

Between Canonical and Apocryphal Texts

Edited by
JÖRG FREY,
CLAIRE CLIVAZ, and
TOBIAS NICKLAS

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419



Between Canonical and Apocryphal Texts

Processes of Reception, Rewriting, and Interpretation
in Early Judaism and Early Christianity

Edited by

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in collaboration with

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Preface

Books have their history, sometimes even a rather lengthy one. The present collection of essays has its origin in two conferences organized by the chair of New Testament at University of Zurich in 2011 and 2012 and a summer school for doctoral students also in 2012, with the common focus on what I originally called ‘Apocryphication’ (in German: ‘Apokryphisierung’).¹ The aim was to comparatively study the process of composition of ‘apocryphal’ texts or ‘paratexts’ on the background of texts that had already some ‘canonical’ or authoritative status. The expectation was that the comparative study of such processes in early Jewish *and* early Christian literature might shed new light on the similarities and differences in the two areas of literary development and that specialists from both fields should be brought together to discuss the problems from their respective fields of expertise.

The first conference in January 2011 on “Apokryphisierung – von kanonischen zu apokryphen Traditionen” was focused on early Christian texts and organized together with Claire Clivaz from the University of Lausanne. A second conference in January 2012 was focused on early Jewish texts and was organized as ‘Forschungskolloquium Antikes Judentum’ together with colleagues from the University of Berne in the context of our Joint-Master study program in Ancient Judaism. A third step was, then, a summer school in Biblical Studies, organized in June 2012 jointly with the Universities of Berne and Lausanne in Einsiedeln near Zurich with the title “Canonical Processes and the Development of Noncanonical Traditions.”

In the aftermath of those three events, we decided to compose a volume with some of the papers of those three conferences and some additional contributions. Tobias Nicklas, who had contributed a paper to the Einsiedeln summer school, joined the editorial team, and I am particularly grateful to him and to Claire Clivaz for all their ideas and considerations in the process of composing the present volume.

We owe thanks to all contributors who gave their papers from one of the three events mentioned or wrote fresh pieces for the book and patiently awaited its release. Due to various reasons, some of the papers delivered in Zurich or

¹ On that term, see also my paper from the Colloquium Biblicum Lovaniense in summer 2011: J. Frey, “‘Apokryphisierung’ im Petrus-evangelium: Überlegungen zum Ort des Petrus-evangeliums in der Entwicklung der Evangelienüberlieferung,” in: J. Schröter (ed.), *The Apocryphal Gospels within the Context of Early Christian Theology*, BETL 260, Leuven: Peeters 2013, 157–195.

Einsiedeln could not be included in this volume, but were published elsewhere.² They should be mentioned here, as they are also part of the whole intellectual enterprise and supplement the collection in the present book. One contributor, my former assistant Michael Becker, will not be able to see the release of this book, due to his untimely death in Spring 2018.

As editors, we are extremely grateful to Jörg Röder, who had worked as a PhD student with Claire Clivaz in Lausanne and joined the project as an editorial collaborator. Without his thorough work, the redaction and completion of the book would not have been possible. He produced the camera-ready manuscript and also compiled the indexes. We owe thanks also to our colleague Moisés Mayordomo in Basel who gave his assistant the time to complete the project after he had joined the University of Basel.

Last, but not least we want to extend our thanks to Mohr Siebeck and the Tübingen staff for their patience with the project and the friendly and competent help in the whole process.

We do hope that the essays assembled in this volume will inspire further research on Jewish and Christian ‘apocryphal’ texts and their relationship to what became sooner or later ‘canonical’.

Zurich, November 2018

Jörg Frey

² F. García Martínez, “Parabiblical Literature from Qumran and the Canonical Process,” *RdQ* 25 (2012), 525–556; H. Najman, “The Vitality of Scripture Within and Beyond the ‘Canon’,” *JSJ* 43 (2012), 497–518; P. Piovanelli, “From Enoch to Seth: Primeval Patrons in Jewish-Apocalyptic and Christian-Gnostic Traditions,” *JAAJ* 2 (2014), 79–112, and Ch. Touati, “Das Schweigen sprechen lassen: Von 2 Kor 12,2–4 zu den apokryphen Apokalypsen,” in *Christian Apocrypha: Receptions of the New Testament in Ancient Christian Apocrypha*, ed. J.-M. Roessli/T. Nicklas, *Novum Testamentum Patristicum* 26 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2014), 301–312.

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From Canonical to Apocryphal Texts: The Quest for Processes of “Apocryphication” in Early Jewish and Early Christian Literature*

Jörg Frey

I. Introduction

The present volume aims at a comparative study of the processes of development “between canonical and apocryphal texts” or what I boldly called processes of “Apokryphisierung”¹ or “apocryphication”² in Second Temple Judaism and in the early Christian tradition. The basic assumption of the underlying research project was that there is a certain analogy in both traditions (which are interrelated in various ways) and that a comparative look at their developments might open up new perspectives for the understanding of early Jewish and early Christian literature. Quite strikingly, such an investigation of both Jewish and Christian “apocryphal” texts is rarely undertaken. This is likely due to the fact that most scholars are specialized either in the field of early Christian apocrypha or in the field of Second Temple Jewish literature or Jewish pseud-epigrapha, leaving only few scholars have the language skills for the study of both.

But the usual separation of scholarly fields may obscure insights that can be gained in a comparative approach or in the mutual dialogue between specialists in the two areas of literature. Such a comparative approach is suggested by the fact that the early Jewish and the early Christian “apocryphal” traditions are

* For inspiring discussions and hints I am grateful to my friend Tobias Nicklas (Regensburg) and, furthermore, to all participants of the Zurich and Einsiedeln meetings. For language corrections I owe thanks to Jacob Cerone.

¹ Cf. already J. FREY, “Apokryphisierung im Petrus-evangelium: Überlegungen zum Ort des Petrus-evangeliums in der Entwicklung der Evangelienüberlieferung,” in *The Apocryphal Gospels within the Context of Early Christian Theology*, ed. J. Schröter, BETL 260 (Leuven: Peeters 2013), 157–195, and, somewhat earlier, J. FREY/J. SCHRÖTER, “Jesus in apokryphen Evangelienüberlieferungen. Zur Einführung und Thema und Konzeption des vorliegenden Bandes,” in *Jesus in apokryphen Evangelienüberlieferungen: Beiträge zu außerkanonischen Jesusüberlieferungen aus verschiedenen Sprach- und Kulturtraditionen*, ed. J. Frey/J. Schröter, WUNT 254 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2010), 3–30 (20–22); J. FREY, “Zur Vielgestaltigkeit judenchristlicher Evangelienüberlieferungen,” *ibid.*, 93–137 (131–134).

² The English term was suggested by Janet E. Spittler in an oral communication.

interrelated in various ways: Originally Jewish texts were adopted, expanded, and transmitted by Christians, as e.g. *1 Enoch*, *2 Enoch*, *the Apocalypse of Moses*, *the Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs*, *the Lives of the Prophets*, or *4 Ezra*. In other cases, it is unclear whether the text is Jewish or Christian. There are also certain analogies and parallel developments between the respective processes of canon formation in ancient Judaism and in early Christianity.³ It was chiefly due to the insights from the Qumran library concerning the development of the Jewish canon that scholars became aware of the character of canonization as a long and variegated “canonical process”⁴ that should be studied as an open process rather than with a certain “end product” in mind.

Canonical recognition is, of course, a phenomenon of reception which may or may not follow the explicit or implicit claims of a certain text. Moreover, these writings were not “canonical” or “apocryphal” from their beginnings, but they only became “canonical” or “apocryphal” within that “canonical process” (which includes recognition, collection, selection of some and rejection of others, ascription of authority, and possibly also textual fixation).⁵ The particular

³ Cf. the related observations in J. FREY, “Qumran und der biblische Kanon: Eine thematische Einführung,” in *Qumran und der biblische Kanon*, eds. M. Becker/J. Frey, BThS 92 (Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 2009), 1–63; IDEM., “Die Herausbildung des biblischen Kanons im antiken Judentum und im frühen Christentum,” *Das Mittelalter* 18 (2013), 7–26. On the history of the Biblical canons cf. in particular L.M. McDONALD, *The Biblical Canon: Its Origin, Transmission, and Authority* (3rd. ed., Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2007); *The Biblical Canons*, ed. J.M. Auwers/H.J. de Jonge, BETL 158 (Leuven: Peeters, 2003); *The Canon Debate: On the Origins and Formation of the Bible*, ed. L.M. McDonald/J.A. Sanders (Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson, 2008); *The Canon of Scripture in Jewish and Christian Discussion*, ed. P.S. Alexander/J.-D. Kaestli (Lausanne: Zèbre, 2007); and *Kanon in Konstruktion und Dekonstruktion: Kanonisierungsprozesse religiöser Texte von der Antike bis zur Gegenwart*, eds. E.-M. Becker/S. Scholz (Berlin/Boston: de Gruyter, 2012).

⁴ The term was first introduced by Jack Sanders, the editor of the Psalms Scroll from Qumran Cave 11; cf. J.A. SANDERS, “The Scrolls and the Canonical Process,” in *The Dead Sea Scrolls After Fifty Years*, vol. 2, eds. J.C. VanderKam/P.W. Flint (Leiden: Brill, 1999), 1–22 (7–10); IDEM., “The Canonical Process,” in *The Cambridge History of Judaism IV: The Late Roman-Rabbinic Period* (Cambridge: CUP, 2006), 230–243; see also A. Lange, “The Status of the Biblical Texts in the Qumran Corpus and the Canonical Process,” in *The Bible as Book: The Hebrew Bible and the Judaean Desert Discoveries*, ed. E.D. Herbert/E. Tov, London 2002, 21–30; E.C. ULRICH, “From Literature to Scripture. Reflections on the Growth of a Text’s Authoritativeness,” *DSD* 10 (2003), 3–25; G.J. BROOKE, “Between Authority and Canon: The Significance of Reworking the Bible for Understanding the Canonical Process,” in *Reworking the Bible: Apocryphal and Related Texts at Qumran*, ed. E.G. Chazon/D. Dimant/R. Clements, STDJ 58 (Leiden: Brill, 2005), 85–104; E. SCHULLER, “The Dead Sea Scrolls and Canon and Canonization,” in *Kanon in Konstruktion und Dekonstruktion*, ed. E.-M. Becker/S. Scholz (Berlin/Boston: de Gruyter, 2012), 293–314.

⁵ Cf. the distinction in the titles of two books by D. LÜHRMANN, *Fragmente apokrypher gewordener Evangelien in griechischer und lateinischer Sprache* (Marburg: Elwert, 2000); IDEM.,

claims of a text may be accepted by the recipients or even by a wider group of readers or communities, but it is also possible that the claim of authority is rejected for various reasons: it could be that the teaching of such a writing is considered misleading or even “forged,” or that the group in which the respective writing had gained authority was considered dubious by others, or that the circles that read or liked a certain text were not among those who could finally decide its canonical status. In any case, those processes turned out to be much more complicated than the traditional and popular images about the fixation of the Jewish and Christian canon had suggested.

What is in view in the present volume are motifs and techniques that lead to the composition of texts or literature which are related to (but not part of) an already existing body of authoritative texts. In the field of Second Temple Jewish literature, scholars have created the term “Parabiblical Literature” which is also not without problems because at the time of the composition of most of those “parabiblical” texts, the canon of the later (Jewish) “Bible” was either not yet established or the collection was still growing. Thus the term “parabiblical” suffers from similar anachronisms as – admittedly – the term “apocryphication,” but the insights gained in the study of such “parabiblical” texts such as the *Book of Jubilees* points in a direction that may also be fruitful for the study of Christian apocryphal texts such as, e.g., the *Gospel of Peter*⁶ or the *Apocryphal Acts of the Apostles*.

The consequences with regard to the claims of those “apocryphal” writings will have to be discussed for each text separately: Did an author intend that his or her text should gain “canonical” authority, or is such an idea still anachronistic for the time of composition? Was the text intended to be read on the same level as other texts which later became canonical? Or can we assume that a text was merely thought to supplement other, already established writings, that it was considered a narrative expansion for pious entertainment, for private reading, or just “for the soul”?⁷

Die apokryph gewordenen Evangelien. Studien zu neuen Texten und zu neuen Fragen, NT.S 112 (Leiden: Brill, 2004).

⁶ Cf. also T.P. HENDERSON, *The Gospel of Peter and Early Christian Apologetics*, WUNT II/301 (Tübingen, Mohr Siebeck, 2011), who utilizes the category of “rewritten Bible” texts for the study of the *Gospel of Peter*. The question is, however, whether the author of that text actually “rewrote” from other gospels or rather wrote from an orally transmitted knowledge (probably based on the written texts). But these problems cannot be discussed here.

⁷ Cf. F. BOVON, “Beyond the Canonical and Apocryphal Books, the Presence of a Third Category: The Books Useful for the Soul,” in idem, *The Emergence of Christianity*, ed. L. Drake. WUNT 319 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2013), 147–160. Apart from the usefulness for private piety, apocryphal texts may be important for the identity formation of particular groups, church provinces, etc., cf. T. NICKLAS, “New Testament Canon and Ancient Christian ‘Landscapes of Memory,’” *EChr* 7 (2016), 5–23; IDEM., “Neutestamentlicher Kanon, christliche Apokryphen und antik-christliche ‘Erinnerungskulturen,’” *NTS* 62 (2016), 588–609.

A general answer to those questions is impossible because every text has to be considered in itself. But the traditional view that “New Testament Apocrypha” originally aimed at being recognized as “canonical”⁸ and that it was merely a later decision of some church officials or councils that selected the “canonical” texts from a wider range of “candidates” must be corrected and replaced by a subtler view that allows for more differentiation in the “canonical process.”

Before the various issues can be presented more precisely, some clarifications with regard to the terminology are in order. What is meant by “apocryphication” and is this term really useful or should we dismiss it and refer to the respective phenomena by more appropriate descriptions or terms? Can we really point to certain “changes” or “developments” of tradition on their way “from canonical to apocryphal texts”⁹ or “between canonical and apocryphal texts”?

In the subsequent paragraphs, I will first discuss the problems of the term “apocryphal” and (II) its usage. (III) Then I will shed some light on the nature of “canonical processes” and the development of traditions “from canonical to apocryphal texts.” (IV) After that, I will briefly present some select examples from Jewish and early Christian texts and (V) finally assemble some the phenomena and techniques that can be observed between “canonical” and “apocryphal texts or texts in the process of “apocryphication.” A more extensive discussion of all the details is presented in subsequent articles of the present volume, and the aim of the present introduction is simply to show the fertility of the research questions sketched above.

⁸ Thus the assumption in the definition of “New Testament Apocrypha” in the introduction to the “old” edition of the Hennecke-Schneemelcher collection, cf. W. SCHNEEMELCHER, “Haupteinleitung,” in idem (ed.), *Neutestamentliche Apokryphen in deutscher Übersetzung, vol. 1: Evangelien* (3rd ed.; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1959), 1–38, 6: “Schriften, die nicht in den Kanon aufgenommen sind, die aber durch Titel und sonstige Aussagen den Anspruch erheben, den Schriften des Kanons gleichwertig zu sein ...” The definition has already been rephrased in the same author’s introduction to the reworked 5th edition (IDEM., “Haupteinleitung,” in *Neutestamentliche Apokryphen in deutscher Übersetzung, vol. 1: Evangelien* (5th ed.; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1987), 1–61) and totally changed in the new edition from 2012 with the new title *Antike christliche Apokryphen*, cf. C. MARKSCHIES, “Haupteinleitung,” in *Antike christliche Apokryphen* (vol. 1: Evangelien und Verwandtes, Teilband 1; ed. C. Markschies/J. Schröter, with A. Heiser; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck 2012, 1–180, 3. For an overview of those definitions see C. MARKSCHIES, “‘Neutestamentliche Apokryphen’ – Bemerkungen zu Geschichte und Zukunft einer von Edgar Hennecke im Jahr 1904 begründeten Quellsammlung,” *Apocrypha* 9 (1998), 97–132 (98–117).

⁹ So the critical question posed by Enrico Norelli before the first Zürich symposium.

II. Apocrypha – Pseudepigrapha – Parabiblical Texts: Terminological Considerations

1. Apocrypha and “Apocryphal” – the Ambivalence of a Term and the Incoherence of its Usage

The term “apocryphal” is normally used in contrast with “canonical”:¹⁰ “Apocryphal” writings are “non-canonical” (i.e. they are not contained in “the” Biblical canon or, strictly speaking, in one of the Biblical canons). At least for Protestant theology, this implies a difference of authority, which was sometimes stressed quite strongly as a difference between the Divine word and merely human words with the consequence that in the Reformed tradition, at least since the 17th or 18th century, the so-called “Apocrypha” were omitted from the Old Testament part of the Bible.¹¹

But the problem begins with the “canons” of the Bible. At least with regard to the Old Testament, there are different canons in various communities next to each other: the Jewish “Hebrew Bible” and the Christian “canon” of the Scriptures according to the Septuagint or Vulgate.¹² The classification of writings merely contained in the Septuagint by the term “Apocrypha” comes from the observation of that difference. Only the idea that the Hebrew was more “original” than the Greek or the Latin (as advocated by Jerome¹³) could lead

¹⁰ Cf. S.C. MIMOUNI, “Le concept d’apocryphité dans le christianisme ancien et médiéval: réflexions en guise d’introduction,” in *Apocryphité. Histoire d’un concept transversal aux religions de livre. En hommage à Pierre Geoltrain*, ed. S.C. Mimouni, BEHE.R 113 (Turnhout: Brepols, 2002), 1–30; T. NICKLAS, “Semiotik – Intertextualität – Apokryphität: Eine Annäherung an den Begriff ‘christlicher Apokryphen,’” *Apocrypha* 17 (2006), 55–78 (61–73). See also the contribution by Simon Mimouni in the present volume.

¹¹ This was not the intention of Luther or the Reformers in Zurich and Geneva. On the development in which the original views of the Reformers were ultimately radicalized due to the evolution of a theory of scriptural inspiration in the time of the Protestant Orthodoxy, see J. FREY, “The Contribution of the Septuagint to New Testament Theology, in *Epiphanies of the Divine in the Septuagint and the New Testament: Mutual Perspectives*, ed. Roland Deines et al., WUNT (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2019, forthcoming).

¹² On the differences between both, see E. ZENGER/C. FREVEL, “Heilige Schrift der Juden und der Christen,” in E. ZENGER et al., *Einleitung in das Alte Testament*; 9th ed., by C. Frevel; Studienbücher Theologie (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 2016), 11–36 (22–36). On the variations in the transmission of the Greek and Latin Bible until the beginnings of modernity, see P. BRAND, *Endgestalten des Kanons: Das Arrangement der Schriften Israels in der jüdischen und christlichen Bibel* (BBB 131; Berlin: Philo), 172–217 and 237–304. We can neglect here the fact that the canons of some Oriental churches (such as the Syriac or Ethiopian church) also differ from the canon of the LXX or Vulgate.

¹³ On Jerome’s interpretation theory, see E. SCHULZ-FLÜGEL, “The Latin Old Testament Tradition,” in M. Sæbø (ed.), *Hebrew Bible/Old Testament. The History of Its Interpretation I: From the Beginnings to the Middle Ages (until 1300)*, Part 1: Antiquity (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht 1996), 642–661 (659–661), and also C. MARKSCHIES, “Hieronymus und die

Reformers such as Karlstadt¹⁴ (and later also Luther and Calvin) to the view that the writings not contained in the Jewish canon are secondary and of minor canonical status, thus labelled “Apocrypha.”¹⁵

In a certain analogy, the term “Apocrypha” was then also applied to collections of non-canonical early Christian texts¹⁶ even though they had never been part of a certain collection in antiquity. Thus, the usage of the term “Apocrypha” is incoherent between those Jewish texts considered “Apocrypha” by parts of the Protestant tradition (or “Deuterocanonical Writings” in the Roman Catholic tradition) and Christian “Apocrypha” (i.e. non-canonical gospels, epistles, acts, and apocalypses which had never been part of a quasi-canonical collection). But although the usage differs with regard to early Jewish and early Christian writings (or “Old Testament Apocrypha” and “New Testament Apocrypha,” “apocryphity” in both cases implies a “minor” status related to a given canon of more authoritative literature.

‘Hebraica Veritas,’” in M. Hengel/A.M. Schwemer (eds.), *Die Septuaginta zwischen Judentum und Christentum*, WUNT 72 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1994), 131–181.

¹⁴ See the important tract by the Wittenberg Reformer A. BODENSTEIN VON KARLSTADT *De Canonicis Scripturis Libellus* from 1520, reprinted in K.A. CREDNER, *Zur Geschichte des Kanons* (Halle: Verlag der Buchhandlung des Waisenhauses, 1847). (1520). The booklet was perhaps primarily written to refute Luther’s bold criticism of James, although it has become most well-known as the first “exclusion” of the “Apocrypha”: Adopting Jerome’s view that the books not contained in the Hebrew canon have less authority and can be used for the edification of the people but not for the authorisation of church doctrines, Karlstadt considers Wisdom, Sirach, Judith, Tobit, and 1–2 Maccabees as “*hagiographa*” of minor authority, while he plainly rejects 3 and 4 Ezra, the Prayer of Manasseh, Baruch, and the additions in Daniel as inauthentic and “apocryphal.” On Karlstadt, see N. WALTER, “‘Bücher: so nicht der heiligen Schrift gleich gehalten ...’ Karlstadt, Luther – und die Folgen,” in idem, *Praeparatio Evangelica: Studien zur Umwelt, Exegese und Hermeneutik des Neuen Testaments* (ed. W. Kraus/F. Wilk; WUNT 98; Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr, 1997), 341–369, and B. LOHSE, “Die Entscheidung der lutherischen Reformation über den Umfang des alttestamentlichen Kanons,” in *Verbindliches Zeugnis I: Kanon – Schrift – Tradition*, ed. W. Pannenberg/T.Schneider, *Dialog der Kirchen* 7 (Freiburg: Herder and Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1992), 169–194.

¹⁵ Thus in the first complete German Bible of the Lutheran tradition from 1534, those writings were separated by two blank pages from Maleachi and introduced with a separate title page: “Apocryha. Das sind bücher so nicht der heiligen Schrift gleichgehalten: und doch nützlich und gut zu lessen sind. I. Judith. II. Sapientia. III. Tobias. IIII. Syrach. V. Baruch. VI. Maccabeorum. VII. Stücke jnn Esther. VIII. Stücke jnn Daniel.“ The Prayer of Manasseh was included but without a separate heading, 2 Maccabees was included together with 1 Maccabees, although Luther would have liked to throw it out. 3 and 4 Ezra are omitted. Cf. LOHSE, “Die Entscheidung der Reformation,” (note 14), 191.

¹⁶ Cf. the list of collections in E. HENNECKE, “Haupteinleitung,” in idem (ed.) *Handbuch zu den neutestamentlichen Apokryphen* (Tübingen: Mohr, 1904), 1–9: 5–9, with the first collection entitled “Apocrypha: hoc es narrations de Christo, Maria, Joseph, cognatione et familia Christi, extra Biblia etc.” by M. Neander, published in Basel in 1564, and the famous *Codex apocryphus Novi Testamenti* by J.A. Fabricius, published in Hamburg in 1703.

But there is a further problem: The term “apocryphal” is not only used incoherently, it is also ambiguous in itself. In relation to a given canon or body of accepted texts, it points to a lower status of authority, or even to the rejection by the church.¹⁷ This is most clearly phrased in the famous Paschal Epistle by Athanasios from 367 CE, where the author distinguishes between the canonized books, a middle group of not canonized but useful books, and the “so-called apocrypha.”¹⁸

This usage is in marked contrast to a different meaning of the term in some ancient Christian writings, where the term ἀπόκρυφος (= hidden) is used to make a particular claim about the higher value and revelatory character of the respective text or its content: Those writings do not merely contain a truth accessible to anyone, but rather a hidden truth, a deeper insight, or a knowledge revealed only to a limited number of particularly chosen recipients.

This is the meaning of ἀπόκρυφος in the *incipit* of the *Gospel of Thomas*, which is preserved in the Coptic version (NHC II, p. 32,10), but can also be presupposed in the lacunae of the fragment of the Greek version in P. Oxy. 654,¹⁹ or similarly in the Title of the *Apocryphon of John* (NHC III,1; BG 2; NHC II,1; NHC IV,1) and the *incipit* of the *Gospel of Jude* (Codex Tchacos p. 33,1–4).²⁰ The opening of the *Gospel of Thomas* explicitly states that this collection of the “hidden sayings of Jesus” demands that the recipients should “seek” in order to find the (deeper) meaning of those sayings. The term ἀπόκρυφος thus marks the claim of “deeper” or “higher” revelation, obviously in comparison with other accounts of Jesus’ teaching or ministry which are thus characterised as less valuable or representing a lower level of insight.

The usage of the term in the negative sense, for a minor degree of authority or even for rejected writings, might be a reaction to such a positive claim of superior “apocryphity” in magical or astrological books²¹ and also in some Christian or Gnosticising circles. “Hidden” books of unclear origin could be

¹⁷ Cf., e.g., Irenaeus, *adv. Haer.* I 20,1 (on Valentinian writings) and Tertullian, *de Pudicitia.* 10,12 (on Hermas); Clem. Alex., *Strom.* III 4,29,1; Hippolyt, *Ref.* VII 20.

¹⁸ Cf. J. SCHRÖTER, “Die apokryphen Evangelien im Kontext der frühchristlichen Theologiegeschichte, in idem (ed.), *The Apocryphal Gospels within the Context of Early Christian Theology*; BETL 260; Leuven: Peeters 2013, 19–66, 21. See the text in T. ZAHN, *Geschichte des neutestamentlichen Kanons. Zweiter Band: Urkunden und Belege zum ersten und dritten band, Erste Hälfte* (Erlangen: Deichert, 1890), 210–212.

¹⁹ Cf. J. SCHRÖTER, “Das Evangelium nach Thomas (Thomasevangelium [NHC II,2 p. 31,10–51,28]) Oxyrhynchus-Papyri I 1, IV 654 und IV 655 (P.Oxy. I 1, IV 654 und IV 655),” in *Antike christliche Apokryphen in deutscher Übersetzung* Vol. I,1, eds. C. Markschies/J. Schröter, with A. Heiser (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2012), 483–526 (489).

²⁰ See MARKSCHIES, *Hauptleitung* (note 8), 19.

²¹ See examples in G. BARDY, “Apokryphen,” *RAC* I (1950), 516–520 (517).

considered suspect.²² Thus ἀπόκρυφος could adopt the meaning of suspect, possibly heretical, forged, or forbidden.²³ But in spite of the ambivalence of the term, it always includes a certain relationship between those “apocryphal” writings and a given body of widespread, accepted, or authoritative literature. They are “apocryphal” in relation to a certain “canon.”

2. *Pseudepigrapha* and “*Pseudepigraphical*” – a Problematic Classification

A second term to be considered in the present context is “*Pseudepigrapha* / *Pseudepigraphical*,” as it is common to link “Apocrypha” and “Pseudepigrapha” with regard to the Old Testament or early Jewish literature.²⁴ But as a category, the term is even more problematic and in my view inappropriate.

“Pseudepigrapha” (as distinguished from “Apocrypha”) usually refers to writings that were transmitted neither in the Hebrew Bible nor in the LXX (or the Vulgate). Many of those writings are only preserved in secondary translations in Oriental languages, and scholarship was aware of them only from references or fragments from ancient authors until new textual evidence was published from newly discovered manuscripts.²⁵ Although those writings are linked with OT figures (Enoch, Abraham, Moses, Elijah, Isaiah, Baruch), their

²² Cf. Hippolytus, *ref.* 7.20 on Basilides who depends on “hidden words.” Origen, *ep. ad Afric.* 9, uses the term with regard to Tobit and Judith because they were not in use among the (palestinian) Jews. While Origen did not yet use the term with regard to Christian fictions, authors in the 4th century and later used the term primarily with the aspect of “doubtful origins” and “forgery.”

²³ Thus already Tertullian, *pub.* 10 on Hermas “inter apocrypha et falsa iudicaretur.” Cf. BARDY, “Apokryphen,” 519.

²⁴ Cf. the classical editions by R.H. CHARLES, *The Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha of the Old Testament in English*, 2 vols., Oxford: Clarendon, 1913, and E. KAUTZSCH, *Die Apokryphen und Pseudepigraphen des Alten Testaments*, 2 vols., (Tübingen: Mohr, 1900). See the previous work of O. ZÖCKLER, *Die Apokryphen des Alten Testaments nebst einem Anhang über die Pseudepigraphenliteratur* (München 1891). The first collection was provided – shortly after his collection of the “Pseudepigrapha of the New Testament” – by J.A. FABRICIUS, *Codex pseudepigraphis Veteris Testamenti* (Hamburg 1713).

²⁵ The *Book of Enoch* was brought to Europe by the English traveller James Bruce in 1773 and edited in an English translation by Richard Laurence in 1821; the *Ascension of Moses* was edited in 1863 by Antonio M. Ceriani, who also published 2 (*Syriac*) *Baruch* in 1866. August Dillmann published the *Ascension of Isaiah* in 1877 from Ethiopic manuscripts; Montague R. James published 3 *Baruch* 1886 and 1896 from Slavonic and Greek manuscripts; Nathanael Bonwetch in 1896 the *Slavonic Book of Enoch* (2 *Enoch*) from Slavonic manuscripts; Georg Steindorff in 1899 fragments of a Coptic *Apocalypse of Elijah*. See K. KOCH, “Einleitung zur Apokalyphtik,” in idem, *Von der Wende der Zeiten: Beiträge zur apokalyptischen Literatur* (Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener, 1996), 109–134 (111–12).

Jewish origin and character is partly uncertain,²⁶ and in some cases one could also speak of “Christian Pseudepigrapha.” But (fortunately) there is no particular scholarly category of “Christian” or “New Testament Pseudepigrapha” in analogy to the “Christian” or “New Testament Apocrypha.”

During the last decades, however, especially since the Qumran discoveries,²⁷ the term “has lost much of its specificity,”²⁸ as the collections by Charlesworth and a new supplementary collection²⁹ with their very broad range of non-canonical Jewish text show.³⁰ The Dead Sea Scrolls have brought to our knowledge a large number of writings composed in continuation of Old Testament stories or ascribed to Biblical authors such as an *Apocryphon of Moses* and an *Apocryphon of Jeremiah*, texts called *Pseudo-Ezekiel*, *Pseudo-Daniel*, previously unknown literary testaments preceding the *Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs*,³¹ and more. In the naming of those texts, the categories “apocryphal” and “pseudepigraphical” “have become virtually synonymous or often overlapping terms.”³²

The problem is, however, that the term “pseudepigraphical” draws on a literary phenomenon, the “false” attribution to an author of an earlier period. Pseudonymity is used here as an element of classification. For some of the apocalypses such as *1 Enoch*, *4 Ezra*, or *2 Baruch*, this could be appropriate, and in fact, the early debate of OT Pseudepigrapha has often focused “on the function of pseudepigraphy in the context of apocalyptic literature”³³ for which pseudonymity has often been considered a distinctive element.

²⁶ Thus, e.g., see the Ascension of Isaiah and the Apocalypse of Elijah which are, according to more recent research, Christian writings linked with OT heroes. On the AscIsa, see most recently J.N. BREMMER/T. KARMANN/T. NICKLAS (eds.), *The Ascension of Isaiah, Studies on Early Christian Apocrypha* 11 (Leuven: Peeters, 2016).

²⁷ For an overview, see M.E. STONE, “The Dead Sea Scrolls and the Pseudepigrapha,” *DSD* 3 (1996), 270–295; further M.J. BERNSTEIN, “Pseudepigraphy in the Qumran Scrolls: Categories and Functions,” in *Pseudepigraphic Perspectives: The Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha in Light of the Dead Sea Scrolls*, ed. E.G. Chazon/M.E. Stone, StT DJ 31 (Leiden etc.: Brill, 1999), 1–26.

²⁸ Thus BERNSTEIN, “Pseudepigraphy in the Qumran Scrolls” (note 27), 2.

²⁹ Cf. J.H. CHARLESWORTH, *Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*, 2 vols. (Garden City: Doubleday, 1983–85); more recently supplemented by *Old Testament Pseudepigrapha: More Non-canonical Scriptures*, vol. 1, ed. R. Bauckham/J.R. Davila/A. Panayotov (Grand Rapids, Mich./Cambridge: Eerdmans, 2013).

³⁰ For some of those texts, especially the later ones, it is unclear whether they can still be considered Jewish or whether they should rather be labelled as Christian.

³¹ Cf., e.g., the *Visions of Amram*; see J. FREY, “On the Origins of the Genre of the ‘Literary Testament’: Farewell discourses in the Qumran library and their relevance for the history of the genre,” in *Qumranica Aramaica. The Aramaic Texts from Qumran* ed. K. Berthelot/D. Stoekl Ben Ezra, StT DJ 94 (Leiden/Boston: Brill, 2010), 245–272.

³² BERNSTEIN, “Pseudepigraphy in the Qumran Scrolls” (note 27), 2.

³³ BERNSTEIN, *ibid.*, 4–5.

In the meantime, however, definitions of “apocalypses” have become subtler,³⁴ and the phenomenon of pseudonymity has been investigated more thoroughly.³⁵ Whereas the traditional view has held pseudepigraphy as morally suspicious “forgeries,” scholars now distinguish between different motifs and reasons for pseudonymous attribution,³⁶ concluding that the authorial fiction and function of pseudonymity must be determined separately for each text. The variety of authorial fictions in Jewish, Greco-Roman, and Early Christian texts seriously questions the use of the term “Pseudepigrapha” for determining a distinctive category of literature.

We should further consider that not all the texts commonly included in collections of Pseudepigrapha are pseudonymous. For example, *4 Maccabees* or the conversion novel *Joseph and Aseneth* are not pseudepigrapha in the literary sense of the word. On the other hand, the phenomenon of pseudonymous attribution or pseudonymity occurs in large parts of the Hebrew Bible (e.g. with Moses traditions in the Torah, or Wisdom traditions attributed to Solomon) and the New Testament (e.g., in the Deutero-Pauline or Catholic epistles). This leads to the consequence that such a term cannot be particularly useful to characterise a body of “extracanonical” texts. As H. F. D. Sparks has phrased:

“To refer to ‘the Pseudepigrapha,’ without further definition or qualification, creates the impression in the popular mind that alongside the ‘canonical’ Old Testament and the ‘deutero-canonical’ Apocrypha there is a third ... ‘trito-canonical’ collection of books – when there is not.”³⁷

In Early Judaism, there is no clear borderline between “Apocrypha,” “Pseudepigrapha,” and other noncanonical texts, and for early Christian texts, the term “Pseudepigrapha” is not useful at all. So we should avoid that term for classification in order to look for a better choice.

³⁴ Cf. in particular the fundamental definition by J.J. COLLINS, “Introduction: Towards the Morphology of a Genre,” in *Apocalypse: The Morphology of a Genre* (Semeia 14; Missoula, Mt.: Scholars, 1979), 1–20 (9): “‘Apocalypse’ is a genre of revelatory literature with a narrative framework, in which a revelation is mediated by an otherworldly being to a human recipient, disclosing a transcendent reality which is both temporal, insofar as it envisages eschatological salvation, and spatial, insofar as it involves another, supernatural world.” Recently, Collins has reconsidered and slightly modified his definition and the view of certain subgroups, see idem, “The Genre Apocalypse Reconsidered,” *ZAC* 20 (2016), 21–40. But in any case, “pseudepigraphie” is not a defining feature of apocalypses.

³⁵ Cf. the comprehensive volume *Pseudepigraphie und Verfasserfiktion in frühchristlichen Briefen*, eds. J. Frey et al., WUNT 246 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2009); see also the introduction by M. JANSSEN/J. FREY, “Einführung,” *ibid.*, 3–24, and the epilogue by D.E. AUNE, “Reconceptualizing the Phenomenon of Ancient Pseudepigraphy: An Epilogue,” *ibid.*, 789–827.

³⁶ Cf. the volume mentioned in the previous footnote, in particular M. JANSSEN, “Antike (Selbst-)Aussagen über Beweggründe zur Pseudepigraphie,” *ibid.*, 125–179.

³⁷ Cf. H.F.D. SPARKS (ed.), *The Apocryphal Old Testament* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1984), xvii.

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