

## Introduction

— Tony Burke —

THE YORK CHRISTIAN APOCRYPHA Symposium Series was created in 2011 as a forum to showcase the work of North American scholars who study the Christian Apocrypha (CA). For the second symposium, titled “Forbidden Texts on the Western Frontier: The Christian Apocrypha in North American Perspectives,” we decided to take that mandate seriously and look directly at ourselves, to consider what makes CA Studies in the U.S. and Canada unique, to celebrate our strengths, and reflect on our weaknesses.

North America has no shortage of accomplished scholars in the field, but it has lacked the visibility and prestige enjoyed by our European colleagues, due in part to their highly-regarded publishing initiatives and the collaborative synergy that made these initiatives possible. Since 1904, German scholars have worked together to produce the celebrated *Neutestamentliche Apokryphen in deutscher Übersetzung* volumes, currently being updated by the editorial team of Christoph Marksches and Jens Schröter.<sup>1</sup> The French and Swiss scholars who established the Association pour l'étude de la littérature apocryphe chrétienne (AELAC) have produced their own collection, the two-volume *Écrits apocryphes chrétiens*,<sup>2</sup> as well as a number of critical editions in the Corpus Christianorum Series Apocryphorum, the

1. Marksches and Schröter, eds., *Antike christliche Apokryphen*.

2. Bovon, Geoltrain, and Kaestli, eds., *Écrits apocryphes chrétiens*.

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journal *Apocrypha*, and a series of pocketbook editions of individual texts (La collection de poche Apocryphes); they also meet regularly at an annual summer réunion and smaller meetings during the winter months. Readers looking for texts in English translation have been served with a number of collections by individual scholars, including J. K. Elliott's *The Apocryphal New Testament* (an update of the collection of M. R. James from 1924), and several compendia assembled by Bart Ehrman. But none of these are collaborative projects on the scale of the French and German collections. It must be acknowledged that membership in the AELAC has become increasingly international over the past decade and North American scholars have assembled with their European colleagues at the group's meetings and have contributed to their publishing endeavors—notably, Tony Burke, Kristian Heal, F. Stanley Jones, Brent Landau, Pierluigi Piovaneli, Jean-Michel Roessli, and Stephen Shoemaker are all members of the group and have published in their series' and/or the *Apocrypha* journal. Similarly, the first volume of the Marksches-Schröter collection includes work by three scholars based in Canada: Wolf-Peter Funk, Stanley Porter, and Wendy Porter. Nevertheless, North American scholarship can profit from gatherings that take place closer to home and from collaborating on scholarly endeavors that address the interests of North American readers.

Efforts have been made to satisfy these needs. U.S. and Canadian (and some international) CA scholars have met at annual meetings of the Society of Biblical Literature for decades, contributing papers to the Christian Apocrypha Section, as well as the Nag Hammadi and Gnosticism Section, and various sessions on such topics as ancient fiction, pseudepigraphy, and second-century Christianity. The North American Patristics Society is also a venue for work on CA texts. The first formal North American gathering focused entirely on CA scholarship took place at the University of Ottawa in 2006 at a workshop organized by Pierluigi Piovaneli entitled "Christian Apocryphal Texts for the New Millennium: Achievements, Prospects, and Challenges."<sup>3</sup> The papers presented at the workshop covered a variety of texts and topics, thus demonstrating the vibrancy and diversity of the field in North America. The workshop concluded with a discussion of collaborative projects and the possibility of forming an academic association, but after a failed attempt to mount a second workshop in 2007, the momentum begun in 2006 was temporarily lost.

Nearly ten years later, much has changed. The first York Christian Apocrypha Symposium, convened in 2011 by Tony Burke with assistance

3. Many of the papers presented at the workshop have been published in Piovaneli, Burke, and Pettipiece, eds., *Rediscovering the Apocryphal Continent*.

from Phil Harland, continued the efforts of the Ottawa workshop to bring together CA scholars from across the continent. This initial gathering had rather humble goals. Nine U.S. and Canadian scholars assembled for one day of discussion of a single text, one that has captured the attention of North American scholars and the wider public: the *Secret Gospel of Mark*.<sup>4</sup> Shortly after, Burke and Brent Landau began work on *New Testament Apocrypha: More Noncanonical Scriptures*, a collection of texts in translation with contributions primarily from North American scholars. The project, a sister to *Old Testament Pseudepigrapha: More Noncanonical Scriptures* compiled by Richard Bauckham, James Davila, and Alexander Panayotov, aims to supplement Elliott's *The Apocryphal New Testament* with new and neglected texts that have never-before appeared in English CA collections. Then, in 2013 Burke joined forces with Landau once again to mount this second York Symposium, this time on a much larger scale. They decided to construct a "state-of-the-art" for CA Studies in North America, with invited presenters looking at the past, present, and future of the field on the continent. Part of that future is the creation, at last, of a North American academic association devoted to the study of the CA. The objectives of collaboration and organization are on their way to being achieved but they are made possible only by the efforts of the many scholars working in the field today and by the perspectives that have shaped and continue to inform their work.

## CHRISTIAN APOCRYPHA STUDIES IN THE UNITED STATES

CA Studies in the U.S. is characterized, chiefly by its critics, as having two propensities: the integration of noncanonical texts into the quest for the historical Jesus and the support of Walter Bauer's theory on the development of early Christianity. Both of these characteristics are said to be hallmarks of the so-called "Harvard School,"<sup>5</sup> but they infuse also the work of the controversial Jesus Seminar as well other scholars working throughout North America.

Brent Landau's essay in this volume traces the history of the Harvard School to Helmut Koester, who joined the faculty of Harvard Divinity

4. The papers were published in early 2013 as Burke, ed., *Ancient Gospel or Modern Forgery?*

5. Darrell Bock, one of the chief critics of U.S. Christian Apocrypha scholarship, also uses the term "new school" for those who champion these two perspectives, though this group is not limited to scholars from Harvard. See *Missing Gospels*, esp. 44–55; for a response to Bock's category, see Burke, "Entering the Mainstream," 22–24.

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School in 1958. Koester's approach to the CA is marked by his reluctance to favour one category of texts, canonical or noncanonical, over another; all are representatives of early Christian literature, and all have the potential to provide insights into the origins of Christianity.<sup>6</sup> This perspective has led Koester to propose theories of the development of New Testament literature that incorporate apocryphal texts at an early stage in the process. Koester's legacy is observable in the work of his doctoral students—including Ron Cameron, Julian Hills, Bentley Layton, Elaine Pagels, and Richard Valantasis—but perhaps his impact is most observable in the work of the Jesus Seminar. The Seminar was formed in 1985 by Robert Funk, who assembled around 200 scholars, primarily North American, as well as non-scholars with academic training, with the twin goals of arriving at a consensus about the life and teaching of Jesus and then presenting these findings to a wide audience. The Seminar's methodological principles entailed examining all Christian texts composed before 300 CE, including noncanonical texts, as possible repositories of authentic Jesus traditions. Seminar member John Dominic Crossan, the author of several best-selling studies of the historical Jesus,<sup>7</sup> is particularly well-known for his early dating of noncanonical texts and became, for many people, the public face of the Seminar and thus the target of much of the criticism levelled against it.<sup>8</sup> Other Seminar members include Charles Hedrick, F. Stanley Jones, John Kloppenborg, and Stephen Patterson. The approach of the Seminar is reflected in the group's collection of texts, *The Complete Gospels*,<sup>9</sup> which places new translations of the canonical gospels side-by-side with select CA texts; the book is the closest North American scholarship has come before now to producing a multi-author CA collection. The Seminar has also published, through its imprint Polebridge Press, a number of CA texts in translation in the series *Early Christian Apocrypha* edited by Julian Hills.<sup>10</sup>

6. See particularly Koester, *Ancient Christian Gospels*.

7. Crossan, *Historical Jesus*, 427–66 carefully lays out his methodological approach to the sources; Crossan, *Cross That Spoke*, is somewhat notorious for its claim that the *Gospel of Peter* is a witness to a “Cross Gospel” that forms the basis for the Passion Narrative of the canonical Gospels.

8. For a survey of early responses to the work of the Seminar see Miller, *Jesus Seminar and Its Critics*.

9. Miller, ed., *Complete Gospels*. Contributors on the apocryphal texts include Crossan, Funk, Koester, Kloppenborg, and Patterson, along with Harold Attridge, Ron Cameron, Jon B. Daniels, Arthur J. Dewey, Julian V. Hills, Ronald F. Hock, Karen L. King, Marvin Meyer, Donald Rappé, and Philip Sellew.

10. A list of the books in the series that have appeared to date, as well as other CA-related books published by the Seminar, is provided in Burke, “Entering the Mainstream,” 23.

Of course Helmut Koester is not the only scholar at Harvard who has contributed significantly to the study of the CA. François Bovon joined the school in 1993 from the University of Geneva, bringing with him European CA scholarship's interest in examining late apocryphal texts and its emphasis on conducting manuscript research. Bovon trained a number of young CA scholars, including Ann Graham Brock, Nicole Kelley, Brent Landau, Catharine Playoust, and Glenn Snyder. Harvard also is home to Karen L. King who joined the faculty in 1997. King works primarily with Coptic apocrypha and is best known for her work on the *Gospel of Mary* and for her challenge to the scholarly construct of "Gnosticism" in her monograph *What Is Gnosticism?*<sup>11</sup> Her students include Benjamin Dunning and AnneMarie Luijendijk. Both Bovon and King brought to Harvard Divinity School new approaches to the study of the CA. As influential as Koester has been to the field, it would be wrong to characterize the "Harvard School," indeed all study of the CA in the U.S., solely by Koester's developmental theories of early Christian literature.

Prominent also in CA Studies is Claremont Graduate University in California. There James M. Robinson established the Coptic Gnostic Library Project at the Institute for Antiquity and Christianity in 1966. The project initiated the publication of a facsimile edition of the Nag Hammadi codices, the first English translation of the library in 1977 (revised in 1988),<sup>12</sup> and a series of critical editions published by Brill as The Coptic Gnostic Library. Among the scholars who worked on the project were Charles Hedrick, who narrates some of his activities at Claremont in his scholarly autobiography in this volume, John D. Turner, Elaine Pagels, and Marvin Meyer. Meyer also was chief editor of the update to Robinson's collection in 2008 and published a series of popular-market books on individual Nag Hammadi and related texts;<sup>13</sup> in addition, he became well-known as a voice arguing for the authenticity of the *Secret Gospel of Mark*.<sup>14</sup> More recently, Claremont has been home to Dennis R. MacDonald, who joined the faculty in 1998 and became director of the Institute for Antiquity and Christianity in 2000. MacDonald is known for *The Legend and the Apostle*, a study of second-century Pauline traditions,<sup>15</sup> and for his interest in allusions to Greek literature in Christian texts, particularly the *Acts of Andrew*.<sup>16</sup> Other

11. King, *What Is Gnosticism?*; King, *Gospel of Mary of Magdala*.

12. Robinson, *Nag Hammadi Library*.

13. Meyer et al., eds., *Nag Hammadi Scriptures*.

14. See particularly Meyer, *Secret Gospel*.

15. MacDonald, *Legend and the Apostle*.

16. MacDonald, *Christianizing Homer*.

CA scholars who have led projects at the Institute include F. Stanley Jones (Jewish Christianity A. The Pseudo-Clementines) and Ronald F. Hock (The Chreia and Ancient Rhetoric and Education Project).

Two other U.S. institutions have become centres for the study of the CA. Princeton University is home to Elaine Pagels, whose participation in the Coptic Gnostic Library Project led to the writing of her best-selling examination of the texts, *The Gnostic Gospels*, in 1979. Pagels has remained active in the study of the texts and has worked in various capacities with a number of CA scholars, including Geoffrey Smith, Nicola Denzey Lewis, and Annette Yoshiko Reed. Bart Ehrman, another graduate of Princeton (though working under Bruce Metzger), also has done much to bring the CA to public attention, mostly due to his appearances in a rash of documentaries—including the *Secret Lives of Jesus* (National Geographic, 2006), *Bible Secrets Revealed* (The History Channel, 2014), and the series *Banned From the Bible* (The History Channel, 2003, 2007, and 2012)—created to capitalize on the curiosity about the texts occasioned by Dan Brown’s popular novel *The Da Vinci Code*. Though most well-known for his work on textual criticism of the New Testament, Ehrman has contributed to CA scholarship through the editing of several collections of texts: *Lost Scriptures* (a companion to his study of early heretical groups, *Lost Christianities*), *The Apocryphal Gospels* (texts and translations, in collaboration with Zlatko Pleše), and *The Other Gospels* (a republishing of *The Apocryphal Gospels* without the texts in the original languages). He also was involved in the publication of the *Gospel of Judas*, contributing an essay to the National Geographic Society’s popular-market translation of the text<sup>17</sup> and appearing in their 2006 documentary about the discovery. At the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, where he holds the James A. Gray Distinguished Professor of Religious Studies, Ehrman has supervised the work of a number of students who have published in the field, including Chris Frilingos, Catherine Burris, and Diane Lipsett.

Tying together scholars from all four of these schools, and indeed from various institutions throughout North America, is a fascination with the Bauer Hypothesis, named for Walter Bauer, author of *Rechtgläubigkeit und Ketzerei im ältesten Christentum*, published in 1934 but not translated into English until 1971, under the leadership of Robert Kraft.<sup>18</sup> Bauer challenged the classical articulation of the history of the early church, as set out by Eusebius of Caesarea and others, that Christianity spread out from Jerusalem,

17. Ehrman, “Christianity Turned on Its Head”; Ehrman later also wrote *The Lost Gospel of Judas Iscariot*, a popular-market book on the text.

18. English translation: Bauer, *Orthodoxy and Heresy*.

transforming no belief into correct belief (orthodoxy), imparted by Jesus to the apostles and then to the apostles' successors; that initial unity soon was compromised with the introduction of wrong belief (heresy), which the church, principally through the writings of the heresiologists, worked hard to eradicate. Against this view, Bauer argued that in some locations in the ancient world, heretical forms of Christianity, such as Marcionism, were established first and these were replaced later by orthodoxy. Bauer's position received mixed reviews in Germany, but it found a sympathetic hearing by Rudolf Bultmann and his students, particularly Helmut Koester, who took up a challenge issued by Bultmann to carry Bauer's hypothesis from the second century into the first,<sup>19</sup> and thus influenced a new generation of scholars in the U.S. to support and refine Bauer's ideas. Many of the details of Bauer's study have been proven wrong with the discovery of new primary sources, particularly the Nag Hammadi codices, but the essential arguments—that Christianity began in variety not unity and that what is orthodoxy lies in the eye of the beholder—continue to shape scholarship on the CA, so much that Bauer's supporters are often the target of attack for apologetic writers, who continue to advocate the pre-Bauer model of Christian origins, in their efforts to discourage interest in apocryphal texts. This interest is due, at least in part, to the popularity of Bart Ehrman's discussions of the material—some critics even refer now to Bauer's hypothesis as the “Bauer-Ehrman thesis.”<sup>20</sup>

If critics of American approaches to the study of the CA are to be believed, then U.S. scholarship focuses on privileging noncanonical texts over the canonical and on demonstrating that orthodox Christianity has no claim to being the one, true, legitimate form of Christianity. Certainly, this characterization is accurate for some U.S. scholars, but it fails to take into account the European perspective, exemplified by Bovon's students at Harvard, that encourages the study of late, not early, apocrypha and thus skirts the issue of what can be learned from the texts about the historical Jesus and early Christianity. As the contributions of these scholars become more widely known, U.S. CA Studies will be less the target of caricature and future assessments will reflect its considerable variety.

19. Koester, “GNOMAI DIAPHORAI.” On the support of Bauer by Bultmann and Koester see the appendix (“The Reception of the Book”) in Bauer, *Orthodoxy and Heresy*, 306–10.

20. See, for example, Köstenberger and Kruger, *Heresy of Orthodoxy*. For an extended discussion of apologetic responses to U.S. scholarship on the Christian Apocrypha see Burke, “Heresy Hunting.”

## CHRISTIAN APOCRYPHA STUDIES IN CANADA

Any conversation, on any topic, about Canada and the U.S. makes apparent the greater strength of the southern nation over its neighbour to the north. Canada's national inferiority complex is an integral part of its identity. Certainly the number of Canadian scholars working in the CA is fewer than in the U.S. and their work is less well-known internationally. That said, Canadians have made a number of significant contributions to the field.

The one major centre for CA Studies in Canada is Université Laval in Quebec, home to the series Bibliothèque copte de Nag Hammadi (BCNH). Begun in 1974 by Jacques É. Ménard of the Université des Sciences humaines de Strasbourg, and Hervé Gagné and Michel Roberge of Université Laval, the BCNH produces critical editions, as well as concordances and studies, of the Nag Hammadi library and related texts for francophone readers—think of it as the French counterpart to The Coptic Gnostic Library at Claremont. The team published also in 2007 the first of a two-volume collection of translations of the entire corpus for Gallimard's Bibliothèque de la Pléiade;<sup>21</sup> this model of producing scholarly editions and a Pléiade collection for a wider audience is the same used by the AELAC (Association pour l'étude de la littérature apocryphe chrétienne), whose endeavours are discussed in detail in Jean-Michel Roessli's paper in this volume. The BCNH is currently under the direction of Louis Painchaud, Wolf-Peter Funk, and Paul-Hubert Poirier. Each of these scholars works also on texts beyond the Nag Hammadi corpus; Painchaud has published on the *Gospel of Judas*,<sup>22</sup> Funk is editing the Berlin portion of the Coptic Manichaean texts from Medinet Madi,<sup>23</sup> and Poirier has worked extensively on the *Acts of Thomas* and recently waded into the debate over defining "Christian Apocrypha."<sup>24</sup> Students of Laval who have made important contributions to CA Studies include Michael Kaler, Timothy Pettipiece, Tuomas Rasimus, and Alin Suci.

To the west of Quebec City, Montreal's Concordia University features three scholars working in the CA: Lorenzo DiTommaso, André Gagné, and Jean-Michel Roessli. DiTommaso's research focuses on the Old Testament Pseudepigrapha, but he has published particularly on Christian-authored Daniel apocrypha.<sup>25</sup> Gagné works on the *Gospel of Thomas* and co-ordinates

21. Mahé and Poirier, eds., *Écrits gnostiques*.

22. Including Painchaud, "À Propos de la (re)découverte de l'Évangile de Judas," an important early critical appraisal of the reconstruction and interpretation of the text in the *editio princeps* in Kasser and Wurst, eds., *Gospel of Judas*.

23. Funk, *Kephalaia (I)*.

24. Poirier, "Vers une redéfinition."

25. DiTommaso, *Book of Daniel*.

the Nag Hammadi Seminar, a gathering of graduate and undergraduate students, sometimes featuring guest speakers from other Canadian universities. And Roessli, who was trained in Europe and moved to Canada in 2007, works on the Christian *Sybilline Oracles* and, as a member of the editorial team of the AELAC, is a friendly bridge between North American CA scholars and their European colleagues.

Farther west lies the University of Ottawa, home of Pierluigi Piovanelli, another European-trained scholar who has done much to advance the study of the CA in Canada. He organized the Ottawa workshop in 2006, has chaired the Christian Apocrypha Section of the Society of Biblical Literature, presented at the 2011 and 2013 York Christian Apocrypha symposia, and is a contributor to both series of More Canonical Scriptures (Old Testament Pseudepigrapha and New Testament Apocrypha). Also, as a longtime member of the AELAC, he has helped introduce North American scholars to the group and thereby increase its international profile. Like Bovon at Harvard, Piovanelli has brought European approaches to the study of the CA to North America, but, as Jean-Michel Roessli remarks, he has also exposed European scholars to a burgeoning North American interest in modern apocryphal texts. Piovanelli's specific research areas are the *Apocalypse of Paul* and Ethiopic texts, such as the *Book of the Rooster*, which he translated for *Écrits apocryphes chrétiens*.<sup>26</sup> Piovanelli is joined at the University of Ottawa by Dominique Côté, a former student of Paul-Hubert Poirier. Côté has worked extensively on the *Pseudo-Clementines*.<sup>27</sup>

The University of Toronto in Ontario is alma mater to Scott Brown, Tony Burke, and Mary Dzon. Brown is one of the principal voices in the debate over the authenticity of the *Secret Gospel of Mark*;<sup>28</sup> Burke and Dzon, working under Robert Sinkewicz in the Department of Medieval Studies/Department for the Study of Religion, both wrote their dissertations on apocryphal infancy traditions. Burke's dissertation, critical edition and commentary on the *Infancy Gospel of Thomas*,<sup>29</sup> was the first North American contribution to the Corpus Christianorum Series Apocryphorum, thus further forging links between European and North American scholarship. The European perspective guiding the Series Apocryphorum is reflected also in the late antique and medieval texts featured in Burke's *New Testament Apocrypha: More Noncanonical Scriptures* collection (co-edited with

26. Piovanelli, "Livre du coq."

27. See, for example, his monograph Côté, *Le theme de l'opposition*.

28. See Brown, *Mark's Other Gospel*, and his contributions to Burke, ed., *Ancient Gospel*.

29. Burke, *De infantia Iesu*.

Brent Landau) and in the breadth of texts discussed in his popular-market introduction to the CA, *Secret Scriptures Revealed*. Burke also is founder of the York Christian Apocrypha Symposium and co-ordinates a session on the CA at the annual meeting of the Canadian Society of Biblical Studies (in conjunction with Timothy Pettipiece for the Canadian Society of Patristic Studies). Though few other graduates of the University of Toronto work in the CA field, there are currently a number of doctoral students working with John Kloppenborg on CA texts, including Ian Brown, Callie Callon, and Anna Cwikla, all regular contributors to the CSBS/CSPS session.

Our cross-Canada survey ends in the Prairies at the University of Winnipeg with Zbigniew Izydorczyk. A lone voice in the wilderness, Izydorczyk has been working for decades on the manuscript tradition of the *Gospel of Nicodemus* and related texts and is known internationally as a prominent scholar of this material. Along with his own work, surveyed in Jean-Michel Roessli's essay, Izydorczyk has collaborated with Rémi Gounelle on bibliographical resources for the *Acts of Pilate*,<sup>30</sup> co-authored the entry on the *Vengeance of the Savior* for *Écrits apocryphes chrétiens*,<sup>31</sup> and contributed to a volume of the Instrumenta of the Series Apocryphorum.<sup>32</sup> In addition, Izydorczyk organized a workshop on the Pilate Cycle in October 2010 entitled "Editing the *Acts of Pilate* in Early Christian Languages: Theory and Practice," which included presentations by international (including Albert Frey, Rémi Gounelle, and Jean-Daniel Dubois) and Canadian scholars (including Burke, Poirier, and Roessli).<sup>33</sup>

To some extent, Canadian contributions to the study of the CA are obscured by the fact that a number of Canadian-born or Canadian-trained scholars—including Philip Tite, Nicola Denzey Lewis, and Mary Dzon—work in the U.S. This situation only underscores the international nature of CA Studies in North America, where some of the major developments in the field were made by European émigrés and where many of the scholars have made significant contributions to European publishing projects. It is hoped that the collaboration amongst North American CA scholars occasioned and encouraged by the York Christian Apocrypha Symposium Series will enhance awareness of our strengths and capabilities and lead to additional opportunities for international collaboration.

30. Izydorczyk and Gounelle, "Thematic Bibliography of the *Acts of Pilate*"; and Izydorczyk and Gounelle, "Thematic Bibliography of the *Acts of Pilate*. Addenda et corrigenda."

31. Bisson, Brossard-Dandré, and Izydorczyk, "Vengeance du Sauveur."

32. Izydorczyk and Wydra, eds., *Gospel of Nicodemus*.

33. Most of the papers from the workshop were published in *Apocrypha* 21 (2010).

## THE 2013 SYMPOSIUM

“Forbidden Texts on the Western Frontier: The Christian Apocrypha in North American Perspectives” gathered together 19 CA scholars from the U.S. and Canada for two days of presentations, exchanging of ideas, and discussion of future collaborations.

The work of the Symposium began the morning of September 25 with our first session, “Christian Apocrypha in the 21st Century.” The goal of the session was to present an overview of North American contributions to the field and to describe the research trajectories of North American CA scholarship. Jean-Michel Roessli (Concordia University) was asked to examine “North American Approaches to the Study of the Christian Apocrypha on the World Stage.” His presentation included an account of the origins and scholarship of the AELAC, an organization with which many of the scholars participating in the Symposium are involved, and the impact of the group’s work on North American scholarship, particularly via François Bovon and Pierluigi Piovanelli. Roessli took a bit of a detour at the end of his presentation, urging North American scholars to examine the origins of the study of the CA during the Enlightenment. This began a discussion of the “apocryphal canon” (that is, the decisions behind why certain apocryphal texts are selected for inclusion into scholarly collections) that many of the Symposium participants touched upon over the course of the weekend. Pierluigi Piovanelli (University of Ottawa) followed with “Trajectories through Early Christianity and Late Antiquity: The *longue durée* of Christian Memorial Traditions in American Scholarship,” an informal discussion on approaches to the study of late antique and medieval apocrypha. The interest in understanding such material in the context of its time and place of composition is considered the hallmark of the European perspective brought to North America by Bovon and Piovanelli. Piovanelli used the example of his work on the *Book of the Rooster* (wisely renamed from its former title, the “Book of the Cock,” an announcement that elicited giggles from the audience), to show how scholars can examine a late text with consideration of the possibility that it drew on earlier sources, but that the precise nature of these sources are impossible to recover. Piovanelli then surprised everyone with the announcement of a new apocryphal text in Ethiopic, the *Story of the Passion of Christ*, which entails a brief summary of a vision of the flogging and crucifixion of Jesus seen by the three women at the tomb. As it turns out, however, the text is actually a medieval devotional text which originally featured three medieval female saints as the visionaries. Though the *Story of the Passion of Christ* did not begin as an apocryphon, it was transformed into one by a later scribe. In his completed paper, Piovanelli ponders what

this example may mean for the study of other CA texts that similarly appear to have reused and repurposed earlier sources. The discovery of new texts can be exciting, Piovanelli says, and though scholars often hope that they contain ancient materials, “in some cases manuscript hunters end up with unexpected surprises that can have, perhaps, the same relevance for the study of epochs and cultural areas other than the origins of Christianity” (p. 108).

The other two presentations in the session focused on two of the major centres for the study of the CA: Harvard University and Claremont Graduate University. The presenters delivered first-hand accounts of their own time spent at these institutions. First, Brent Landau (University of Texas at Austin) discussed “The ‘Harvard School’ of the Christian Apocrypha,” which has become well-known (and much-criticized) due to Helmut Koester’s arguments that certain noncanonical texts reveal much about stages in the development of the composition of the canonical Gospels. Landau drew attention also to the contributions to scholarship made by François Bovon and Karen King, and mentioned some important events in the Harvard school’s prehistory: an 1838 address by Ralph Waldo Emerson and a collection of agrapha made by James Hardy Ropes in 1896. Landau noted the impact of the Harvard school on the field in North America, particularly through those who, like himself, graduated from the program. But he lamented also that the future of the school is uncertain—Koester is still teaching (in his 57th year at Harvard!), but Bovon and King, he said at the time, have suffered from very serious illnesses in recent years and none of the present junior faculty list the CA as a chief research interest. Landau was right to be concerned; Bovon succumbed to cancer a month after the Symposium. The second of the two presentations on centres for CA research was Charles Hedrick’s (Missouri State University) scholarly autobiography, “Excavating Museums: From Bible Thumping to Fishing in the Stream of Western Civilization.” Hedrick’s long and accomplished career intersected with several major discoveries of the last century, including the publishing of the Nag Hammadi library (as a member of The Coptic Gnostic Library Project at Claremont), the *Gospel of the Savior*, and the *Gospel of Judas*. Hedrick mentions in his completed paper the conflict he had studying apocryphal texts while still being much involved in the Southern Baptist Church (he even served as pastor at several points in his early professional career). As a graduate student he came to the conclusion that, “in historical scholarship it is not possible to be a servant of the church and the discipline at the same time” particularly because “noncanonical literature presents a threat to the church” (p. 82). Not everyone in attendance at the Symposium agreed that a decision has to be made between church and scholarly study, but even today

there have been some nightmare stories out of the U.S. of biblical scholars losing their positions because their work conflicts with the mandate of their institutions. The interplay between faith and historical investigation was another topic of discussion over the course of the Symposium.

The presentations in the first afternoon session, “New Frontiers in Christian Apocrypha Studies,” looked at bridging gaps between CA and related disciplines. In “Jesus at School among Christians, Jews, and Muslims,” Cornelia Horn (Catholic University of America) continued her work on Christian and Muslim use of Jesus and Mary infancy traditions. This time her discussion featured the story of Jesus in school from the *Infancy Gospel of Thomas* and looked at its transformations in the *Armenian Infancy Gospel*, the *Toledot Yeshu*, and the story of the Imam Muḥammad al-Bāqir in *Umm al-kitāb* (an eighth-century Shi’ite text). The new frontier opened up here, then, is the sharing of apocryphal traditions across the dividing lines of religions. In the conclusion of her presentation, Horn asked us to consider the status of texts like *Umm al-kitāb*—does its connection to apocryphal Jesus stories make it a Christian apocryphal text, or an Islamic apocryphal text, or something else? Nicola Denzey Lewis (Brown University) followed with a dynamic presentation entitled, “Nag Hammadi, Gnosticism, Apocrypha: Bridging Disciplinary Divides.” The completed paper points out how scholars have segregated gnostic texts from other apocrypha—she writes, “the Christian apocrypha and our so-called gnostic texts have become the ugly, wicked stepsisters in the fairy tale of New Testament Studies—one silly, the other dangerous” (p. 132). The divide between the two bodies of texts is most apparent at conferences like the SBL Annual Meeting, which separates Nag Hammadi or Gnostic Studies from Christian Apocrypha, despite the fact that some Nag Hammadi texts are not gnostic (e.g., the *Acts of Peter and the Twelve Apostles*) and some gnostic texts are not from Nag Hammadi (e.g., the *Pistis Sophia*, the *Gospel of Mary*); one text in particular, the *Gospel of Thomas*, seems to transcend all of these boundaries. Denzey Lewis echoes the call by other scholars to redraw these boundaries, to classify all the texts as “early Christian literature” and then focus on sub-genres such as apocalypse, romance, or gospel. The final paper of the session was “Debating Canon Formation: Why and Where Scholars Disagree” by Lee Martin McDonald (Institute for Biblical Research). McDonald has written extensively on the canon, and seems to show no signs of slowing down; but his work has not been effectively brought into discussions of the CA, despite the fact that canon is very important for studying *noncanonical* texts, particularly since the various forms that the canon has taken over time and space has bearing on whether or not a text is declared noncanonical. McDonald’s paper touches on several aspects of his previous work on canon that CA scholars

should take into account, including his position that the Muratorian Canon is a product of the early fourth, not second, century, and his view of the development of the Western canon (it clearly was not settled in the fourth-century). He states (rightly) also, that a fixed text of the New Testament was never physically possible until “the invention of moveable text and the printing press” (p. 163), and makes the provocative point that, thanks to electronic media, we are living in a time much like the first few centuries when we can pick and choose the texts we value, and without any sense of having to limit a corpus to the mechanics of book production. The session concluded with a response by Lorenzo DiTommaso (Concordia University) to the two papers available in draft form (by Denzey Lewis and McDonald). In an early stage of the planning process, DiTommaso was invited to present on Christian Old Testament Pseudepigrapha—another category of texts rarely discussed in connection with the CA. Jim Davila, a Harvard graduate working at the University of St. Andrews in Scotland, has done much to open up this new frontier with his work on re-evaluating the authorship of the Pseudepigrapha,<sup>34</sup> thereby encouraging North American CA scholars to follow the path of their European colleagues in bringing Christian-authored Pseudepigrapha into CA scholarship. Unfortunately, DiTommaso’s schedule did not allow him time to write a paper, but we were pleased to have him attend the Symposium and offer his thoughts on the other papers of the session.

The afternoon of the first day of the Symposium began with a session focused specifically on North American scholarship’s interest in the CA for studying the historical Jesus. Stephen Patterson (Willamette University), who has worked extensively with the *Gospel of Thomas* and is known for his position on the text being an early repository of teachings of Jesus, provided a re-evaluation of work in this area, including his own previously-stated arguments. His presentation opened on a surprisingly skeptical note with the declaration that “the apocryphal gospels have had virtually no impact on the historical study of Jesus in North America,” and adding later, “or on any other continent for that matter” (p. 176 in the completed paper). The Synoptic Jesus, he said, is still the focus of historical Jesus work. Nevertheless, Patterson spent the rest of his time making a case for a cluster of sayings of Jesus from the *Gospel of Thomas* that were not accepted by the Jesus Seminar: the sayings about primordial androgyny (e.g., log. 22, “When you make the two one. . .”). He remarked that scholars tend to dismiss the apocryphal gospels as “more speculative, mystical, ascetical, enigmatic, or just downright confusing” and asks “should this necessarily disqualify them completely from

34. See Davila, *Provenance of the Pseudepigrapha*.

the discussion?” (p. 178). In the end, Patterson advocated casting our nets wide when examining the historical Jesus, stating, “The question is not, after all, which of the gospels best represents the historical Jesus. The question for critical scholarship is how to imagine an historical figure from which could emanate all of the various traditions and interpretations that appear in the first century or so of nascent Christian development” (p. 185). Patterson’s paper was followed by two responses (included in this volume), one from John Kloppenborg (University of Toronto), known particularly for his work on Q, and Mark Goodacre (Duke University), who has recently joined CA scholarship with his book *Thomas and the Gospels: The Case for Thomas’s Familiarity with the Synoptics*.

Day one came to a close with a keynote address from Annette Yoshiko Reed (University of Pennsylvania). She titled her presentation, “The Afterlives of Christian Apocrypha.” It touched on a range of topics, spanning from early scholarship on the texts to modern use of CA imagery in popular culture, particularly Manga (with examples from *Neon Genesis Evangelion* and others). Reed noted that the creators of Manga know little about Christianity and simply pluck from it whatever ideas they think useful for their stories. Only when Western distributors take issue with the content do the creators realize that they are using controversial apocryphal imagery. Reed’s address, intended as an oral and visual presentation, is not included in this volume.

On day two of the Symposium we looked to the future. The first session featured several presentations by contributors to the anthology *New Testament Apocrypha: More Noncanonical Scriptures*, examining some little-known or under-appreciated texts and traditions. In the first presentation, F. Stanley Jones (California State University) investigated “The Distinctive Sayings of Jesus Shared by Justin and the Pseudo-Clementines.” Jones contributed two pieces to the first *MNTA* volume: the Syriac epitome of the *Acts of Peter* and an Aramaic fragment of the *Toledot Yeshu*, neither of which had appeared earlier in English translation. The goal for the second volume is to include a translation of the entire *Pseudo-Clementines* corpus, since the currently-available English translation is now almost 150 years old. As for Jones’s paper, it presents an argument against the view that the shared sayings derive from a gospel harmony; instead, Jones argues, the Basic Writer of the *Pseudo-Clementines* seems to have pulled them from Justin’s lost work *Syntagma*, which Justin wrote to refute Marcion. The sayings thus have a distinct Marcionite or anti-Marcionite flavour. Jones was followed by Stephen Shoemaker (University of Oregon), presenting on “The *Tiburtine Sibyl*, the Last Emperor, and the Byzantine Apocalyptic Tradition.” Shoemaker’s paper draws on his translation of the *Tiburtine Sibyl* prepared

for *MNTA*; he also has contributed a new translation of the *Apocalypse of the Virgin* to the volume. For many people in the room, Shoemaker's paper was their first exposure to this text, though it was widely popular in the Middle Ages and deeply influenced medieval culture (Shoemaker says it was "more influential on medieval eschatology than the canonical Apocalypse," p. 221). Nevertheless, the *Tiburtine Sibyl* is rarely included in CA collections (Erbetta's expansive collection is the exception), chiefly because it is a relatively recent composition (late fourth century). Shoemaker thus called the text, in his presentation, an example of "noncanonical apocrypha," and cautioned listeners to his presentation to be careful of allowing the CA collections to limit study to the standard texts. An important feature of the *Tiburtine Sibyl* is its description of the Last Emperor, a figure identified with Constantine who, the Sibyl says, will "devastate all the islands and cities of the pagans and destroy all the temples of idols" (*Tib. Sib.* 10). Shoemaker argues that the Sibyl's description of this figure may have influenced early Islamic eschatology.

The final two papers of the session were "Backstories of the Bandits: The Emergence, Submersion and Re-emergence of the Cult of Dysmas" by Mark Bilby (University of San Diego) and David Eastman's (Ohio Wesleyan University) "Confused Traditions? Peter and Paul in the Apocryphal Acts." Bilby, like Shoemaker, brought attention to a little-studied apocryphon, though this one is not a complete text but an "orphan story" with versions appearing in a variety of sources, including manuscripts of the *Gospel of Pseudo-Matthew* and the *Gospel of Nicodemus*. Orphan stories tend to be neglected because they are considered late additions to the texts; sometimes these additions appear in notes to editions or translations, but are otherwise rarely given much attention (though this may change with Bilby's contribution on the traditions to *MNTA*). Bilby demonstrated how widespread were these stories of the Good Thief and how important they are to medieval piety. Unfortunately, Bilby's paper could not be finished in time for inclusion in the volume. For his presentation, Eastman similarly juggled a wide assortment of texts to show how depictions of Peter and Paul tend to blend in later apocryphal acts, as well as in the *Toledot Yeshu* and iconography. Eastman is working on his own collection of these later acts, none of which have been translated into English. For *MNTA*, Eastman has contributed a new translation of the *Epistle of Pseudo-Dionysius the Areopagite to Timothy*, which features a story of Peter and Paul's martyrdoms, and a new translation of the *Acts of Xanthippe and Polyxena*. Among the interesting features of the blended stories of Paul and Peter is the tendency to place words of Paul in Peter's mouth; curiously, Eastman finds no case in the apocryphal texts of Peter where Peter quotes 1 or 2 Peter.

The afternoon session of day two considered new approaches to studying apocryphal texts. Kristian Heal (Brigham Young University) guided the audience through new research tools used in his efforts to create a critical edition and translation of the Syriac *History of Joseph*. His presentation, “Digital Humanities and the Textual Critic: Resources, Prospects and Problems,” focused on tools for studying Syriac texts, but his handout (included here as an appendix to the completed paper) included a wider list of resources. The completed paper presents these resources in a text-editing travelogue similar to François Bovon’s article “Editing the Apocryphal Acts,” which details his efforts to find and edit Greek manuscripts of the *Acts of Philip*. Heal was followed by Mary Dzon (University of Tennessee) who discussed *incunabula* for her paper “‘All the (Good) News That’s Fit to Print?’ Early Printings of Apocryphal Texts.” *Incunabula* are rarely brought into research on the transmission of CA, yet several important texts (including the *Protevangelium of James* and the *Gospel of Nicodemus*) were first published as *incunabula* and, in some cases, these early printed books drew upon manuscripts that are no longer available. Dzon focused on early printings of the *Gospel of Pseudo-Matthew*, some of which contain stories of Jesus’ childhood that have not previously appeared in scholarship. Unfortunately, Dzon’s paper could not be finished in time for inclusion in the volume.

Glenn Snyder’s (Indiana University-Purdue University Indianapolis) presentation, “The Conversion of Paul: The Production of a Model,” reconsidered the direction of dependence of the *Acts of Paul* and the canonical Acts by focusing on one specific tradition: Paul’s conversion. The *Acts of Paul* is particularly suited for such an approach as it is much debated whether an “*Acts of Paul*” ever truly existed as a complete text rather than as several separate stories. The audience raised objections to some of Snyder’s conclusions, however; and there was an audible gasp when Snyder declared Galatians un-Pauline. The completed paper allows for a more careful evaluation of Snyder’s detailed form-critical work; it is eye-opening to read the conversion stories this way, particularly if one considers Acts 9:10b–11, 17–18a (the story of Ananias) as a story separate from Acts 9:1–10a, as it brings attention to some of the episode’s curious features, such as the house of Judas on Straight Street and the construction of Paul’s name, translated by Snyder as “a stumbling man by the name Tarseus” (p. 293). Finally, the session came to a close with “Ordinary or Extraordinary? The Reception of the *Protevangelium of James* in the *History of the Blessed Virgin Mary*” by Lily Vuong (Valdosta State University). What makes this paper a “new approach” is Vuong’s interest in the *History of the Blessed Virgin Mary*, a late reworking of the *Protevangelium of James* and other infancy traditions in Syriac known more widely in its further translation into the *Arabic Infancy*

*Gospel*. To her surprise (and everyone else's) Vuong found that *Hist. Virg.* tends to diminish Mary's special qualities, not enhance them as one might expect. Audience reaction to Vuong's paper was mixed; there was praise for bringing this development in Marian piety to our attention, but concerns were raised over her early dating of *Hist. Virg.* (fourth century, but eighth century is more likely) and her understanding of the complexities of the manuscript evidence. Vuong decided to continue working on the project, but it was not completed in time for inclusion in the volume.

The symposium finished with a session entitled "Christian Apocrypha in North America: Where Do We Go From Here?" The goal of this session was to consider new collaborative endeavours, including outreach projects, future gatherings, and publishing ventures. The most dramatic outcome of the session was the decision to form a new academic association dedicated to the study of the CA—a North American counterpart, of sorts, to the AELAC. After the conclusion of the Symposium, a board of directors was formed and a meeting took place in November 2014 to consider the group's mandate and to give the group a name: the North American Society for the Study of Christian Apocryphal Literature (NASSCAL). For news and information on the group visit its web site at [NASSCAL.com](http://NASSCAL.com).

It would appear from the success of the 2013 Symposium that the state of North American CA Studies is strong. There is much more variety in our scholarship than critics' assessments and popular culture representations indicate; its debt to the Bauer Hypothesis and its pursuit of the historical Jesus cannot be denied, but it also has more affinities with European approaches than has been acknowledged and this European connection continues to gain strength. The traditional centers for CA Studies—Harvard, Claremont, and Laval—remain vital but new ones are emerging, including the University of Texas in Austin, the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, the University of Ottawa, the University of Toronto, and York University. North America is also growing as a center for Digital Humanities research with such projects as the Hill Museum and Manuscript Library, and Coptic Scriptorium, created by Carolin Schroeder (University of the Pacific) and Amir Zeldes (Georgetown University). And new opportunities for collaboration are emerging through the *More New Testament Apocrypha* volumes, the York Christian Apocrypha Symposium, and NASSCAL. North American CA Studies is no one-trick pony. The 2013 York Christian Apocrypha Symposium Proceedings is a celebration of our accomplishments and an indicator of greater things ahead.