INTRODUCTION

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Scripture says "Give honor to whom honor is due" (Rom 13:7) and "Acknowledge those who have worked hard among you" (1 Thess 5:12). It is for this purpose that we present this volume in honor of François Bovon. To some of us he has been a mentor; to others a cherished colleague of many years. To all of us he has proved himself a trusted and dear friend. His dedication and service to Christian scholarship has only been surpassed by his devotion to his students, to his colleagues, and to his friends. His contributions to scholarship have been many, and they are enumerated in the preceding bibliography prepared by Elizabeth Busky (his assistant at Harvard). It is with our own contributions herein contained that we now honor him.

For him, every voice deserves a hearing! For François Bovon, there are no early Christian writings that are "out." In his many publications he has excelled in showing the importance of all ancient Christian literature for our understanding of early Christianity. In his writings he has refused to relegate any literary evidence into oblivion. He has not allowed the label of "apocrypha" or the stigma of "heresy" to erect barriers that blind us to the variety of early Christian expression. Whether his focus has been on Christian writings "inside" the New Testament (especially those of Luke, as in his great commentary on the third gospel) or on those that are "out" (e.g., his commentary with Bouvier and Amsler on the Acts of Philip, or his collection of studies on New Testament Traditions and Apocryphal Narratives), his method and purpose have always remained the same. Unafraid to cross boundaries or to transcend barriers, he has striven to explore new frontiers in his investigation of early Christianity.

His writings have also crossed the boundaries and barriers of language, nationality and religion. He has written several books and articles not only in...
his native French but also in German, Italian, Spanish, Greek, and English. His commentary on Luke, originally written in German for the Evangelisch-katholischer Kommentar zum Neuen Testament (an ecumenical effort by Protestant and Catholic scholars), has now been translated into French, Spanish, and English. He and Pierre Geoltrain brought together several noted scholars from different languages, nationalities, and backgrounds to produce the impressive Écrits apocryphes chrétiens,⁴ which will be the most exhaustive collection of Christian apocrypha yet assembled when it is complete. He even stepped over boundaries to bring the perspectives of two different religions together in his Nouvel âge et foi chrétienne: Un dialogue critique à partir du Nouveau Testament (Aubonne: Éditions du Moulin, 1992).

Before coming to Harvard University, François Bovon spent twenty-six years as a professor in the Divinity School at the famous University of Geneva, founded by John Calvin in 1559. From 1976 to 1979 he served as its dean, and he still holds the rank of honorary professor there. He became Frothingham Professor of the History of Religion at the Divinity School of Harvard University in 1993. His willingness to cross the ocean and to come to Harvard—to work through the barrier of teaching students in another language—has enabled him not only to interact with other scholars on a much broader scale internationally but also to share the riches of his knowledge of European biblical scholarship with those on this side of the Atlantic, thereby further building bridges and bonds toward the common goal of understanding and explaining early Christianity.

In appreciation of his work, we—his colleagues and students from both sides of the Atlantic—have reached across the ocean to join together in producing a variegated work highlighting not only the diversity in early Christianity itself but also the diversity in François Bovon’s own talents and scholarship. Like him, we have emphasized in these contributions the need for scholars to cross the boundaries of religious expression and to remove the barriers that still impede the study of early Christianity.

This volume naturally falls into six parts, each one emphasizing an important aspect of François Bovon’s own scholarship. In the first section (Early Christian Voices in Jesus Traditions), James M. Robinson, the unquestioned leader in the quest for \( Q \), explores the earliest theology of Jesus as it is exemplified in this gospel and how this theology was later altered in the gospel’s subsequent redaction. He is followed by his colleague of many years, Helmut Koester, who takes us on a different trajectory and provides us with another treasure from his storehouse of knowledge of ancient gospel narratives. Next Ron Cameron critiques the views of John Dominic Crossan and presents his own understanding of the relationship between the sayings in \( Q \) and those in the Gospel of Thomas. Harold Attridge, the Dean of Yale Divinity School, offers

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⁴ Écrits apocryphes chrétiens (ed. François Bovon and Pierre Geoltrain; Bibliotheque de la Pléiade 442; Paris: Gallimard, 1997).
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an insightful essay on the evocative nature of the intentional and ironical anonymity of the Fourth Gospel.

Ann Graham Brock opens the second part of this volume (Early Christian Voices in Lukan Traditions) with a valuable contribution on how the game of politics played an important role in the development of early Christian literature. She is followed by Christopher Matthews, who traces the occurrences of the “Hellenists” in Acts as Luke’s effort to link his own community to the “mother church” in Jerusalem. David Pao examines themes of concord and discord in the book of Acts, while Daniel Marguerat shows how Acts 8 can be viewed as a thematic paradigm for the entire work of Luke—Acts, and David Warren demonstrates how even the apparent inconsistencies in the outpouring of the Spirit within the narratives of Acts harmonize into a coherent argument intended by the author. Marianne Bonz concludes this section with her proposal that the Book of Acts is a deliberate revision of Paul’s theology.

In part three, we turn to consider the impact that early Christian movements had on the development of Christianity and its literature in various locales. Christine Thomas argues that we should view Montanism not so much as “the tombstone of the prophetic spirit . . . as the first in a series of conflicts” over how the New Testament should be interpreted. Using the healing of the blind man in John 9, Jean Zumstein shows how the Johannine School attempted to achieve unity amidst the conflicting diversity of early Christian groups. Ellen Aitken considers how Christianity from a single, rigorous perspective—asceticism— influenced one understanding of Jesus. Alain Desreumaux illustrates how Christianity and its literature developed in one specific locale: northern Syria and upper Mesopotamia. And Éric Junod shows how some Christians—in particular, Athanasius—tried to marginalize other segments of Christianity through the relegation of their writings.

The fourth section concerns the ancient interpretation—or perhaps better, reinterpretation or rereading—of early Christian writings. Like an intrepid explorer, François Bovon has spent his life in the pursuit of new discoveries and of new perspectives to further our understanding of the early Christians and their literature. Following his lead, Yves Tissot offers a new explanation of how the early Christian understanding of Christ’s resurrection developed. While he deals with Christian interpretation in the first century, Beverly Kienzle moves forward a millennium and finds important similarities in the “new and unheard-of” exegesis of Hildegard of Bingen. Yann Redalié returns to the first century in his research on the relationship between 1 and 2 Thessalonians. His essay considers whether the second letter can be understood as a “rereading” or reinterpretation of the first. We then turn to the second century, where Willy Rordorf discusses the symbolic interpretation of the Acts of Paul; Enrico Norelli does the same for the Ascension of Isaiah (and in doing so, critiques the conclusions of Jonathan Knight).

The largest section in the book, Part Five, is devoted to depictions, both rhetorical and iconical, of various motifs found in early Christian writings, and
especially those found in the Christian apocrypha. This is a topic very dear
to François Bovon’s heart, as seen in his own essay, “The Child and the
Beast.” As an aperitif for his larger work with David Cartledge, Keith Elliott
opens this section with a discussion of how various motifs in the Christian
apocrypha have influenced early Christian art, and vice-versa. Also concerned
with Christian art, John Herrmann and Anneties van den Hoek explain the
significance of “two men in white” along with other iconic motifs found on
early medieval Ascension lamps from North Africa. In the next essay, Karen
King turns to rhetorical motifs and shows how conceptual differences among
Christians living in the second century regarding their relationship with God
are still being replicated today by Christians living in the twenty-first century.
Dennis R. MacDonald traces the simile of the Holy Spirit as “a dove” back
to Homer, while similarly Jean-Daniel Kaestli seeks the origin of the “Fall of
Satan” myth. Stanley Jones treats the theme of the Christian teacher in the
Pseudo-Clementines, while Jean-Marc Prieur tracks the theme of the Cross through-
out the second century. Peter Vogt traces the symbolic interpretation of another
Christian motif, the allegory of “one bread from many grains,” from its first
appearance in the Didache early in the second century until the time of Luther
and Calvin in the Reformation.

The last section of the book, Early Christian Voices and Ancient Manuscripts,
emphasizes the importance of making accessible to scholars today those early
Christian writings still locked away in ancient manuscripts. For François Bovon,
this has been and still remains his greatest passion ever since he, along with
Bertrand Bouvier and Éric Junod, experienced the joy of discovering together
the Xenophontos manuscript of the Acts of Philip (Xenophontos 32) on Mt. Athos
and published it for the first time so that scholars could read now for them-
selves portions of this ancient work that have been lost for centuries. With
this very same purpose in mind, Frédéric Amsler and Bertrand Bouvier open
this section with a French translation of a hagiographical text, “The Miracle
of Michael the Archangel at Chonai,” and so provide modern scholars with
their look at this important ancient text. Next John Duffy plays detective in
trying to track down the curious history of an ancient and forgotten manu-
script at Harvard University. And then Françoise Morard presents the text of
an early Christian writing that has never been published before. In her editio
princeps, Morard provides us with the Coptic text, along with her French trans-
lation and notes, of a sermon on the Apostles and the Final Judgment. Finally,
Jean-Daniel Dubois demonstrates how much information can be gleaned from
a single letter, and through it we hear early Christian voices speak that have
been silent for centuries due to the religious prejudice and intolerance of their
own time.

5 François Bovon, “The Child and the Beast: Fighting Violence in Ancient Christianity,”
6 David R. Cartledge and J. Keith Elliott, Art and the Christian Apocrypha (London/New
In closing, the editors of this volume wish to express our deepest gratitude to Annewies van den Hoek (Lecturer in Greek and Latin at Harvard University, The Divinity School) and Éric Junod (Professor of Theology at the University of Lausanne) for their support and help in getting this project off the ground. Without them, this volume may never have seen the light of day. We also wish to thank Bertrand Bouvier (Honorary Professor in the Department of Mediterranean, Slavic, and Oriental Languages and Literature at the University of Geneva) and Frédéric Amsler (Maître d'enseignement et de recherche at the University of Geneva) for proofreading all of the French and Greek in our volume. Their unstinting eye and meticulous concern for detail have spared us all from many embarrassments, while their sacrificial and unselfish service bespeaks of their great love and affection for their colleague and friend of many years. I am also grateful to the faculty and staff at Heritage Christian University (Florence, Alabama)—especially to Cyndi White, Phyllis Underwood, and Larry Murdock—for their assistance in helping me to complete the indexes found at the end of this volume. Finally, on behalf of my fellow editors, I wish to thank Patrick H. Alexander (Publishing Director for Brill Academic Publishers in Boston) for his personal interest in this project. Without him and his efficient staff—especially Renee Ricker, the Production Editor—this volume would never have been completed on time.