

Infancy Gospels

Edited by

CLAIRE CLIVAZ, ANDREAS DETTWILER,
LUC DEVILLERS and ENRICO NORELLI
with the assistance of BENJAMIN BERTHO

Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen

zum Neuen Testament

281

Mohr Siebeck

Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen
zum Neuen Testament

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281



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Stories and Identities

Edited by

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e-ISBN 978-3-16-152090-7

ISBN 978-3-16-150833-2

ISSN 0512-1604 (Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament)

Die Deutsche Nationalbibliothek lists this publication in the Deutsche Nationalbibliographie; detailed bibliographic data are available on the Internet at <http://dnb.d-nb.de>.

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The book was printed on non-aging paper by Gulde-Druck in Tübingen and bound by Großbuchbinderei Spinner in Ottersweier.

Printed in Germany.

Acknowledgments

This volume is the result of a research program organized by the Universities of the French part of Switzerland (Fribourg, Geneva, Lausanne and Neuchâtel), and the organizers are very grateful to the Conference of the French speaking universities of Switzerland (CUSO, theology) for its support of this event. Three meetings were held in autumn 2010 in Lausanne, Geneva and Fribourg, gathering together scholars from diverse fields: New Testament Exegesis, Religious Studies, Early Jewish and Christian Literature, Ancient Jewish and Christian History and French Literature. The organizers' team consisted of Claire Clivaz (New Testament and Early Christian Literature, University of Lausanne), Andreas Dettwiler (New Testament, University of Geneva), Luc Devillers (New Testament, University of Fribourg) and Enrico Norelli (Early Christian History, University of Geneva), but other colleagues and research assistants had had a great influence on the project and the edition. Benedict Viviano, Honorary New Testament Professor (University of Fribourg), proposed the topic of the meeting. Sabrina Inowlocki Meister, former Assistant Professor in Jewish Literature and Ancient History at the University of Lausanne, contributed significantly to the quality of the conference program during its preparation in 2008–2009. Jenny Read-Heimerdinger (University of Lausanne) patiently corrected all the English articles written by non-native English writers. We owe a huge gratitude to Benjamin Bertho, PhD student and research assistant (University of Lausanne): this volume published a short time after the conference is due to his diligence and attention. Last but not least, we warmly thank Mohr Siebeck publishing for welcoming this volume.

The editors

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List of abbreviations

AB	The Anchor Bible.
ABD	The Anchor Bible Dictionary, ed. D.N. FREEDMAN, 6 vols., New York, NY, 1992.
ABR	Australian Biblical Review.
ABRL	Anchor Bible Reference Library.
ACA	Antike Christliche Apokryphen.
AJT	American Journal of Theology.
AnBib	Analecta Biblica.
AnBoll	Analecta Bollandiana.
ANCL	Ante-Nicene Christian Library.
ANRW	Aufstieg und Niedergang der römischen Welt: Geschichte und Kultur Roms im Spiegel der neueren Forschung, ed. H. TEMPORINI – W. HAASE, Berlin, 1972–.
ANT	Apocrypha Novi Testamenti.
ARG	Archiv für Religionsgeschichte.
ASNU	Acta Seminarii Neotestamentici Upsaliensis.
ASTI	Annual of the Swedish Theological Institute.
ATANT	Abhandlungen zur Theologie des Alten und Neuen Testaments.
AThR	Anglican Theological Review.
BAC	Biblioteca de Autores Cristianos.
BBR	Bulletin for Biblical Research.
BETL	Bibliotheca Ephemeridum Theologicarum Lovaniensium.
BHT	Beiträge zur Historischen Theologie:
BibInt	Biblical Interpretation.
BibLeb	Bibel und Leben.
BibOr	Biblica et Orientalia.
BibS(N)	Biblische Studien (Neukirchen).
BJRL	Bulletin of the John Rylands University Library of Manchester.
BLE	Bulletin de Littérature Ecclésiastique.
BTB	Biblical Theology Bulletin.
BThS	Biblich-theologische Studien.
BWANT	Beiträge zur Wissenschaft vom Alten und Neuen Testament.
BZAW	Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für die Alttestamentliche Wissenschaft.
BZNW	Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für die Neutestamentliche Wissenschaft.
CaE	Cahiers Evangélie.
CBET	Contributions to Biblical Exegesis and Theology.
CBQ	Catholic Biblical Quarterly.
CCCM	Corpus Christianorum Continuation Mediaevalis.
CCSA	Corpus Christianorum Series Apocryphorum.
CCSL	Corpus Christianorum Series Latina.

CNT	Commentaire du Nouveau Testament.
Comm	Communio.
ConBNT	Coniectanea Neotestamentica or Coniectanea Biblica: New Testament Series.
CP	Classical Philology.
CSCO	Corpus Scriptorum Christianorum Orientalium.
CurTM	Currents in Theology and Mission.
DJD	Discoveries in the Judaean Desert.
DNP	Der Neue Pauly: Enzyklopädie der Antike, ed. H. Cancik – H. Schneider, Stuttgart, 1996–.
DSD	Dead Sea Discoveries.
ECR	Eastern Churches Review.
EKKNT	Evangelisch-Katholischer Kommentar zum Neuen Testament.
EstBib	Estudios Biblicos.
ETL	Ephemerides Theologicae Lovanienses.
ETR	Etudes Théologiques et Religieuses.
EvT	Evangelische Theologie.
FC	Fontes Christiani.
FCB	The Feminist Companion to the Bible.
FRLANT	Forschungen zur Religion und Literatur des Alten und Neuen Testaments.
GCS	Die Griechische Christliche Schriftsteller der ersten [drei] Jahrhunderte.
HBS	Herder's Biblical Studies.
HeyJ	Heythrop Journal.
HNT	Handbuch zum Neuen Testament.
HTKNT	Herders Theologischer Kommentar zum Neuen Testament.
HTR	Harvard Theological Review.
HTS	Harvard Theological Studies.
HvTSt	Hervormde Teologiese Studies.
IBAES	Internetbeiträge zur Aegyptologie und Sudanarchaeologie.
ICC	International Critical Commentary.
JAC	Jahrbuch für Antike und Christentum.
JBL	Journal of Biblical Literature.
JECS	Journal of Early Christian Studies.
JJS	Journal of Jewish Studies.
JRS	Journal of Roman Studies.
JSHRZ	Jüdische Schriften aus Hellenistisch-Römischer Zeit.
JSJ	Journal for the Study of Judaism.
JSJSup	Supplements to the Journal for the Study of Judaism Series.
JSNT	Journal for the Study of the New Testament.
JSNTSup	Journal for the Study of the New Testament: Supplement Series.
JSOTSup	Journal for the Study of the Old Testament: Supplement Series.
JSP	Journal for the Study of the Pseudepigrapha.
JSPSup	Journal for the Study of the Pseudepigrapha: Supplement Series.
JSS	Journal of Semitic Studies.
JTS	Journal of Theological Studies.
LD	Lectio Divina.
LNTS	Library of New Testament Studies.
LTP	Laval Théologique et Philosophique.
LTQ	Lexington Theology Quarterly.
MdB	Le Monde de la Bible.
MGWJ	Monatschrift für Geschichte und Wissenschaft des Judentums.

NABU	Nouvelles Assyriologiques Brèves et Utilitaires.
Neot	Neotestamentica.
NHC	Nag Hammadi Codices.
NHS	Nag Hammadi Studies.
NICNT	New International Commentary on the New Testament.
NIGTC	New International Greek Testament Commentary.
NovT	Novum Testamentum.
NovTSup	Novum Testamentum Supplements.
NTAbh	Neutestamentliche Abhandlungen.
NTA	New Testament Apocrypha.
NTOA	Novum Testamentum et Orbis Antiquus.
NTS	New Testament Studies.
NTTS	New Testament Tools and Studies.
OCP	Orientalia Christiana Periodica.
OCV	Œuvres Complètes de Voltaire.
OrChr	Oriens Christianus.
OrChrAn	Orientalia Christiana Analecta.
ÖTK	Ökumenischer Taschenbuch-Kommentar.
OTP	Old Testament Pseudepigrapha, ed. J.H. CHARLESWORTH, 2 vols., New York, NY, 1983.
PG	Patrologie Grecque.
PIBA	Proceedings of the Irish Biblical Association.
PIRSB	Publications de l'IRSB.
PO	Patrologia Orientalis.
PTS	Patristische Texte und Studien.
QC	Qumran Chronicle.
QD	Quaestiones Disputatae.
RB	Revue Biblique.
REJ	Revue des Etudes Juives.
RevQ	Revue de Qumran.
RHE	Revue d'Histoire Ecclésiastique.
RHPR	Revue d'Histoire et de Philosophie Religieuses.
RHR	Revue de l'Histoire des Religions.
RNT	Regensburger Neues Testament.
RSR	Recherches de Science Religieuse.
RTP	Revue de Théologie et de Philosophie.
SA	Studia Anselmiana.
SANT	Studien zum Alten und Neuen Testaments.
SB	Sources Bibliques.
SBB	Stuttgarter Biblische Beiträge.
SBF	Studium Biblicum Franciscanum.
SBLDS	Society of Biblical Literature: Dissertation Series.
SBLSP	Society of Biblical Literature: Seminar Papers.
SBLSymS	Society of Biblical Literature: Symposium Series.
SBS	Stuttgarter Bibelstudien.
SC	Sources Chrésiennes.
SEÅ	Svensk Exegetisk Årsbok.
SEAug	Studia Ephemeridis Augustianum.
SHAW	Sitzungen de Heidelberger Akademie der Wissenschaften.
SHR	Studies in the History of Religions (supplement to Numen).

SJ	Studia Judaica.
SNTSMS	Society for New Testament Studies: Monograph Series.
SNTSU	Studien zum Neuen Testament und Seiner Umwelt.
SR	Studies in Religion/Sciences Religieuses.
STDJ	Studies on the Texts of the Desert of Judah.
StPatr	Studia Patristica.
StPB	Studia Post-Biblica.
SubHa	Subsidia Hagiographica.
SUNT	Studien zur Umwelt des Neuen Testaments.
SVEC	Studies on Voltaire and the Eighteenth Century.
TBLNT	Theologisches Begriffslexikon zum Neuen Testament.
TDNT	Theological Dictionary of the New Testament, ed. G. KITTEL – G. FRIEDRICH, transl. G.W. BROMILEY, 10 vols., Grand Rapids, MI, 1964–1976.
ThH	Théologie Historique.
THKNT	Theologischer Handkommentar zum Neuen Testament.
ThKNT	Theologischer Kommentar zum Neuen Testament.
ThT	Theologische Tijdschrift.
TJT	Toronto Journal of Theology.
TSAJ	Texte und Studien zum Antiken Judentum.
TSK	Theologische Studien und Kritiken.
TU	Texte und Untersuchungen.
TynBul	Tyndale Bulletin.
VC	Vigiliae Christianae.
VCSup	Supplements to Vigiliae Christianae.
VT	Vetus Testamentum.
WBC	Word Biblical Commentary.
WTJ	Westminster Theological Journal.
WUNT	Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament.
ZNT	Zeitschrift für Neues Testament.
ZNW	Zeitschrift für die Neutestamentliche Wissenschaft und die Kunde der Älteren Kirche.
ZTK	Zeitschrift für Theologie und Kirche.
ZWT	Zeitschrift für Wissenschaftliche Theologie.

Introduction

I. The Volume's Project¹

1. Two Collected Essays in 2009 and 2011 on Jesus' Infancy Stories

In her book *Marie*,² the French scholar France Quéré highlights the two close but different verbs used in the parallel expressions of Lk 2.19 and 2.51b,³ *συνετήρει* and *διετήρει*. In the NRSV, the two verbs are translated similarly as “treasured”. But *συνετήρει* in Lk 2.19 indicates for Quéré that Mary is able to gather together the diverse elements of the situation; she harmoniously meditates the Word, as the preposition *συν-* in *συνετήρει* and the verb *συνβάλλουσα* underline.⁴ In Lk 2.51b, Mary seems too perplexed to gather together all the elements of the situation in her heart, as the absence of *συνβάλλουσα* and the use of *διετήρει*, with the preposition *δια-*, indicate. According to Quéré, this small difference between *συν-* and *δια-* signals that something is troubling Mary in Lk 2.51b.⁵ In homage to this fine exegete, gone too soon, we could say in introduction to these collected essays that the readers who will compare the present volume with the one published in 2009 by James Corley on the suggestion of the Catholic Biblical Association of Great Britain – *New Perspectives on the Nativity*⁶ – will probably be experimenting a feeling closer to *διετήρει* than to

¹ Many thanks are due to Etienne Guilloud for his English proof reading and the English translations of the French citations.

² See F. QUÉRÉ, *Marie*, Paris: Desclée de Brouwer, 1996.

³ See Lk 2.19 and 51b according to the NA²⁷: ἡ δὲ Μαριάμ πάντα συνετήρει τὰ ῥήματα ταῦτα συνβάλλουσα ἐν τῇ καρδίᾳ αὐτῆς / καὶ ἡ μήτηρ αὐτοῦ διετήρει πάντα τὰ ῥήματα ἐν τῇ καρδίᾳ αὐτῆς.

⁴ See QUÉRÉ, *Marie*, p. 155.

⁵ See *ibid.*, p. 155: “Le *syn* – qui impliquait la cohérence des pensées – se change en un *dia* – qui offre le sens contraire et exprime la division jetée dans le souvenir où l’heureuse assurance se colore maintenant d’un pressentiment douloureux. Et Marie conserve néanmoins cette mémoire déchirée, aussi fidèlement qu’elle la gardait au temps de son intégrité.”

⁶ See J. CORLEY (ed.), *New Perspectives on the Nativity*, London – New York: T&T Clark, 2009.

συνηθήρει, or will in any case note the different profiles of the two volumes.

Our editorial team has started to prepare the content of the present volume without any knowledge of the *New Perspectives* project. Consequently, it will be an interesting task for the readership of these two volumes to situate them in the present history of research, in order to understand what is happening today around the texts usually called “infancy gospels” and “infancy apocrypha” in French-speaking research, but which are known as “infancy narratives” and “infancy gospels” in English-speaking research. This introduction is a first attempt to situate the *Infancy Gospels* volume as a new step in research, at the crossroad of diverse points of view. It will also explain some differences with the *New Perspectives* volume, which offers a state of research on Mt 1–2 and Lk 1–2 written by Henry Wansbrough,⁷ as well as a “Bibliography of Studies on the Nativity, 1990–2009”,⁸ to which one can usefully refer. The two volumes are based on different textual corpora. Corley’s volume focuses on the canonical Jesus’ infancy stories with some articles about the history of reception, whereas the present volume studies canonical and non-canonical Jesus’ infancy stories, often together. This divergence in the studied texts consequently leads to two main differences between the books: the role of history and the relationship between the canonical infancy stories and other contemporaneous textual productions. These points shall be developed in part 1, before giving an overview of the volume in part 2.

2. Categories and History at Stake

In English-speaking research, the masterpiece by Raymond Brown, *The Birth of the Messiah*, uses the expression “infancy narratives” for Mt 1–2 and Lc 1–2.⁹ The same kind of designation still stands thirty years later in *New Perspectives*, when Henry Wansbrough speaks about the “gospels infancy narratives”,¹⁰ whereas “infancy gospels” designates usually the apo-

⁷ See H. WANSBROUGH, “The Infancy Stories of the Gospels since Raymond E. Brown”, in J. CORLEY (ed.), *New Perspectives on the Nativity*, pp. 4–22.

⁸ See H. WANSBROUGH – J. CORLEY, “Bibliography of Studies on the Nativity, 1990–2009,” in J. CORLEY (ed.), *New Perspectives on the Nativity*, pp. 205–211.

⁹ See the introduction “Scholarship and the Infancy Narratives,” in R. Brown, *The Birth of the Messiah. A Commentary on the Infancy Narratives in the Gospels of Matthew and Luke. New Updated Edition* (ABRL), New York et al.: Doubleday, 1993² (1976), pp. 25–41; see also, for example, this sentence in the foreword of the original edition: “It is the central contention of this volume that the infancy narratives are worthy vehicles of the Gospel message ; indeed, each is the essential Gospel story in miniature” (*ibid.*, p. 7).

¹⁰ See WANSBROUGH, “The Infancy Stories of the Gospels”, p. 5, for example.

cryphal stories on Jesus' infancy in English.¹¹ In an inverted way, as Michel Berder pointed out in 2009, "the expression 'infancy gospels' is usually used to designate Mt 1–2 and Lk 1–2"¹² in French-speaking research. This designation is notably present in Jean Daniélou and René Laurentin monographs' titles: *Les Evangiles de l'enfance* (1967) and *Les Evangiles de l'enfance du Christ* (1983).¹³ Because Brown's *Birth* has never been translated into French and was the subject of polemical debates internal to the Catholic Church, as Wansbrough reminds us,¹⁴ scholarship never really did consider the fact that the French expression "Evangiles de l'enfance" and the English expression "infancy gospels" were designating diverse categories.

By giving to this volume the usual French terminology, the editorial team enlarges at the same time the French and the English categories. Indeed, "infancy gospels" can designate here the canonical infancy gospels (see part 2), or all the available Jesus' infancy gospels (see part 1), or the non-canonical infancy gospels (see part 3). This choice – with its floating aspect – does not represent a novelty, but rather makes visible and explicit a growing implicit evolution in the scholarly language. For example, if Berder defines the 'infancy gospels' in his article as Mt 1–2 and Lc 1–2, he also notes some pages later that the apocryphal Jesus' infancy stories "have commonly received the designation of 'Infancy Gospels'".¹⁵ He thus attests that the expression is becoming convenient for the entire textual corpus in the French-speaking area.

But categories are also evolving in English-speaking research, as Berder notices about the 2006 book by Keith Elliott – *A Synopsis of the Apocryphal Nativity and Infancy Narratives*.¹⁶ "it is significant that Elliot went as far back as the birth of Mary, which is not reported in any text of the New Testament. Moreover, the title given to his work doesn't quote Jesus'

¹¹ See E.A. LIVINGSTONE (ed.), *The Concise Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006, p. 294: "Infancy Gospels. The apocryphal stories about the birth and childhood of Christ which were early put into circulation".

¹² M. BERDER, "L'enfance de Jésus dans les évangiles canoniques et dans les apocryphes," in F.-M. HUMANN – J.-N. NOËL (eds.), *Les Apocryphes chrétiens des premiers siècles. Mémoire et traditions* (TU 7), Paris: Desclée de Brouwer, 2009, pp. 211–244 ; here p. 215.

¹³ J. DANIÉLOU, *Les Evangiles de l'enfance*, Paris: Desclée de Brouwer, 1993² (1967); R. LAURENTIN, *Les Evangiles de l'enfance du Christ : vérité de Noël au-delà des mythes : exégèse et sémiotique, historicité et théologie*, Paris: Desclée de Brouwer, 1983.

¹⁴ See WANSBROUGH, "The Infancy Stories of the Gospels", pp. 4–5.

¹⁵ BERDER, "L'enfance de Jésus", p. 221.

¹⁶ J.K. ELLIOTT, *A Synopsis of the Apocryphal Nativity and Infancy Narratives* (NTTS 34), Leiden – Boston, MA: Brill, 2006.

name: ‘Nativity’ and ‘Infancy’ equally apply to Mary”.¹⁷ I am not sure if Elliott wished to put a Mariological implication in his title; indeed, he makes efforts in chapter one to keep Mary’s stories linked to the canonical texts, by incorporating “Luke 1” in a quite artificial way to the texts considered to be about “Mary’s birth and upbringing”, under the form of an “Appendix: The Birth of John the Baptist”.¹⁸ But he cannot avoid the fact that his book’s title can be read with an implied link to Mary, as Berder noticed. Focusing on Christmas stories leads to enlarging the studied textual corpus, as one can verify even in the rather conservative book by René Laurentin, *Les Evangiles de Noël* (1985). Laurentin considers that the *Protevangelium of James* belongs to “improbable and megalomaniac” apocryphal texts.¹⁹ But in another passage of the same book, he chooses to keep the cave mentioned in *PJ* 18.1 as historically probable, against the Gospel according to Luke: “The cave, a respectable tradition, would tend towards the caravanserai hypothesis as the place from which the Holy Family was rejected.”²⁰ This example illustrates how the cultural dimension influences the academic perception of the diverse elements of the “Christmas stories”, even by a scholar who considers that “the megalomania, the ignorance of the context and the improbability of the Apocrypha manifest, in a striking manner, the truth of the Gospels”.²¹

In fact, the cultural factor is the most important one in order to understand what is at stake today in the evolution of the designations and categorisations of Jesus’ infancy stories. It should be clearly reminded that the depreciation of the apocryphal infancy stories was a generally accepted fact in current Western culture until not long ago, and not an attitude specific only to traditional New Testament scholars. Indeed, it is interesting to read an article written about the infancy apocrypha in 1996 by Jean Rudhardt, professor in History of Religions at the University of Geneva in 1965–1987, the first chair created in that field in 1865.²² For Rudhardt, “when comparing [canonical] retained texts to many of the rejected ones, that were more anecdotal, more picturesque or more speculative, one will see in them qualities suited to justify the preference the Church gave them.”²³ He considers the canonical infancy gospels as being “less picturesque and wild, more reserved” and estimates it to be “paradoxical” to find

¹⁷ BERDER, “L’enfance de Jésus”, p. 223.

¹⁸ See Elliott, *A Synopsis*, pp. 1–2.

¹⁹ R. LAURENTIN, *Les Evangiles de Noël*, Paris: Desclée de Brouwer, 1985, p. 27.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 19.

²¹ *Ibid.*, p. 24.

²² See <http://www.unige.ch/lettres/antic/HR/index.html>; last check on 26/07/2011.

²³ J. RUDHARDT, “Le fictif et le faux, l’authentique et le vrai dans l’histoire des religions,” in *RHR* 213/1 (1996), pp. 5–23 ; here p. 16.

so much traces of the infancy apocrypha in the liturgy of the (catholic) Church.²⁴ Such an opinion attests to the fact that in the second half of the 20th century, a wide consensus still existed on a cultural point: canonical infancy narratives were considered to be as “serious” as the apocryphal infancy narratives, even if the historicity of the canonical stories was diversely appreciated.

This general cultural Western appreciation is clearly evolving. On the one hand, the edition by the AELAC²⁵ of the *Ecrits apocryphes chrétiens*²⁶ in the beautiful volumes of the series *La Pléiade* (Gallimard) signals a concrete turning point at the end of the 20th century in the perception of the Christian apocrypha in European culture, whose effects are visible in French speaking-research in Berder’s article²⁷ or in the edition of the present volume, for example. A similar phenomenon is happening in German speaking-research, if one looks at the important collected essays by Frey and Schröter *Jesus in apokryphen Evangelienüberlieferungen*,²⁸ issuing from the preparation of the first volume of the new Hennecke-Schneemelcher series, the *Antike christliche Apokryphen*.²⁹ On the other hand, the appreciation of the Christmas stories is evolving inside of the emic³⁰ point of view of the Christian exegetes, as one can see by comparing Daniélou’s 1967 statement and Wansbrough’s 2009 statement. Daniélou considered in 1967 that “the question of the historical value of the Gospels is fundamental to faith: if Christ has not really been conceived by the Holy Spirit, if he

²⁴ See *ibid.*, pp. 17, 21.

²⁵ Association for the Study of the Christian Apocryphal Literature; the head is at the University of Lausanne, IRSB (French-speaking Swiss Sciences Biblical Institute; www.unil.ch/irsb; last check on 26/07/2011).

²⁶ See F. BOVON – P. GEOLTRAIN (eds.), *Ecrits apocryphes chrétiens I* (Bibliothèque de la Pléiade 442), Paris: Gallimard, 1997; P. GEOLTRAIN – J.-D. KAESTLI (eds), *Ecrits apocryphes chrétiens II* (Bibliothèque de la Pléiade 516), Paris: Gallimard, 2005.

²⁷ See BERDER, “L’enfance de Jésus,” p. 211, n. 2.

²⁸ J. FREY – J. SCHRÖTER (eds., in collaboration with J. SPAETH), *Jesus in apokryphen Evangelienüberlieferungen: Beiträge zu außerkanonischen Jesusüberlieferungen aus verschiedenen Sprach- und Kulturtraditionen* (Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament 254), Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2010.

²⁹ See *ibid.*, p. V; C. MARKSCHIES – J. SCHRÖTER (eds.), *Antike christliche Apokryphen in deutscher Übersetzung. I. Band: Evangelien und Verwandtes. 7., völlig neu bearbeitete Auflage der von Edgar Hennecke begründeten und von Wilhelm Schneemelcher weitergeführten Sammlung*, Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, forthcoming December 2011.

³⁰ This terminology comes from anthropology and was coined in 1954 by Kenneth Pike to designate the description of behavior or a belief in terms meaningful to the actor inside his/her cultural references (see for a description of the emergence of the emics/etics terminology: T. HEADLAND – K. PIKE – M. HARRIS (eds.), *Emics and Etics: The Insider/Outsider Debate*, Newbury Park – London: Sage Publications, 1990).

hasn't really been resuscitated from the dead, our faith is vain,"³¹ whereas in 2009 Wansbrough wrote the following statement:

It can never be doubted that Christianity is a historical religion, founded on what actually happened – the ministry, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. If these did not happen, 'then our faith is vain' (1 Cor 15.17). In the case of the gospel infancy narratives, as in all accounts of the birth and infancy of men and women who have made an indelible mark on the world, exact historicity is not the main interest. The importance of the infancy narratives lies not in the precise historicity of the events but in what these narratives show about Jesus, or rather, about Christian belief in Jesus.³²

Both statements are based on 1 Cor 15.17, explicitly by Wansbrough and implicitly by Daniélou – since Jesus' birth is not mentioned in this verse –, which makes the evolution clearly perceptible. But one probably arrives now at the end of the possibility of affirming a position such as Wansbrough's in *New Perspectives*. Firstly, the idea that Jesus' resurrection maintains Christianity as a "historical religion" becomes everyday more of an emic Christian point of view.³³ Secondly, such a point of view leads Corley to affirm that in *New Perspectives*, "the strongest theme is the inadequacy of critical historical study to do justice to the message of the nativity stories."³⁴ Such a statement remains based on a narrow definition of historical criticism on the one hand – as Borg and Crossan also use it in *The First Christmas*.³⁵ On the other hand, it is really difficult to understand what kind of criticism can be developed if an academic framework, if history is put in brackets. Moreover, it also seems difficult to see what kind of Christian theology could put history in brackets, and stay efficient in culture and faith. On the theological level, the dissociation between faith and historical perspective has its limits: Wansbrough, after having affirmed that "exact historicity is not the main interest" in the infancy narratives, nevertheless reproaches to François Bovon for only speaking of "legends" about Lk 1–2 and Mt 1–2 in his commentary on Luke.³⁶

³¹ DANIELLOU, *Les Evangiles de l'enfance*, p. 7.

³² WANSBROUGH, "The Infancy Stories," p. 5.

³³ For an evaluation of this debate in European universities, see C. CLIVAZ, "Why Were the Resurrection Stories Read and Believed? And What Are We Making of Them Today?" in G. VAN OYEN – T. SHEPHERD (eds.), *Resurrection of the Dead. Biblical Traditions in Dialogue (BETL)*, Leuven: Peeters, forthcoming; the pdf version is available here, with the editor's agreement: http://my.unil.ch/serval/document/BIB_6BE62A6637FC.pdf; last check on 26/07/2011.

³⁴ CORLEY, "Introduction", in J. CORLEY (ed.), *New Perspectives on the Nativity*, London – New York: T&T Clark, 2009, pp. 1–3; p. 2.

³⁵ M. BORG – J.D. CROSSAN. (eds.), *The First Christmas. What the Gospels Really Teach about Jesus' Birth*, New York: HarperOne, 2007.

³⁶ See WANSBROUGH, "The Infancy Stories", pp. 13–14.

For the editorial team of this volume, it nevertheless seems possible to say something after Brown³⁷ on the infancy narratives, by enlarging the textual corpus to the apocryphal infancy gospels, and considering all the stories on Jesus' infancy in the category of "infancy gospels". Firstly, such a shift allows one to give history a new place in the debate, because several articles study the interactions between the infancy gospels and the history in terms of stories and identities. Such a key aspect of reading allows surprising discoveries, such as links between the information concerning the Desposynoi's genealogical tradition and the canonical Gospel genealogies (see Guignard), or between the *testimonia* and Jesus' birth (see Norelli). To read Mt 1–2 from the point of view of cultural anthropology enlightens the Matthean community as a fugitive and antagonistic minority (see Destro and Pesce). It is sure that this approach is now developing in research, as Autero's 2011 article shows.³⁸

Secondly, such a starting point radically prevents considering the canonical gospels as some heterogeneous "zero starting point". Raymond Brown does not avoid finally accentuating the "freedom of composition" of the evangelists in the infancy narratives, in conclusion to the debate about the historical sources: "Perhaps precisely because the material had been less fixed in the course of apostolic preaching, the evangelists exercised greater freedom of composition in the infancy narratives."³⁹ But one can rightly contest, theologically as well as historically, the idea that the infancy canonical gospels should be like a UFO inside ancient Jewish literature, which is what Wansbrough does when he affirms about 4Q246 that "Luke's usage [h]as still an advance on the Qumran text."⁴⁰ Therefore, several articles of the present volume draw interesting lines with ancient Jewish literature and Christian apocrypha. Midrashic literature can be used to link the messianic reading of Isa 7.14 with the Septuagint (Costa), or *PJ*

³⁷ See *ibid.*, p. 22: "no new paradigm has yet totally superseded the work of Raymond Brown".

³⁸ See E. AUTERO, "Social Status in Luke's Infancy Narrative: Zechariah the Priest," *Biblical Theology Bulletin: A Journal of Bible and Theology* 41 (2011), pp. 36–45.

³⁹ BROWN, *The Birth of the Messiah*, p. 38: "Whether or not the infancy narratives were historical, whether or not they were based on eyewitness testimony, whether or not they had a pre-Gospel existence, Matthew and Luke thought they were appropriate introductions to the career and significance of Jesus. To give them less value than other parts of the Gospels is to misread the mind of the evangelists for whom the infancy narratives were fitting vehicles of a message they wanted to convey. Indeed, from this point of view the infancy narratives are not an embarrassment but a masterpiece. Perhaps precisely because the material had been less fixed in the course of apostolic preaching, the evangelists exercised greater freedom of composition in the infancy narratives".

⁴⁰ WANSBROUGH, "The Infancy Stories", p. 17.

XI.2–3 with *QuestBarth* 2.15–20 and the P. Gen. IV.149 reinforces the roots of Lk 1.35 in “polyvalent Jewish traditions” such as 4Q246 (Clivaz).

A last word in this part has got to be an invitation to compare this volume to *New Perspectives* regarding the theological implications of the collected essays. This volume is not specifically addressed to “Christians”, and does not aim to “go deeper into the Christian message”, as it is assumed in *New Perspectives*.⁴¹ Produced by scholars coming from diverse backgrounds, it nevertheless offers interesting theological reflections, depending on the scholars’ implications in that field. For example, the Lukan author presents the beginnings of the Church in Acts as being modeled upon the Infancy narrative of the third Gospel (Devillers); the canticles in Lk 1–2 transmit a vision of God and the world, as well as a new ethos still to be trained (Gerber); the God of biblical revelation is everywhere present in the infancy gospels according to Matthew and Luke, but often in a self-effacing way (Viviano). Organised by a team of four scholars from diverse backgrounds, this research program has been offered by the theological research committee of French-speaking Switzerland (CUSO théologie). Consequently, this first part of the introduction will end with a theological opening on the ways that could be pursued in theological research after this volume, ideally in discussion with systematic and fundamental theology.

3. *Theological Impact: the Third Category of Texts “Useful for the Soul”*

The European academic context has the chance to be able to gather scholars from diverse fields and confessional backgrounds, and to study in peaceful ways the canonical Gospels and the early Christian literature. It is much more difficult to study Christian apocryphal texts in the US context today, without being forced to take a position on the evangelical/liberal Christian chessboard. In this dispassionate European academic atmosphere, it is possible to observe that the present volume is inscribed in a cultural framework marked by Christianity. Indeed, all the scholars mentioned in this volume – whatever research fields they come from – have considered that it was possible to speak about “infancy narratives” or “infancy gospels”, without specifying whose infancy was at stake. But this point could evolve over the next few years. When one puts “Christmas” on *Wolframalpha*, a database using the Web 3.0 – the semantics Web or the future Web⁴² –, the first results do not specify that Christmas is Jesus’ birth. *Wolframalpha* indicates instead Christmas as the day of birth of Isaac

⁴¹ CORLEY, “Introduction”, p. 1.

⁴² See T. BERNES-LEE, *Weaving the Web: the Original Design and Ultimate Destiny of the World Wide Web by its Inventor*, New York: HarperBusiness, 2000.

Newton and Rod Serling, as well as the day of the invention of the pendulum and of the election of Vaclav Havel as president of Czechoslovakia⁴³. So one can rightly ask what kind of cultural world will appear in the coming digital age, and how will Christian theology evolve in this emerging culturally altered world. In any case, such an evolution makes it all the more important to open some ways to discuss further the diverse categories and functions of ancient Christian texts in Christian theology.

To speak about “infancy gospels” for infancy narratives and infancy apocrypha and to study the entire available documentation on Jesus’ infancy stories, documentary papyri included, leads indeed to adapting some points in a modern Christian theology based on the *Sola Scriptura*, such as the one born from the printed protestant culture in the 16th century. Since the emergence of the printed culture, a stronger distinction has appeared between texts “in the Book” and other “apocryphal” texts outside of “the Book”. Some facts reflect the importance of the connection between the emergence of the printed culture and the perception of the frontier between canonical and apocryphal books: the list of canonical books was fixed at the fourth session of the Council of Trent, the 8th of April 1546; Cotelier published in 1672 the first collection of patristic texts, *SS. Patrum qui temporibus apostolicis floruerunt (...) opera editis*, and Fabricius published in 1703 the first *Codex apocryphorum Novi Testamenti Collectus*.⁴⁴

But the situation was quite different before the printed culture, as anybody can see today on the free online exemplar of the Codex Sinaiticus, where the *Pastor* and the *Epistle of Barnabas* are presented after the Revelation.⁴⁵ Ancient Christian writers had different appreciations of the non canonical texts. Origen uses an apocryphal word of Jesus, an *agrapha*, when he tries to defend the four traditional gospels in his *Homily on Luke* 1.1.⁴⁶ Nor does he hesitate to attribute 1 Co 2.9 to an apocryphal text⁴⁷. Athanasius also considers “other texts”: he indicates that the *Pastor* can be

⁴³ See <http://www.wolframalpha.com/input/?i=christmas>; last check on 26/07/2011.

⁴⁴ See E. JUNOD, “‘Apocryphes du Nouveau Testament’: une appellation erronée et une collection artificielle”, in *Apocrypha* 3 (1992), pp. 17–46; here pp. 20–21.

⁴⁵ See www.codexsinaiticus.org; last check on 26/07/2011.

⁴⁶ See W. RAUER (ed.), *Origenes Werke Bd. 9, Die Homilien zu Lukas in der Übersetzung des Hieronymus ; und die griechischen Reste der Homilien und des Lukas-Kommentars* (GCS 49), Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1959², pp. 3–6.

⁴⁷ See Origen, *Comm. Matt.* 5.29 on Matt. 23.37; quoted by E. JUNOD, “Quand l’évêque Athanase se prend pour l’Évangéliste Luc (*Lettre Festale XXXIX* sur le Canon des Écritures),” in D. H. WARREN – A. G. BROCK – D. W. PAO (eds.), *Early Christian Voices in Texts, Traditions and Symbols*, Boston, MA – Leiden: Brill, 2003, pp. 197–208; here p. 201, n. 13.

used in the teaching of the catechumens.⁴⁸ For several years, François Bovon has observed the use of non-canonical ancient Christian texts by diverse authors throughout centuries, and has proposed to escape the binary repartition between canonical and apocryphal texts, by suggesting a third thoroughgoing category of texts in Christianity, the texts “useful for the soul”, according the recurrent use of the word ψυχωφελης.⁴⁹

Bovon has developed the topic in a 2011 lecture: “Beyond the Canonical and the Apocryphal Books, the Presence of a Third Category: The Books Useful for the Soul.”⁵⁰ As he summarises it, “my claim is that the majority of early Christians in the *catholica* and in other communities divided the available books not into two but into three categories: the most authoritative were considered canonical; those deprived of any authority were rejected and called apocryphal; and those that had some authority, that is, those that were considered profitable or useful, comprised a third category.”⁵¹ Bovon’s proposition opens doors for Christian theology – catholic and protestant as well – to reconsider the role and implications of the Scripture in theology. His proposition is beginning to be discussed,⁵² and it offers opportunities to pursue the theological reflexion after a volume on the “infancy gospels”, canonical and non-canonical. Jesus’ infancy

⁴⁸ See Athanasius, *Epistula festalis XXXIX*, PG 26.1435–1440. For a translation of the Greek and Coptic versions of this letter, see G. ARAGIONE, “La lettre festive 39 d’Athanasie. Présentation et traduction de la version copte et de l’extrait grec,” in G. ARAGIONE – E. JUNOD – E. NORELLI (eds.), *Le canon du Nouveau Testament. Regards nouveaux sur l’histoire de sa formation* (MdB 54), Genève: Labor & Fides, 2005, pp. 197–219. See D. BRAKKE, “Canon Formation and Social Setting in Fourth-Century Egypt: Athanasius of Alexandria’s Thirty-Ninth Festal Letter,” in *HTR* 87 (1994), pp. 395–419; E. JUNOD, “Quand l’évêque Athanasie”; D. BRAKKE, “A New Fragment of Athanasius’s Thirty-Ninth Festal Letter: Heresy, Apocrypha, and the Canon,” in *HTR* 103 (2010), pp. 47–66.

⁴⁹ See F. BOVON, “Beyond the Book of Acts: Stephen, the First Christian Martyr, in Traditions Outside the New Testament Canon of Scripture,” in *Perspectives in Religious Studies* 32 (2005), pp. 93–108; part. 107–108.

⁵⁰ It was the Presidential Address of the 2011 New England and Eastern Canada Regional Annual Meeting of the *SBL*; I thank very much François Bovon for having provided to me the text of this lecture that will be published.

⁵¹ See note 50 above.

⁵² See for example X. GRAVEND-TIROLE, “From *Sola Scriptura* to *Pluralibus Scripturis*,” in C. CLIVAZ – J. ZUMSTEIN (eds., in collaboration with J. READ-HEIMERDINGER and J. PAIK), *Reading New Testament Papyri in Context – Lire les papyrus du Nouveau Testament dans leur contexte. Actes du colloque des 22–24 octobre 2009 à l’université de Lausanne* (BETL 242), Leuven: Peeters, 2011, pp. 355–381; here p. 375. For a reflexion on Christianity and the idea of “Religion of the Book”, see C. CLIVAZ, “The New Testament at the Time of the Egyptian Papyri. Reflections Based on P¹², P⁷⁵ and P¹²⁶ (P. Amh. 3b, P. Bod. XIV–XV and PSI 1497),” in C. CLIVAZ – J. ZUMSTEIN, *Reading New Testament Papyri in context*, pp. 15–55; here pp. 52–55.

stories are one of the clearest examples that illustrate the “usefulness for the soul” of ancient Christian texts such as the *Protevangelium of James* or the *Pseudo-Matthew*. The presence in liturgy and the repercussions in arts and popular culture of several Christmas non-canonical stories illustrate that Christian people through centuries have found some “usefulness for the soul” in such stories.

II. The Volume’s Content⁵³

The *first part* of the volume, “Infancy Gospels and Stories”, presents nine articles rather focused on the context of the writing and reading of the infancy gospels. In “Divine Fathers, Virgin Mothers and Founding Children”, Francesca Prescendi starts with the presentation of three Italic birth myths (Servus Tullius, Romulus and Remus, and Caeculus) and their study by James Frazer in *The Golden Bough*. She concludes, that “the function of conception and birth narratives concerning humans is to bestow authority on them, and to show their half-human, half-divine nature, which ensures their illustrious future.”⁵⁴ Christian Grappe, in “Les Evangiles canoniques de l’enfance et les récits d’enfance intertestamentaires”, argues that the intertestamental literature shows that haggadic or midrashic re-readings of the lives of biblical characters were already developed at an early stage and may have influenced the New Testament writers. Matthew and Luke’s infancy narratives illustrate a kind of cumulative Christology, since Jesus is paralleled to famous characters of the past (Moses, as well as priestly figures, among them Melchizedek), whose life he recapitulates while outranging them. Then Simon Mimouni argues in “La virginité de Marie: entre textes et contextes (Ier–IIe siècles)”, that “les prémices du passage entre la christologie résurrectionnelle et la christologie incarnationnelle peuvent être situées approximativement entre les années 50 et les années 80, entre Paul et les auteurs de l’Evangile selon Matthieu et de l’Evangile selon Luc.”⁵⁵ Enrico Norelli shows in “Les plus anciennes traditions sur la naissance de Jésus” that early *testimonia* – such as in AsIsa 11.2–18 or Ac-Pe 24 – have been gathered together to valorize the conception of Jesus by a virgin, already before the end of the first century.

⁵³ This part is based on the abstracts furnished by the authors themselves: a big thanks to them.

⁵⁴ F. PRESCENDI, “Divine Fathers, Virgin Mothers and Founding Children”, see in the present volume, pp. 3–14.

⁵⁵ S.C. MIMOUNI, “La virginité de Marie: entre textes et contextes (Ier–IIe siècles)”, see in the present volume, pp. 33–46.

Christophe Guignard, in “Jesus’ Family and their Genealogy according to the Testimony of Julius Africanus”, shows that Julius Africanus refers to first century Palestinian tradition about Jesus’ family. He investigates whether this information concerning the Desposynoi’s genealogical tradition has some links with each of the Gospel genealogies. Adriana Destro and Mauro Pesce, in “The Cultural Structure of the Infancy Narrative in the Gospel of Matthew”, suggest that Matthew’s religious system consists of the use of models of *legitimacy* that are acceptable from the Jewish viewpoint and from the non-Jewish one. Matthew is the expression of a persecuted minority group with a clandestine strategy of flight, but one that never ceases to proclaim the future defeat of those in power: it is a fugitive and antagonistic minority. José Costa, in “The Matthean Reading of Isaiah 7.14 and the *Midrash*, of Ancient Rabbis”, claims to demonstrate that a messianic reading of Isa 7.14 is perfectly possible when midrashic procedures are applied to the Hebrew or the Greek text of the verse. Therefore Matthew’s Judeo-Christian understanding of Isa 7.14 can be explained with intellectual processes, which are close or even identical to those of the *Midrash* and the messianic reading of Isa 7.14 may be an ancient Jewish tradition, already attested in the Septuagint. Joseph Verheyden, in “Creating Difference Through Parallelism”, shows how Luke, all through his account, is looking for ways to draw out a comparison between John the Baptist and Jesus that prove the latter to be the more important of the two, with the former (and his family) explicitly testifying to this. A comparison is made with Plutarch’s use of the device of *synkrisis* in his *Parallel Lives*. Claire Clivaz, in “Beyond the Category of ‘Proto-Orthodox Christianity’”, demonstrates that multivalent early Christian readings of the story of the Annunciation have existed, as *PJ* XI,2–3, *QuestBarth* 2,15–20, as well as the P. Gen. IV.149 and the Coptic homily by Pseudo-Cyril of Jerusalem demonstrate. Consequently, she argues that several elements prevent limiting Lk 1.35 to a pre-orthodox reading. Moreover, this verse cannot be considered as a “zero point” (see notably 4Q246), but is rooted in early Jewish readings, for example of Ex 40.34–38 LXX.

In the *second part* of the volume, “Stories and Identities in the Infancy Gospels”, ten articles are focused rather on the stories and identities as told in the canonical infancy gospels. Jörg Frey, in “How Could Mark and John Do without Infancy Stories?” analyzes why and how Mark and John can present Jesus’ story without infancy stories. He argues that Mark provides a Scriptural framework in which the construction of a miraculous birth appears unnecessary for the presentation of Jesus as ‘Son of God’. The Johannine prologue explains the beginning of Jesus’ earthly existence by use of the motif of God’s indwelling among his people. In response to Frey, David Pastorelli goes in a complementary direction in “The Genealogies of

Jesus in Tatian's *Diatessaron*": Tatian did not eliminate the Matthean and Lukan genealogies, but harmonised them into a single list and the central issue is not so much the presence or absence of the genealogies as their harmonisation or non-harmonisation. Andrea Taschl-Erber presents in "Subversive Erinnerung. Feministisch-kritische Lektüre von Mt 1–2 und Lk 1–2" an overview of feministic readings. She underlines that Mary's conception without male begetting challenges the patriarchal order. If the third gospel shows tendencies of silencing women, the powerful female role models point nevertheless to a subversive memory.

Then three articles focus on Matthew's infancy narratives. In "Matthew 1–2 and the Problem of Intertextuality", Moises Mayordomo starts from Kristeva's approach and presents recent debates on intertextuality. He concludes that the search for the precise form of a certain pre-text is secondary to the hermeneutical possibilities that the interplay between two texts generates. In "Enjeux ecclésiologiques de Matthieu 1–2. Approche historique et narrative", Elian Cuvillier reads Matthew 1–2 from an ecclesiological perspective. He argues that these chapters take the form of an ecclesiological discourse aimed at building a community based on an all new Christological foundation; namely, a community steadfastly open to the universal, sociologically nonsectarian, and whose mission is to be witness to their unique Messiah. In "Giving Birth to Jesus in the Late First Century", Anders Runesson shows that Matthew's presentation of the birth of Jesus is focused on ethno-political aspects associated with a Jewish Davidic Messiah expected to rule both Israel and the nations. He belongs to the scholars who wish to challenge the Markan priority.

Luke 1–2 is at stake in the three next articles. In "Lk 1–2: Auftakt einer tragischen Geschichte?", Simon Butticaz evaluates the hermeneutic impact of the *Israelfrage* on the Lucan Infancy Gospel (Lk 1–2). He provides an exegetical overview from the ideological purge of Marcion to the symptomatic oversight of Hans Conzelmann. Then, with the help of the tools of narrative criticism, he attempts to re-examine these various interpretative models in order to determine the Christian identity that the Lucan Infancy Gospel installs at the beginning of the double work *ad Theophilum*. Luc Devillers, in "The Infancy of Jesus and the Infancy of the Church", explores the relationship between the three canticles (i.e. the *Magnificat*, the *Benedictus*, and the *Nunc dimittis*) and the three great summaries (Acts 2.42–47; 4.32–35; 5.12–16). Diverse links can be found between the Lucan canticles and summaries, including the role of the Spirit regarding individuals and community: they tend to present the beginnings of the Church as being modeled upon the Infancy narrative of the third Gospel. In "D'une identité à l'autre: Le *Magnificat*, le *Benedictus*, le *Gloria* et le *Nunc dimittis* dans le rôle de passeurs", Daniel Gerber argues on the narrative level

that these hymns help the reader to grasp the absolute sense of the story's initial facts. They transmit a point of view on God and on the world, with a new *ethos* to test. Benedict Viviano concludes this second part by a theological reflexion: "God as Father in the Infancy Gospels (Matt 1 and 2, Luke 1 and 2)". He argues that the God of biblical revelation is everywhere present in the infancy gospels according to Matthew and Luke, but often in a self-effacing way.

The ten articles of the third part, "Infancy Gospels Stories and Identities", are mainly focused on the apocryphal infancy gospels; several of them challenge the boundaries between Jewish and Christian identities, and can be situated in the general debate about the "parting of the ways."⁵⁶ In "Ways to Survival for the Infancy Apocrypha", Sever Voicu presents an inventory of the known infancy apocrypha. He argues that the oldest ones – *Paidika* and *Proteuangelium Iacobi* – were written in the second half of the second century, and then used as sources for all the later apocrypha, which were written and/or transmitted in many ancient and mediaeval languages. Lily Vuong focuses then on *Prot.Jas* in "Let Us Bring Her Up to the Temple of the Lord". She argues that Jewish practices and traditions on purity take "harmoniously place in a text that sets its priority on establishing the special role Mary and her son have in salvation history."⁵⁷ She suggests that this device provides "grounds for re-evaluating the *Prot. Jas.*'s relationship with Judaism",⁵⁸ a narrative usually labelled as "Christian".

Three articles are then focused on the *Paidika Iesou* and present diverse opinions on the question of their date, provenance and relationship to Judaism. Frederic Amsler, in "Les *Paidika Iesou*, un nouveau témoin de la rencontre entre judaïsme et christianisme à Antioche au IVE siècle ?", argues, against the thesis of an Ebionite origin, that this collection of little stories on Jesus between five and twelve years old has to be understood in the context of the net of tensions between Jews and Christians in Syria in fourth century. In "Die sogenannte 'Kindheitserzählung des Thomas'", Ursula Ulrike Kaiser argues that this apocryphal text combines Hellenistic biographical patterns and real children's lives, which help modern readers

⁵⁶ See notably J.D.G. DUNN (ed.), *Jews and Christians. The Parting of the Ways A.D. 70 to 135. The Second Durham-Tübingen Research Symposium on Earliest Christianity and Judaism (Durham, September, 1989)* (WUNT 2.66), Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1992; A.H. BECKER – A. YOSHIKO REED (eds), *The Ways that Never Parted. Jews and Christians in Late Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages* (TSAJ 95), Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2003 ; S.C. MIMOUNI – B. POUADERON (eds.), *La séparation des chemins revisitée / The Parting of the Ways Revisited* (Les Patrimoines), Paris: Cerf, forthcoming.

⁵⁷ Lily Vuong, "Let Us Bring Her Up to the Temple of the Lord", see in the present volume, pp. 418–432

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 432

to understand its sometimes rather aggressive portrayal of the little Jesus. It reminds one of the adult Jesus of the four gospels who also doesn't always act peacefully. She concludes that this apocryphal book can help to keep in mind that one is always dealing with (re)constructions of who Jesus was and what he did. In "Rereading the Rewriting of the Biblical Traditions in The Infancy Gospel of Thomas (*Paidika*)", Geert van Oyen focuses on the interpretation of the phenomenon of intertextuality between *Paidika* and the canonical texts. He argues that the clearest example of intertextuality is between *Paidika* 17 and Luke 2.41–52. But there is no reason to deny general knowledge of other NT texts (e.g. the Gospel of John).

In "Mapping an Unexplored Second Century Apocryphal Gospel: the *Liber de Nativitate Salvatoris* (CANT 53)", Jean-Daniel Kaestli offers the synopsis of this Latin unexplored apocryphal text. He gives an overview of the numerous striking similarities between this text and the *Revelation of the Magi*, another little-known apocryphal work, and suggests that both texts originated in Syria, in the same cultural milieu. The study focuses on a strange episode, the story of the midwife witnessing the birth of Christ. It argues that this apocryphal text is independent from the *Protevangelium of James* and must be dated in the second century. In "Les récits apocryphes de l'enfance dans la tradition arménienne", Valentina Calzolari, after a *status quaestionis*, approaches the theme of the virginity of Mary, considered the anti-type of Eve, in ancient Armenian literature. Special focus has been given to the reception of these apocryphal texts by medieval Armenian writers and in the Armenian Mediaeval illuminations.

Last but not least, the last three articles offer a journey through ancient and modern Jewish and Christian identities, from the *Toledot Yeshu* to Voltaire. In "Jesus and his Mother in the Jewish Anti-Gospel (the *Toledot Yeshu*)", Philip Alexander analyses the Anti-Infancy Gospel material in the *Toledot* in terms of counter-narrative and parody, traces its history, suggesting, against some recent scholarship, that significant elements of it go back to Antiquity, and argues that it throws such light on the development of the Christian tradition, that the *Toledot Yeshu* should now be recognized as integral to the study of the apocryphal gospels. In response to Alexander, Daniel Barbu examines *Toledot Yeshu*'s influence on 18th century biblical criticism, specifically with respect to the works of Voltaire, in "Voltaire and the *Toledoth Yeshu*". If their use by Voltaire is primarily polemical, it nonetheless nourishes the development of the philosopher's highly innovative reconstruction of the historical Jesus and of the birth of Christianity. The Enlightenment's spirit and involvement in apocryphal infancy gospels is masterfully analyzed by François Rosset in "'False' and 'True' Infancy and Apocryphal Gospels in the Century of Voltaire". After an overview, Rosset focuses on the Baron d'Holbach, a well-known figure of