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Preface

The preface to the first volume of *New Testament Apocrypha: More Noncanonical Scriptures* expresses the editors' affection for and esteem of the great apocrypha collections that drew them into their study of this fascinating literature. It has been gratifying to see that first volume receive such positive responses from scholars and readers. We are particularly appreciative of the feedback given at the two conference panels convened to review the book. At the Canadian Society of Biblical Studies (in Calgary, May 2016): Alicia Batten, Robert Kitchen, John Kloppenborg, and Tim Pettipiece. And at the Society of Biblical Literature (in Boston, November 2017): David Brakke, Valentina Calzolari Bouvier, J. Gregory Given, Judith Hartenstein, Philip Jenkins, Christoph Marksches, and Julia Snyder. Your comments and suggestions have helped shape the present volume.

A project such as this is truly a collaborative effort, not only because it is a collection of works by multiple authors, but because many of our contributors (and some who worked on the first volume) graciously worked behind the scenes to assist each other, and the editor, in a variety of ways. I want to acknowledge their contributions and express my gratitude. Ivan Miroshnikov clarified and corrected information on Coptic and Church Slavonic manuscripts for several texts, particularly the *Acts of Thomas and His Wonderworking Skin*, and provided access to some Russian scholarship on 2 *Apocryphal Apocalypse of John*. Both Ivan and Alin Suciuc helped sort out the Coptic sources to the *Homily on the Life of Jesus and His Love for the Apostles*. Hugo Lundhaug and Lance Jenott consulted with each other on their two Coptic texts: the *Investiture of Gabriel* and the *Investiture of Michael*. And Charles D. Wright and Brandon Hawk contributed significantly to the introduction and translation of the *Apocalypse of Thomas*. I took advantage of Slavomír Čéplöš's impressive language skills for more texts in this volume than I can remember. Bradley Rice made some corrections to the Armenian translation of the *Life of Judas* and gave me some much-needed feedback on the introduction to the volume. And David Eastman and Brandon Hawk helped clarify some aspects of the literary background of the *Acts of Nereus and Achilles*. Thanks also to David Lincicum and Steve Reece for providing solutions to some of the tricky Greek readings of 3 *Apocryphal Apocalypse of John* and to Julian Petkov, Anissava Miltenova, and Olga Mladenova, for their willingness to share their work on the Church Slavonic tradition of that text.

Also working behind the scenes was my co-editor on the first volume, Brent Landau, who was involved in the planning of the present book and provided valuable comments for improvement of all the contributors' work.

Preface

To all of the contributors, thank you so much for being a part of this project and for your patience with the near-endless requests for changes and clarifications. Particular appreciation goes to those who came late to the project when others could not complete their assigned texts: Chance Bonar, Slavomír Čéplö, Cambry Pardee, Lloyd Abercrombie, and Hugo Lundhaug.

Richard Pervo, who provided the translation of the *Acts of Titus* in vol. 1 and *Acts of Nereus and Achilles* for the present volume, passed away in May of 2017. Richard is highly regarded for his work in the field, particularly on the *Acts of Paul*. *Requiescat in pace*.

A special thank-you goes to the staff at Eerdmans including Andrew Knapp, David Cottingham, Leah Luyk, Meg Schmidt, and Laura Bardolph Hubers.

This volume would not have been possible without the friendship and support of Slavomír Čéplö, Bradley Rice, and Janet Spittler.

Most of all, I wish to thank my wife Laura Cudworth, for her encouragement and advice, especially on the days when it seemed like this project might never be completed.

Introduction

The first volume of *New Testament Apocrypha: More Noncanonical Scriptures* (*MNTA*) appeared in 2016, a few years after the debut of its sister publication, *Old Testament Pseudepigrapha: More Noncanonical Scriptures* (*MOTP*), edited by Richard Bauckham, Jim Davila, and Alexander Panayotov. The goal of both projects is to supplement the available, and highly regarded, apocrypha and pseudepigrapha collections in English with translations of newly discovered texts and, in most cases, already published texts that need significant updating in light of newly available sources. Whereas *MOTP* is envisioned as a companion to James H. Charlesworth's *Old Testament Pseudepigrapha* (published in two volumes in 1983 and 1985), *MNTA* is a companion to J. K. Elliott's *The Apocryphal New Testament* (published in 1993). Both Charlesworth and Elliott were interested in “early” texts—i.e., texts created in the first several centuries before or after the Common Era, or texts perhaps incorporating early material that could be traced to that time period. Scholars today have much broader interests. Christian apocrypha are now studied for more than what they can tell us about the composition and collection of the canonical texts. This newfound liberation is reflected in the expansive collections of apocrypha that are available now in Italian, French, and German. These volumes include a wide assortment of texts, extant in a variety of languages and forms, and composed after the typical temporal limit of the establishment of the New Testament canon—once held to be settled in the fourth century, but now increasingly acknowledged as continually in flux, with differences that span time and place throughout Christian history.

The number of texts that can be called “Christian apocrypha” is surprisingly high. The *Clavis apocryphorum Novi Testamenti* compiled by Maurice Geerard in 1992 lists 346 texts or versions of texts. Today more can be added to that number due to new discoveries—including, from *MNTA* 1, the *Berlin-Strasbourg Apocryphon* (first published in 1999), the fragment P. Oxy. 5072 (2011), and the *Discourse of the Savior* and the *Dance of the Savior* (2006)—or due to unwitting omissions—including, again from *MNTA* 1, the *Revelation of the Magi*, the *Legend of the Thirty Pieces of Silver*, the *Acts of Cornelius the Centurion*, the *Life and Conduct of the Holy Women Xanthippe, Polyxena, and Rebecca*, the (*Latin*) *Revelation of John about the Antichrist*, and the fragment P. Oxy. 210. Geerard's list is also temporally limited; though no parameters are explicitly indicated, the *clavis* does not include any modern apocrypha, such as the *Unknown Life of Christ* or the *Letter of Benan*. To these can be added the most recent modern apocryphon: the *Gospel of Jesus' Wife*. To paraphrase Ecclesiastes (12:12), of making apocryphal books there is no end.

This second volume of *MNTA* continues the work of the first by making available to English readers more apocryphal texts, some published here for the very first time.

The introduction to *MNTA* 1 finished with a provisional list of texts to be included in vol. 2. As can be seen in the new volume's table of contents, that list was provisional indeed. Some of the differences are due merely to changes in the titles assigned to the texts. But some texts are entirely absent because the work required to prepare the translations proved to be so substantial that they could not be completed in time for this volume. Other texts were set aside by contributors due to professional or personal constraints on their workload. Fortunately, there is no shortage of apocrypha, nor of apocrypha scholars, to fill the gaps.

As with vol. 1, the texts are arranged, mostly for convenience's sake, in the same generic categories found in the New Testament and followed in other apocrypha collections. Section 1, Gospels and Related Traditions of New Testament Figures, features texts that expand upon the life and teachings of Jesus as well as tales of Jesus' family and acquaintances (the Virgin Mary, John the Baptist, Joseph of Arimathea, and Judas). The section begins with two texts that add to the story of Jesus' childhood. The first, the *Adoration of the Magi*, is particularly noteworthy because it is extant only in Old Uyghur. The text comes from an assortment of manuscripts purchased in Turfan (China) and uses a language restricted to the ninth and thirteenth centuries. Its inclusion here demonstrates how far stories of the Magi traveled over time and how the scope of Christian apocrypha scholarship has grown in recent decades to include a range of little-studied languages and cultures. The second childhood text, the *Rebellion of Dimas*, is a tale about the Good Bandit (aka the Good Thief), a character made famous by the Gospel of Luke. The story is found in a single manuscript of the *Gospel of Pseudo-Matthew*, a gospel first published three centuries ago, but the dogged determination of scholars to seek out additional manuscripts of this text, and others, has led to the discovery of a number of such free-floating stories. The inclusion of *Reb. Dimas* in this volume illustrates how the goal of text-critical work is no longer simply to reconstruct the original text (if indeed such a goal is attainable), but to examine the various forms a text takes throughout its transmission history.

Jesus' adult career is featured in only one text in this volume: a *Homily on the Life of Jesus and His Love for the Apostles*. This is one of several Coptic texts in the collection classified as "pseudo-apostolic memoirs," a genre described in detail in Alin Suciuc's contributions to *MNTA* 1. They are so called because the texts begin with a framing narrative in which a leading figure in the church—such as Cyril of Jerusalem or Basil of Caesarea—begins a homily and then presents the contents of a text said to be written by one of the apostles. Many of the apostolic memoirs have yet to be published, much less translated into a modern language. One of the difficulties involved in their publication is that they have to be reconstructed from Coptic manuscripts that were torn apart and sold to various European libraries. Portions of *Hom. Life Jesus* were discovered and translated into English over a century ago; the translation here incorporates all of the additional evidence for the text published in the decades since. A similar situation exists for the second apostolic memoir in this collection: a *Homily on the Passion and Resurrection* attributed to Evodius of Rome. The homily was published and translated previously from a complete manuscript held in the Pierpont Morgan Collection, but new fragments from dispersed manuscripts have become available in the interim. Among its varied contents is the pseudepigraphical author's defense of composing apocrypha; he likens their creation to dying cloth or combining gold with other minerals—the holy Gospels appear more glorious as a result. The *Book of Bartholomew*, another text associated with the apostolic

memoirs, but lacking a frame narrative, is equally complicated to reconstruct and in need of an update. Though fairly well known, the text rarely appears in apocrypha collections; when it does, it is usually only in summary. The full text is included here in the first English translation to be made in over a century.

Events that took place after the resurrection are spotlighted in the *Healing of Tiberius*, a text of the Pilate Cycle that was popular in the Middle Ages but, until now, never translated into English. Medieval Christians showed considerable interest also in the history of the wood from which the cross of Jesus was constructed, as may be seen in the many forms of the *Legend of the Holy Rood Tree*. The version of this legend offered here, the *Post Peccatum Adae*, is available in over eighty manuscripts in Latin alone. This text is similar in many ways to the *Legend of the Thirty Pieces of Silver*, which appeared in *MNTA* 1. *Leg. Sil.* traces the transmission of the coins from their creation by Abraham's father through pivotal events in Jewish history to their role in the betrayal of Jesus; a similar history is told of the wood, which derives ultimately from the tree of life and is used by Moses, David, and Solomon before it is fashioned into a cross. At one point the legend even intersects with the story of Judas, when thirty silver rings attached to the tree are removed to pay the betrayer. Both texts are what may be called "object gospels," written to demonstrate how God's providential hand guided every aspect of Jesus' life and death. Judas is seen again in the popular *Life of Judas*, a biography of the wayward apostle adapted from the story of Oedipus. The text has never before appeared in an apocrypha collection, despite its widespread transmission in multiple forms and languages, including the never-before-published Armenian version, which appears here alongside the earliest of the Latin versions.

Many late antique and medieval apocrypha were composed to establish feast days and holy sites as memorials to Christian saints. The *Life of Mary Magdalene*, translated for the first time into English, is one such text. It takes Western tales of Mary's evangelical work in Marseille, removes their depiction of Mary as a repentant prostitute, and adds to them Eastern traditions about her death in Ephesus and the translation of her relics to Constantinople. Several European pilgrimage sites claimed to be stewards of Mary's remains; *Life Mary* provides the warrant for a rival shrine available to devotees in the Christian East. Two other texts in the collection vie with one another over which city—Lydda or Philippi—can boast of being home to the official church of the Virgin Mary. The *Story of Joseph of Arimathea*, also appearing for the first time in English translation (this time from Georgian, another rare language in Christian Apocrypha Studies), tells of how the church in Lydda received divine and human sanction after an image of the Virgin miraculously appeared inside; similarly, the *Homily on the Building of the First Church of the Virgin*, an apostolic memoir attributed to Basil of Caesarea, contains a letter said to be written by Luke, in which the evangelist narrates how a buried icon of the Virgin was revealed and then was miraculously transported into a church in Philippi built by the apostles.

Section 2, "Apocryphal Acts and Related Traditions," comprises six accounts of the missionary endeavors of the apostles. Again, previous apocrypha collections in English typically present only the earliest of such texts—the so-called "five great apocryphal acts" of Peter, Andrew, Paul, John, and Thomas. Of these, only *Thomas* is complete; the others are reconstructed as well as possible from multiple manuscript sources that include one story here, and another story there. Scholars continue to search for the missing tales. Perhaps some of the texts included in the *MNTA* volumes can contribute to

this goal. *MNTA* 1 includes the Syriac *History of Simon Cephas, the Chief of the Apostles*, a combination of several accounts of Peter's career, including the Greek *Acts of Peter*, otherwise extant principally in a much-transformed Latin form. This Syriac version may help to distinguish between readings in the original *Acts* and changes introduced in the Latin version. *MNTA* 2 features four texts that expand the sources for Peter's apocryphal exploits. Two of these are in Syriac: the never-before-published *Travels of Peter*, and the *Exhortation of Peter*, presented in this volume in an expanded form. A third, from Coptic and Latin sources, features a story about Peter's paralyzed daughter and is often considered by scholars to be part of the original *Acts of Peter*. It is mentioned by Augustine, alluded to in the *Acts of Philip*, excerpted in the (*Apocryphal*) *Epistle of Titus*, and presented in full in the *Act of Peter* preserved in Papyrus Berolinensis 8502.4. But there is another version of this tale embedded within the *Acts of Nereus and Achilleus*, which is included here in its first complete English translation. Rounding out the Petrine texts is the *Act of Peter in Azotus*, a short Greek narrative published and translated into French in 2008 and now presented in English. It is by no means certain that any of these stories were once part of the original *Acts of Peter*; the independent circulation of these tales testifies to an abiding interest in short stories about the apostolic heroes, so it is possible they are preserved in precisely the form in which they were created. Perhaps, too, some of the stories presently assigned to the great apocryphal acts were not originally part of these texts at all.

The five "great" apocryphal acts tend to overshadow other accounts of the apostles' lives that were created, it seems, as replacements of or at least rivals to the earlier, somewhat heterodox accounts. For many Christians, these were the true lives of the apostles. Some of these later acts were composed in Latin for the churches of the West, others were composed in Greek, but most of these Greek forms exist today only in Syriac, Arabic, Coptic, Ethiopic, and sometimes Church Slavonic translations. One exception is the *Acts of Thomas and His Wonderworking Skin*, extant in at least nine Greek manuscripts, four of which are used as the basis for this volume's translation. Rounding out the selection of apocryphal acts is the *History of Philip*, appearing in a new translation incorporating a number of recently recovered Syriac manuscripts.

Epistles form a large group of materials in the New Testament—twenty-one out of the twenty-seven texts in the corpus. Apocryphal epistles are less plentiful, and only one is included here: the Ethiopic *Epistle of Pelagia*. Yet this text is an epistle only in its title. Its content is more akin to the free-floating stories of the apostles mentioned above, and indeed features two tales of Paul's encounters with a lion that were long believed to have once belonged to the *Acts of Paul*. For a time, *Ep. Pelag.* was the only known witness to this portion of the early acts, but more recent manuscript discoveries of *Acts Paul* in Greek and Coptic that include the tales have overshadowed it in importance. A new translation of *Ep. Pelag.* drawing on several additional manuscripts may help bring attention back to the text, if not for the story of Paul and the lion, then for the other tales of Paul it contains that have been largely forgotten. *Ep. Pelag.*'s placement in the category of "Epistles" thus illustrates the problems that arise from efforts to bring order to texts within a collection. Even the compilers of the New Testament struggled with this issue, placing Hebrews after the letters of Paul based on a traditional association of the text with the apostle, even though it does not contain Paul's name and is more a sermon in form than an epistle. Other texts within the present volume could also be placed within the "Epistles" category: the "apostolic memoir" contained in *Hom. Church*

Vir. is presented as a letter written by Luke, and *Acts Ner. Ach.* contains three letters: one from Nereus and Achilleus to Marcellus, Marcellus's reply, and another letter to Marcellus from Eutyches, Victorinus, and Maro. Other methods of organization are possible, including grouping all of the apostolic memoirs together based on their close association with one another; or perhaps it is better to ignore genre altogether and simply order the texts alphabetically. However, since *MNTA* is conceptualized as a supplement to Elliott's *Apocryphal New Testament*, it seemed best to the series editors to follow his canonical divisions, even though recent scholarship on Christian apocrypha is trying to resist the pull of the New Testament for defining and delineating the genres of apocryphal texts and indeed has become quite critical of using such titles as "New Testament Apocrypha" as a description of the literature. In scholarship, change frequently comes slowly and the results can be messy.

Section 4 covers the final traditional genre: Apocalypses. The New Testament features only one apocalypse, composed by a certain John in the late first century. The conversation between John and Jesus in the Book of Revelation continues in several noncanonical apocalypses. Many of these are readily available in John M. Court's recent collection, *The Book of Revelation and the Johannine Apocalyptic Tradition* (JSNTS 190; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2000). At first there seemed to be no need to revisit them so soon. However, it became clear that the number of available sources for these texts has expanded considerably in recent years and that, in some cases, the new sources significantly impact the texts' reconstruction and interpretation. The first of these is the widely known *1 Apocryphal Apocalypse of John*, which has not appeared in English collections since 1870. Unfortunately, no new edition of the text has appeared since (though there is one in preparation), but it is included here in a new translation principally for comparison with the other Johannine apocalyptic texts. The text known as *2 Apocryphal Apocalypse of John* is perhaps poorly named, as the manuscripts vacillate over the identity of its interlocutor: sometimes he is called John the Theologian, as in the other apocalypses, at other times he is called John Chrysostom, thus moving the text out of the purview of apocrypha and into patristica. It is possible that the apocalypse experienced a second transformation, as portions of its material are apparently drawn from Byzantine *erōtapokriseis* (or "question-and-answer") literature. Given the evident fluidity in this text's transmission, it was decided to present *2 Apocr. Apoc. John* here in two versions, arranged in parallel. A relationship with *erōtapokriseis* literature is evident also in *3 Apocryphal Apocalypse of John*, translated here from Greek into English for the first time, though a translation from Church Slavonic is already available. The Church Slavonic version also spawned a sequel called the *Questions of John to Abraham*, which also appears here in its first translation into any modern language. It is John, not Jesus, who answers the questions in the *Questions of James to John*, translated by Court from a single manuscript but here based on five witnesses and significantly improved. These four Johannine texts illustrate the appeal of John the Theologian as a transmitter of not only additional information about the eschaton, but also about the afterlife and other subjects of interest to their apparently monastic audience, such as the order of the liturgy and the intricacies of the relationship between hegumens, monks, and their wider community.

Grouped with the Byzantine apocalypses are the fragmentary *Dialogue of the Revealer and John*, which does not appear in Elliott's collection and tends to be overlooked in examinations of Coptic "gnostic" apocrypha, and another, more orthodox,

Coptic text: the *Mysteries of John*. Like 1 *Apocr. Apoc. John, Myst. John* is included here primarily because of its connections to other texts in the volume: the *Investiture of the Archangel Gabriel* and the *Investiture of the Archangel Michael*. All three texts belong to the pseudo-apostolic memoirs genre and are related in content to the *Investiture of Abbaton*, included in *MNTA* 1. The translation of *Myst. John* improves on earlier work with the integration of evidence from a second, fragmentary manuscript; *Invest. Gab.* and *Invest. Mich.* appear here in English for the first time. Appended to the translation of *Invest. Mich.* is the *Homily against Heretical Books*, composed by John of Parallos in the seventh century. He mentions *Invest. Mich.* along with several otherwise unknown apocrypha and cautions his readers against reading their “filthy words.” John at once testifies to the use of *Invest. Mich.* in celebrations of the angel on his feast day and to resistance to such practices. This homily is a useful reminder that apocryphal texts were integral to the spiritual lives of Christians long after the apparent closing of the canon and that the calls to avoid and even destroy such literature were not always effective. The final apocalypse included here, the *Apocalypse of Thomas*, is a common sight in apocrypha collections, including Elliott’s compendium. But a number of additional witnesses to the text have been published over the last decade, and they are integrated into the new translation.

This second volume of *MNTA* breaks finally with traditional efforts at organization by introducing a fifth category of apocryphal texts: church orders. The earliest and most well known of such texts is the *Didache*, which contains regulations for the congregation (on baptism, on prayer, etc.), bookended by a code of Christian morals (the teaching of the “Two Ways”) and a brief description of the *eschaton*. Church orders do not appear in most versions of Christian Scripture, but three are found in the Ethiopian canon: the *Book of the Covenant*, the *Senodos*, and the *Didascalia*. This fifth category can be thought of as also a “supplementary” section of the canon akin to the organization of Codex Sinaiticus, which follows Revelation with the *Epistle of Barnabas* and the *Shepherd of Hermas*, and Codex Alexandrinus, which concludes with 1 and 2 *Clement* and once also contained the *Psalms of Solomon*. The church order featured here is the Syriac version of the *Teaching of the Apostles*, which, along with the typical disciplinary and liturgical rules, includes several apocryphal episodes, including a framing story placing the delivery of the rules in the upper room where the apostles and Mary hide after the death of Jesus, and a list of the various regions appointed to the apostles for missionary activity.

Even More New Testament Apocrypha?

The two volumes of *MNTA* by no means exhaust the number of apocryphal texts that still need to be published or published anew. At the time of publication, plans began for a third volume. A preliminary list of texts to be included is given below.

The Acts of Andrew and Paul
The Acts of Andrew and Philemon
The Acts of John by Prochorus
The Acts of John in the City of Rome
The Acts of Mark
The Acts of Thaddaeus

The Book of the Rooster
The Decapitation of John the Forerunner
The Dialogue between Jesus and the Devil
The Dialogue of Mary and Christ on the Departure of the Soul
The Disputation between Peter and Nero
The Dream of Nero
The Dream of the Rood
The Encomium on Barnabas, by Alexander Monachos
The Epistle of James to Quadratus
The Epistles of Ignatius to John and the Virgin Mary
The Epistles of Longinus, Augustus, Ursinus, and Patrophilus
The Gospel of the Twelve
The History of Paul
A Homily on How Archangel Michael Defeated Satanail, by Pseudo-John Chrysostum
The Hospitality and Perfume of the Bandit
 John and Cerinthus (Irenaeus, *Haer.* 3.3.4; Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 3.28)
Latin Lives of Mary Magdalene
The Martyrdom of Zechariah
On the Star, by Pseudo-Eusebius of Caesarea
The Preaching of Philip
The Preaching of Simon Cephas in the City of Rome
The Questions of John
The Revelation of Matthew
The Revelation of Matthew about the End Times
The Revelation on the Lord's Prayer
The Story of the Image of Edessa
The Travels of Peter and Christ to Rome
The Vision of Theophilus

e-Clavis: Christian Apocrypha

While the first volume of *MNTA* was in press, the newly formed North American Society for the Study of Christian Apocryphal Literature (NASSCAL) was in the process of creating e-Clavis: Christian Apocrypha. The open-access electronic resource (accessible at NASSCAL.com) consists primarily of a bibliography and manuscript index. An individual page for each text in the database provides the following information: 1) the various titles and standard abbreviations used in English scholarship; 2) the clavis numbers assigned to the text (*CANT*, *BHG*, *BHO*, etc.); 3) a short summary with lists of characters and locations mentioned in the text; 4) a variety of resources, such as examples of the text's use in popular culture, documentaries, and websites; and 5) an exhaustive bibliography, including information on each manuscript in which the text is preserved, and all critical editions, translations, and secondary works. Links are provided to online editions of older works (provided by archive.org and other resources) and to *Manuscripta apocryphorum* entries, which feature detailed descriptions of each manuscript with further links to digitized catalogs and manuscript images. At the time of press, contributors to e-Clavis had created

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entries for over one hundred texts and more than 150 *Manuscripta apocryphorum* pages. One of the benefits of this resource is that contributors can continually update the entries with new scholarship and new manuscript sources. Readers of the introductions and translations featured in *MNTA*, therefore, are encouraged to consult the entries in the e-Clavis for changes and developments in the reconstruction and interpretation of the texts.