and Answers by King Solomon*, *The Heartless Rich Man and the Precious Stone*, *Jeremiah’s Prophecy to Pashhur*, the *Seventh Vision of Daniel*, *The Relics of Zechariah and the Body buried at His Feet*, *Fifth and Sixth Ezra*, the *Latin Vision of Ezra*, *The Cave of Treasures*, and the *Palaea Historica*.

Christianity.” This is precisely the purpose of Annette Yoshiko Reed’s essay on “‘Jewish-Christian’ Apocrypha and the History of Jewish/Christian Relations,” mainly devoted to the study of the information we can gather from Christian apocryphal texts – the *Apocalypse of Peter*, the *Protevangelium of James*, the *Didascalia apostolorum*, the Pseudo-Clementines, the *Book of the Rooster*, and the *Gospel of Nicodemus* – that seem to preserve “Jewish Christian” traditions or to be the more familiar with Jewish and/or rabbinic discourses.

The main body of the volume is then devoted to the examination of specific texts, literary ensembles, or questions. Louis Painchaud’s contribution, “With Regard to the (Re)Discovery of the *Gospel of Judas*,” was among the first attempts, made as early as 2006, to set the record straight about the true narrative character of Judas Iscariot – friend or foe? – in the newly discovered eponymous Coptic gospel. Minna Heimola’s essay deals with the intriguing question of the treatment of the figures of “Christians and Jews in the *Gospel of Philip*.” Theodore de Bruyn carries out an extremely useful survey of “Christian Apocryphal and Canonical Narratives in Greek Amulets and Formularies in Late Antiquity.” Stephen Shoemaker does the same about the figure of “Mary in Early Christian Apocrypha” – from late antique Dormition narratives, Apocalypses, and Lives of the Virgin back to the early Christian *Gospel of Mary* –, a field of research that he does not hesitate to qualify as “Virgin Territory.” An alternative path is taken in Pierluigi Piovanelli’s essay, “Why Mary and Peter? From the Early Christian *Gospel of Mary* to the Late Antique *Apocryphal Acts of the Apostles*,” which tries to put into historical perspective the replacement of the character of a “Gnostic” Mary of Magdala with those of Mary the mother and/or Peter the apostle in late antique “orthodox” rewritings. The articles of Peter Dunn, “Luke’s Acts or the *Acts of Paul*: Which Looks More Like a Second-Century Text?” and Cornelia Horn, “Depictions of Children and Young People as Literary Motifs in Canonical and Apocryphal Acts,” explore the narrative, ideological, and social views of both the canonical and apocryphal Acts of the Apostles, while Vahan Hovhannessian, in “The *Rest of the Blessed John* in the Armenian Bible: Deconstructing the *Acts of John*,” argues for an independent, non-gnostic origin of the episode of the apostle John’s death in *Acts of John* 106–115. The way to a socio-rhetorical analysis of the Christian edition of the *Sibylline Oracles* is opportunely cleared by Timothy Beech, “Unraveling the Complexity of the *Oracula Sibyllina*: The Value of a Socio-Rhetorical Approach in the Study of the *Sibylline Oracles*.” Another reconfiguration of Jewish apocalyptic literature is then examined by Michael Kaler, “Gnostic Irony and the Adaptation of the Apocalyptic Genre,” notably in the two similar cases of the *Apocalypse of Paul* (NHC V,2) and the *Apocalypse of Adam* (NHC V,5). Finally, Timothy Pettipiece’s essay, on “The Manichaean Reception of Apocryphal Traditions: The Case of the ‘Five Limbs,’” reminds us that a certain number of Jewish and/or Christian “apocryphal” traditions were positively received by the prophet Mani and his followers.

The last section of the volume includes five essays devoted to various aspects of Pseudo-Clementine literature, a series of novelistic writings essentially composed of two different fourth-century forms: the *Recognitions* in ten books, whose Greek text, presently lost, is preserved in Rufinus' integral Latin version and in a partial translation into Syriac; and the *Homilies* in twenty sermons, still extant in Greek. As is well known, these two texts derive from an earlier third-century work called in German *Grundschrift*, or "Basic Writing," which can at least in part be reconstructed and whose Jewish Christian (perhaps Ebionite) nature is almost universally accepted.<sup>40</sup> While previous generations of specialists have concentrated their efforts on the elusive shapes of the *Grundschrift's* hypothetical sources (the famous *Kerygmata* and *Periodoi Petrou*) or the *Grundschrift* itself, scholarly attention has now shifted in the direction of a more synchronic and rhetorical study of the two surviving late antique editions.<sup>41</sup> Thus, the contributions of F. Stanley Jones ("John the Baptist and His Disciples in the Pseudo-Clementines: A Historical Appraisal," on negative views of John the Baptist found in the *Grundschrift*), Kelley Coblentz Bautch ("The Pseudo-Clementine *Homilies'* Use of Jewish Pseudepigrapha," especially Enochic traditions),<sup>42</sup> and Giovanni Battista Bazzana ("Healing the World: Medical and Social Practice in the Pseudo-Clementine Novel," on an interesting difference of attitude towards medical practice between the Pseudo-Clementines and the *Acts of Peter and the Twelve Apostles* [NHC VI,1]) operate at the level of the Basic Writing. Meanwhile, the contributions of Dominique Côté ("Rhetoric and Jewish-Christianity: The Case of the Grammarian Apion in the Pseudo-Clementine *Homilies*," on the Homilist's attitude towards Greco-Roman *paideia*, rhetoric, and philosophy) and Nicole Kelley ("Pseudo-Clementine Polemics against Sacrifice: A Window onto Religious Life in the Fourth Century?" proposing to interpret such a polemic in the light of the Neo-Platonist critique of sacrifices) are more oriented towards its fourth-century rewritings and their late antique social and cultural contexts.

### 3. What prospects for future studies?

We are confident that consideration of the essays collected in this and similar volumes<sup>43</sup> will contribute to correct some misconceptions about Christian

<sup>40</sup> See, most recently, J. N. Bremmer, "Pseudo-Clementines: Texts, Dates, Places, Authors and Magic," in *The Pseudo-Clementines* (ed. J. N. Bremmer; SECA 10; Leuven 2010), 1–23.

<sup>41</sup> See the history of the research drawn by F. Amsler, "État de la recherche récente sur le roman pseudo-clémentin," in *Nouvelles intrigues pseudo-clémentines*, 25–45.

<sup>42</sup> For an analogous reconfiguration of the same traditions on the "gnostic" side, see now P. Piovaneli, "From Enoch to Seth: Primeval Patrons in Jewish-Apocalyptic and Christian-Gnostic Traditions," *Judaïsme ancien – Ancient Judaism* 2 (2014): 79–112.

<sup>43</sup> For example, J. Frey and J. Schröter, eds., *Jesus in apokryphen Evangelienüberlieferungen. Beiträge zu ausserkanonischen Jesusüberlieferungen aus verschiedenen Sprach- und Kulturtra-*

apocryphal texts, bringing the underground to the foreground, so to speak, and opening new avenues for the study of Jewish and Christian memorial traditions and “scripturistic” – certainly a better term than “para-biblical” – literature as a global phenomenon encompassing both “canonical” and “apocryphal” productions. More specifically, from a methodological point of view it would be highly beneficial, on the one hand, for too rigid source- and redaction-critical approaches to give way to more flexible socio-rhetorical studies of the different texts and traditions, and on the other hand, for “Jewish” and “Christian,”<sup>44</sup> “orthodox” and “heretical,” early and late texts and traditions to be put together in historical perspective and studied *in the long term*, albeit without denying the social and ideological peculiarities of the different milieus that produced them.<sup>45</sup>

Hopefully a day will come when it will no longer be necessary to advertise the edition of a new Coptic or Syriac apocryphal text discovered in a late antique or medieval manuscript as containing traditions as early and sensational as those transmitted by the Q source or the *Gospel of Thomas*.<sup>46</sup>

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ditionen (WUNT 1.254; Tübingen 2010); A. Gagné and J.-F. Racine, eds., *En marge du canon. Études sur les écrits apocryphes juifs et chrétiens* (L'écriture de la Bible 2; Paris 2012); J. Schröter, ed., *The Apocryphal Gospels within the Context of Early Christian Theology* (BETL 260; Leuven 2013); J.-M. Roessli and T. Nicklas, eds., *Christian Apocrypha: Receptions of the New Testament in Ancient Christian Apocrypha* (Novum Testamentum Patristicum 26; Göttingen 2014); or T. Burke and B. Landau, eds., *Forbidden Texts on the Western Frontier: The Christian Apocrypha in North American Perspectives* (Eugene, Or. forthcoming).

<sup>44</sup> In this respect, an extremely promising line of research is offered by the joint study of Jewish mystical and Christian apocalyptic texts. See, most recently, D. M. Burns, *Apocalypse of the Alien God: Platonism and the Exile of Sethian Gnosticism* (Divinations; Philadelphia 2014), and P. Piovaneli, “‘A Door into an Alien World’: Reading the *Ascension of Isaiah* as a Jewish Mystical Text,” in *The Ascension of Isaiah* (eds. J. N. Bremmer, T. R. Karmann and T. Nicklas; SECA 11; Leuven forthcoming).

<sup>45</sup> See the considerations expressed by J.-M. Roessli, “North American Approaches to the Study of the Christian Apocrypha on the World Stage,” in *Forbidden Texts on the Western Frontier*, forthcoming, and P. Piovaneli, “Scriptural Trajectories Through Early Christianity, Late Antiquity, and Beyond: Christian Memorial Traditions in the *longue durée*,” *ibid.*

<sup>46</sup> A welcome exception being R. van den Broek, *Pseudo-Cyril of Jerusalem On the Life and the Passion of Christ: A Coptic Apocryphon* (VCSup 118; Leiden 2013), who resisted the temptation to antedate an extremely interesting late antique sermon attributed to Cyril of Jerusalem in spite of the fact that it is replete with earlier apocryphal traditions.



## II. General Perspectives