PART I

ANCIENT JUDAISM
I. What Labels are We Using?

Like many of the contributions to this volume, which at first was intended to be titled Palimpsests, the thinking behind this essay began with reference to the work of Gérard Genette who has used the term most provocatively. Although in codicology a palimpsest is simply a recycled manuscript in which the most recent text does not necessarily have any relationship to the text over which it is written, the term helpfully suggests how one text may lie on top of another text that has not been entirely erased. Genette used the term metaphorically to express how the text written on top was “literature of the second degree.”

Nevertheless, for the purposes of this study I have been on the quest for a more suitable term that without metaphor might describe something of the relationships between the texts of my concern. In relation to much of what is presented in the Dead Sea Scrolls, the Second Temple period Jewish collection of literature from the caves at and near Qumran on the northwest shore of the Dead Sea, my preferred term has become “hypertext.” This choice is indicated trivially by the spell-checker on my word-processing software. The spell-checker does not recognize intertext, paratext, peritext, epitext, metatext, cotext, transtext, architext, or hypotext, but it does seem to know what a hypertext is, suggesting that it knows, for example, of the relationship

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1 Professor Kurt Schubert was the leading Dead Sea Scrolls scholar of the first generation in Vienna and established the University of Vienna’s Institut für Judaistik in 1966; he kindly attended and commented upon the first lecture on the scrolls that I gave in Vienna in May 2005 and died shortly before the meeting of the Palimpsests symposium.