PART ONE

GENERAL CONTEXT AND METHODOLOGY
CHAPTER ONE

THE PSEUDEPIGRAPHA IN CHRISTIANITY

[1.1] In autumn of 1975, I was asked to prepare a paper for the 1976 annual meeting of the Studiorum Novi Testamenti Societas (SNTS) at Duke University on “The Christianity of the Pseudepigrapha,” a topic closely related to my sabbatical project for 1975/76. After struggling with this assignment from a variety of perspectives, I finally decided to modify the title to “Christianity and the so-called Jewish Pseudepigrapha,” or more concisely, “The Pseudepigrapha in Christianity.” Thus I have chosen to deal less with precise details within particular pseudepigrapha, and more with questions of methodology that arise in the study of these writings.

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1 Special credit and appreciation are owed to John C. Reeves (then [1994] of Winthrop University, now [2008] University of North Carolina in Charlotte), whose patience and diligence in filling out my roughly outlined footnotes and submitting them for my final revision and/or approval made it possible for this more fully documented form of the essay to be included in the anthology that he has edited entitled Tracing the Threads: Studies in the Vitality of Jewish Pseudepigrapha (SBLEJL 6; Atlanta: Scholars 1994) 55–86. Any variations and additions in the notes of the electronic version, printed here, represent modifications subsequent to that March 1994 print version. The paragraph numbering represents an attempt to facilitate reference to the electronic version, in which normal hardcopy pagination (enclosed in double brackets, colored red in the electronic format) is less obvious. The footnotes in what follows have been significantly expanded, and no attempt is made to correlate their numbering with that of the 1994 print version.

2 This essay had rested uneasily in my files for more than 15 years, waiting for me to find/take time to annotate it! As the years passed, I considered simply rewriting and updating it. But now that it has been “dusted off” at long last, I have decided to leave the text basically as it was delivered in 1976, and to do all the significant updating in the notes. Otherwise, its original flavor and (at least to me) excitement will have been diluted and sometimes simply lost. Much relevant research has appeared in the intervening years, of which the footnotes attempt to give some notice. In various particulars, the essay does need to be rewritten today [1994] and periodically. But in its general thrust, its challenge to responsible scholarship still stands. In the footnotes, OTP refers to The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha (ed. James H. Charlesworth; 2 vols.; Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1983–85; see below, Chapter Six), and EJMI to Early Judaism and its Modern Interpreters (ed. R.A. Kraft and G.W.E. Nickelsburg; Philadelphia/Atlanta: Fortress/Scholars Press, 1986).