

Between Canonical and Apocryphal Texts

Processes of Reception, Rewriting, and Interpretation
in Early Judaism and Early Christianity

Edited by

Jörg Frey, Claire Clivaz, and Tobias Nicklas

in collaboration with

Jörg Röder

Mohr Siebeck

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JÖRG FREY, born 1962; 1996 Dr. theol.; 1998 Habilitation; since 2010 Professor for New Testament at the University of Zurich.

CLAIRE CLIVAZ, born 1971; 2007 PhD; since 2014 Invited Professor in Digital Humanities at the University of Lausanne; since 2015 Head of Digital Enhanced Learning at the Swiss Institute of Bioinformatics in Lausanne.

TOBIAS NICKLAS, born 1967; 2000 Dr. theol.; 2004 Habilitation; since 2007 Professor for Exegesis und Hermeneutics of the New Testament at the University of Regensburg.

JÖRG RÖDER, born 1980; since 2014 Researcher for the HyperNT Project (New Testament Studies), University of Basel.

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(According) To the Hebrews

An Apocryphal Gospel and a Canonical Letter Read in Egypt

Claire Clivaz

1. Introduction¹

Using New Testament writing as a starting point, specifically the *Epistle to the Hebrews* (Hebrews), this article proposes to cross-examine it together with the *Gospel according to the Hebrews*. Thus, from a perspective based on the history of reading, it is worth paying particular attention to the manuscripts of *Epistle to the Hebrews* as first witnesses to the readers' reactions, or as first echoes from scribe-readers. Such an approach has already been developed and used in previous publications, for example in an article where the triad of the "author-scribe-reader" centred on the work of the Luke-Acts was explored:

"Between the author and the readers stand the scribes, those who literally wrote and made the texts. When we speak about 'texts,' we are in fact referring to the work of the scribe who is, at one and the same time, the final author and a reader of considerable influence."²

This approach has been articulated as "through Ancient readership"³. If the study of Hebrews is an overcrowded field⁴, it is generally analysed from the

¹ All my gratitude is due to Harley Edwards, for the English proof-reading of this article.

² C. CLIVAZ, "Luke, Acts and the Ancient Readership: The Cultures of Author, Scribes and Readers in New Testament Exegesis", in *Rethinking the Unity and Reception of Luke and Acts (Religious Studies)*, ed. A. Gregory/K.C. Rowe (Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina Press, 2010), 153–171; here 154.

³ C. CLIVAZ, *L'ange et la sueur de sang (Lc 22,43–44) ou comment on pourrait bien encore écrire l'histoire*, BiTS 7 (Leuven: Peeters, 2010), part. 188–196; 195: "Je m'inscris dans une génération de chercheurs prêts à lire les textes non seulement dans leur contexte de production, mais aussi de réception. A mes yeux, la prise au sérieux de la réception des textes conduit en ce qui concerne le Nouveau Testament à une prise de conscience qui s'inscrit pour moi dans "la modestie" de l'historien d'aujourd'hui: nous lisons des textes dont le support matériel ne remonte pas en amont de la fin du deuxième siècle de notre ère. Autrement dit, nous étudions les textes du Nouveau Testament déjà lus, déjà reçus, déjà interprétés et modifiés, et non pas l'exemplaire tel que sorti de la plume des auteurs."

⁴ In the three last years, at least ten monographs on Hebrews have been published: J.C. CAL-AWAY, *The Sabbath and the Sanctuary. Access to God in the Letter to the Hebrews and its*

authors' perspectives, rather than from the scribes' and readers', particularly in regarding its manuscripts as a history of reading. Complete studies of Hebrews manuscripts are very rare⁵; some studies focus on a specific manuscript⁶, and there are several publications on specific variants⁷. Depending on the languages, the manuscript information on Hebrews is sometimes simply not

Priestly Context, WUNT 349 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2013); M.-L. HERMANN, *Die „hermeneutische Stunde“ des Hebräerbriefs. Schriftauslegung in Spannungsfeldern*, HBS 72 (Freiburg/Basel/Wien: Herder, 2013); A.L.B. PEELER, *You Are My Son. The Family of God in the Epistle to the Hebrews*, LNTS 486 (London et al.: Bloomsbury, 2014); B.C. SMALL, *The Characterization of Jesus in the Book of Hebrews*, BIS 128 (Leiden/Boston: Brill, 2014); J.I. GRIFITHS, *Hebrews and Divine Speech*, LNTS 507 (London et al.: Bloomsbury, 2014); J.A. WHITLARK, *Resisting Empire. Rethinking the Purpose of the Letter to “the Hebrews”*, LNTS 484 (London et al.: Bloomsbury, 2014); N.J. MOORE, *Repetition in Hebrews. Plurality and Singularity in the Letter to the Hebrews, Its Ancient Context, and the Early Church*, WUNT 388 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2015); J. COMPTON, *Psalm 110 and the Logic of Hebrews*, LNTS 537 (London et al.: Bloomsbury, 2015); O.J. FILTVEDT, *The Identity of God’s People and the Paradox of Hebrews*, WUNT 400 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2015); D. DOGNIN, *La foi de Jésus. Une lecture de la lettre aux Hébreux*, LiB 105 (Paris: Les Editions du Cerf, 2015).

⁵ Global studies of Hebrews manuscripts are particularly missing, but see F.W. BEARE, “The Text of the Epistle to the Hebrews in P46”, *JBL* 63 (1944), 379–396; F.F. BRUCE, “Textual Problems in the Epistle to the Hebrews”, in D.A. Black (ed.), *Scribes and Scripture. New Testament Essays in Honor of J. Harold Greenlee* (Winona Lake: Indiana, Eisenbrauns, 1992), 27–39; E. GÜTING, “The Methodological Contribution of Günther Zuntz to the Text of Hebrews”, *NT* 48/4 (2006), 359–378; J.R. ROYSE, “The Early Text of Paul (and Hebrews)”, in *The Early Text of the New Testament*, ed. C.E. Hill/M.J. Krueger (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 175–203; or an unpublished PhD by T. FINNEY, *The Ancient Witnesses of the Epistle to the Hebrews*, available online on Academia: https://www.academia.edu/2088754/THE_ANCIENT_WITNESSES_OF_THE_EPISTLE_TO_THE_HEBREWS (last accessed 02/18/17).

⁶ Some studies are focusing on a specific manuscript, see for example H.C. HOSKIER, *A Commentary on the Various Readings in the Text of the Epistle to the Hebrews in the Chester-Beatty Papyrus P46 (circa 200 A.D.)* (London: Bernard Quaritch, 1938); R.F. SCHLOSSNIKEL, *Der Brief an die Hebräer und das Corpus Paulinum. Eine linguistische ‚Bruchstelle‘ im Codex Claromontanus (Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale grec 107 + 107 A + 107 B) und ihre Bedeutung im Rahmen von Text- und Kanongeschichte*, VL.AGLB 20 (Freiburg i.Br.: Herder, 1991); A. PAPHOMAS, “A New Testimony to the Letter to the Hebrews”, *JGRChJ* 1 (2000), 18–24; G.J. STEYN, “The ending of Hebrews reconsidered”, *ZNW* 103/2 (2012), 235–253; M.J. KRUEGER, “The Date and Content of Antinoopolis 12 (0232)”, *NTS* 58/2 (2012), 254–271. H.-G. BETHGE, “Ein neu bekannt gewordener Papyrus-Codex mit Texten aus Paulus-Briefen. Ein Werkstattbericht”, *EChr* 4/1 (2013), 129–138.

⁷ The variant of He 2:9 has been particularly successful, see notably L. BLUMELL, “Vindob. G 42417 (= P116). Codex Fragment of the Epistle to the Hebrews 2:9–11 and 3:3–6 Reconsidered”, *ZPE* 117 (2009), 65–69; J.K. ELLIOTT, “Specific Variants”, in *New Testament Textual Criticism: The Application of Thoroughgoing Principles, Essays on Manuscripts and Textual Variation*, *Novum Testamentum*. Supplements (NT.S 137), Leiden/Boston, Brill, 2010, 211–232; B.D. EHRMAN, *The Orthodox Corruption of Scripture. The Effect of Early Christological*

registered, such as for the Armenian Zohrab version⁸, or available, such as for the Syriac version⁹, but not used in usual exegetical research. However, one point is clear: all of the thirteen most ancient Greek witnesses of Hebrews come from Egypt (papyri, parchments, ostraka), including two Oxyrhynchus papyri published in 2009, as P114 and P116¹⁰. The most ancient and famous example, P46, already mentions the title, Πρὸς Ἑβραίους¹¹, “to the Hebrews”, without characterizing it as a letter, an epistle, or a sermon. When we consider the amount of discussions around the literary genre of Hebrews¹², it is surely worth keeping firmly in mind this first manuscript observation.

Considering this writing from a scribe-reader perspective, it is worth reading the *Epistle to the Hebrews*, together with the almost homonymous *Gospel according to the Hebrews*. Indeed, both texts have been read early on in Egypt around Alexandria, and their titles, containing the term “Hebrews”, can at least

Controversies on the Text of the New Testament, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2011, 146–150.

⁸ See Y. ZOHRAPEAN (ed.), *Astowacašownc’ matean hin ew nor ktakaranac’* (Venise: St Lazar Press, 1805). This version has been used essentially in the Pauline letters, see M.-J. Lagrange (ed.), *Critique textuelle*, 2 vol. (Paris: Gabalda et Co, 1935), 348, 351, 459, and 527–528. See also the syncretical article by J.M. ALEXANIAN, “The Armenian Version of the New Testament”, in *The Text of the New Testament in Contemporary Research*, ed. B.D. Ehrman/M.W. Holmes (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995), 157–172.

⁹ See B. ALAND/A. JUCKEL (eds.), *Das Neue Testament in syrischer Überlieferung. II. Die paulinischen Briefe. Teil 3: 1./2. Thessalonicherbrief, 1./2. Timotheusbrief, Titusbrief, Philemonbrief und Hebräerbrief*, ANTF 32 (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2002).

¹⁰ For the complete list before P114 and P116 publication, see A. PPATHOMAS, “A new testimony to the Letter to the Hebrews” (note 6), 18, footnote 3.

¹¹ See notably P46, 01, 02; see recently S.C. MIMOUNI, “Le «grand prêtre» Jésus «à la manière de Melchisédech» dans l’Épître aux Hébreux”, *Annali di storia dell’esegesi* 33/1 (2016), 79–105; here 80: “Ce titre, figurant dans les plus anciens et meilleurs manuscrits, est attesté dans la tradition chrétienne dès la fin du IIe siècle comme l’indique le P46 qui est de cette époque.”

¹² Harold Attridge has argued for a sermon genre (H. ATTRIDGE, *The Epistle to the Hebrews. A Commentary on the Epistle to the Hebrews*, Hermeneia, [Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1989], part. 204–206). For a recent state of the art on the literary genre of Hebrews, see P. DE SALIS, “‘Aux Hébreux’, lettre ou épître?”, *Annali di storia dell’esegesi* 33/1 (2016), 15–29. De Salis adopts also the hypothesis of a homiletic writing, but referring essentially to French speaking authors, like Albert Vanhoye and recently Régis Burnet: “L’hypothèse de la finale épistolaire de *Aux Hébreux* comme addition alexandrine de la fin du IIe siècle – telle que proposée par Régis Burnet suite à une reconstitution et un examen rigoureux de l’histoire de sa réception – apporte à notre avis un éclairage substantiel dans ce sens. Hébreux serait “à l’origine une sorte d’homélie” destinée vraisemblablement à une communauté judéenne romaine autour des années 60” (26). One can only be surprised to not see mentioned in this synthesis article the work of G. Gelardini (see as summary: G. GELARDINI, “Hebrews, an Ancient Synagogue Homily for Tish be-Av: Its Function, Its Basis, Its Theological Interpretation”, in *Hebrews. Contemporary Methods – New Insights, Biblical Interpretation Series*, BIS 75, ed. G. Gelardini [Leiden/Boston, Brill, 2005], 107–127).

be related to their early scribes and/or readers, if not with certitude to their authors. Unfortunately, we have no manuscripts but only quotations from the *Gospel according to the Hebrews*¹³, so the name itself is something that came to us through Egyptian readers in the most ancient examples, and with no relation to the content of the quotations. Jörg Frey underlines it in the following manner:

“Die Bezeugung des Werks zuerst bei Clemens, dann bei Origenes und Didymus, weist auf eine Verbreitung des Hebräerevangeliums im ägyptischen Christentum hin. Der Titel des Werks sagt nur etwas über die Trägerkreise, aber nichts über die Sprache des Werks aus. Er verweist wohl auf griechischsprachige judenchristliche Kreise. Das wäre allerdings in Palästina kaum als ‚Hebräer‘ bezeichnet worden.”¹⁴

If such an opinion is largely accepted, one has to discuss a special proposal by Simon Mimouni who considers that a very early non-Egyptian reader, Irenaeus, quotes the *Gospel according to the Hebrews* in *Against Heresies* I,26,1. However, this quotation is explicitly related to the *Gospel according to the Ebionites* by Irenaeus himself. In 2006, Mimouni briefly justified this choice by a reference in a footnote to Harnack¹⁵. In his later 2013 article, he simply puts forth in a footnote: “L’Evangile selon les Ebionites mentionné est en réalité l’Evangile selon les Hébreux”¹⁶. Mimouni’s tendency is to consider all the fragments of three different Jewish-Christian Gospels together (*according to the Hebrews, the Ebionites, the Nazoreans*)¹⁷. The purpose of this current article requires to discuss here only this quotation by Irenaeus: all the other scholars tend to attribute it to the *Gospel according to the Ebionites*, following the

¹³ Klijn’s edition remains a milestone for the fragments of the *Gospel according to the Hebrews* study, A.F.J. KLIJN, *Jewish-Christian Gospel Tradition*, SVigChr 17 (Leiden: Brill, 1992). This inspiring work has been followed by numerous translations and works. One can refer here to the bibliographies proposed in overviews of the topic: in French, see S.C. MIMOUNI, *Les fragments évangéliques judéo-chrétiens “apocryphés”*. *Recherches et perspectives*, CRB 66 (Paris : J. Gabalda et Cie, Éditeurs, 2006), 21–45, and a 2013 summary: S.C. MIMOUNI/T. NICKLAS/R. BEYERS, “Les évangiles dits apocryphes”, in *Histoire de la littérature grecque chrétienne. 2. De Paul apôtre à Irénée de Lyon, Initiations aux Pères de l’Église (IPE)*, ed. B. Pouderon (Paris, Les Éditions du Cerf, 2013), 371–411, here 373–378. As recent reference work, see J. FREY “Die Fragmente des Hebräerevangeliums”, in *Antike christliche Apokryphen in deutscher Übersetzung, I. Band: Evangelien und Verwandtes. Teilband 1*, ed. C. Marksches/J. Schröter (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2012), 593–606; J. FREY, “Die Synopse zur Zuordnung der Fragmente zu Hebräer- und Nazoräerevangelium”, in *Antike christliche Apokryphen I* (note 13), 649–654.

¹⁴ FREY, “Die Fragmente des Hebräerevangeliums” (note 13), 597.

¹⁵ MIMOUNI, *Les fragments évangéliques judéo-chrétiens “apocryphés”* (note 13), 24, n. 5.

¹⁶ MIMOUNI/NICKLAS/BEYERS, “Les évangiles dits apocryphes” (note 13), 374, n. 1.

¹⁷ I criticized Mimouni’s perception of the Nazoreans in CLIVAZ, *L’ange et la sueur de sang* (note), 502–508.

Latin Father of the Church¹⁸. As Andrew Gregory summarizes it, “there is a widespread agreement that excerpts preserved in the writings of Clement of Alexandria, Origen and Didymus are to be attributed to the *Gospel according to the Hebrews*, and there is no reason to question this consensus”¹⁹. Consequently, I am joining the scholars who consider that all early known attestations of the *Gospel according to the Hebrews* come from Egypt, and that “our earliest access to its text is in the writings of Clement of Alexandria”²⁰.

Returning to the latter part of Jörg Frey’s statement, it could absolutely characterize the *Epistle according to the Hebrews* as well:

“Der Titel des Werks sagt nur etwas über die Trägerkreise, aber nichts über die Sprache des Werks aus. Er verweist wohl auf griechischsprachige judenchristliche Kreise. Das wäre allerdings in Palästina kaum als ‚Hebräer‘ bezeichnet worden.”²¹

However, the *Epistle according to the Hebrews* and the *Gospel according to the Hebrews* are usually not studied together.²² Even the act of reading the Hebrews in parallel with some other Christian or Jewish apocryphal texts remains uncommon²³, and Jörg Frey references Hebrews just once in a footnote to his pages about the *Gospel according to the Hebrews*²⁴. Only Simon Mimouni explicitly underlines – but without further comment – the common presence of

¹⁸ See for example C. MORESCHINI/E. NORELLI/M. ROUSSET (transl.), *Histoire de la littérature chrétienne antique grecque et latine. I. De Paul à l'ère de Constantin* (Genève: Labor et Fides, 2000), 83–85; J. FREY, “Das Ebionäerevangelium (Synopse)”, in *Antike christliche Apokryphen* (note 13), 621–622.

¹⁹ A. GREGORY, “Jewish-Christian Gospel Traditions and the New Testament”, in *Christian Apocrypha. Receptions of the New Testament in Ancient Christian Apocrypha*, NTP 26, ed. J.-M. Roessli/T. Nicklas (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht 2014), 41–59 (53).

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 53.

²¹ FREY, “Die Fragmente des Hebräerevangeliums” (note 13), 597.

²² For example, one can find no mention at all of the *Gospel according to the Hebrews* in these five recent monographs on Hebrews: C.A. RICHARDSON, *Pioneer and Perfecter of Faith. Jesus’ Faith as the Climax of Israel’s History in the Epistle to the Hebrews*, WUNT 338 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2012); J.A. BARNARD, *The Mysticism of Hebrews. Exploring the Role of Jewish Apocalyptic Mysticism in the Epistle to the Hebrews*, WUNT 331 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2012); CALAWAY, *The Sabbath and the Sanctuary* (2013; note 4); FILTVEDT, *The Identity* (2015; note 4); MOORE, *Repitition in Hebrews* (2015; note 4).

²³ Wray has crossed Hebrews with the *Gospel of the Truth* (see J.H. Wray, *Rest as a Theological Metaphor in the Epistle to the Hebrews and the Gospel of Truth. Early Christian Homiletics of Rest*, SBL.DS 166 [Atlanta, Scholars Press, 1998]). As for me, I crossed H 5:7 with the *Gospel of the Savior* and the Greek habit of the *iketia*, see C. CLIVAZ, “L’Évangile du Sauveur, He 5,7 et la prière de supplication: en quête d’autres traditions sur la prière au Mont des Oliviers”, *Apocrypha* 18 (2007), 109–137; C. CLIVAZ, “Heb 5.7, Jesus’ Prayer on the Mount of Olives and Jewish Christianity: Hearing Early Christian Voices in Canonical and Apocryphal Texts”, in *A Cloud of Witnesses. The Theology of Hebrews in its Ancient Context*, LNTS 387, ed. R. Bauckham et al. (London: T&T Clark, 2008), 187–209.

²⁴ FREY, “Die Fragmente des Hebräerevangeliums” (note 13), 599, n. 33.

the term “Hebrews” in both writings: “l’*Évangile selon les Hébreux* [...] – cet intitulé, soit dit en passant, rappelle évidemment celui de l’*Épître aux Hébreux* [...]”²⁵. Both Simon Mimouni and Graham Harvey²⁶ have provided definitions for the uses of the term “Hebrews” that open ways for further commentary on the common presence of this term in the two titles. In part 3 this point will be examined in more detail, “An Epistle Addressed to – and a Gospel According to – the ‘Others’, to the ‘Hebrews’”, where the following hypothesis will be presented: at least for certain the scribes/readers, Πρὸς Ἑβραίους designates a group of “others”, a group different from themselves.

Before such an examination, in part 2 it is worth considering why Hebrews and *the Gospel according to the Hebrews* are never examined together, not even from the perspective of the Egyptian history of reception and reading. Such a question is surely a good test case for the consideration of the “apocryphication” or *Apokryphisierung* concept, the main topic of a 2011 Zürich meeting that gave root to several articles of the present collection of essays. A chronological German understanding of *Apokryphisierung* has in all likelihood contributed to the avoidance of such a cross-reading of the epistle and the gospel. If the process is considered from a French perspective, with the term “apocryphisation” or “apocryphisé” in brackets, we recognize the influence of the scholarly point of view in the categorisation of writings, thus one is able to test new cross-readings among the diversity of the Ancient Christian literary texts. Such a turning point is manifested in the title of the present article that gathers together the titles of the two writings in an English wordplay: (*According*) to the Hebrews, a writing addressed to and another writing coming from the Hebrews, both read in Egypt in the 2nd century.

²⁵ MIMOUNI, *Les fragments évangéliques judéo-chrétiens “apocryphisés”* (note 13), 37; voir aussi MIMOUNI, “Le «grand prêtre» Jésus” (note 11), 80: “L’*Épître aux Hébreux*, un titre qui ne semble pas faire partie de l’œuvre et qui pourrait lui avoir été ajouté sans aucun appui explicite dans le texte, est un hapax parmi presque toutes les œuvres chrétiennes – on connaît seulement un *Évangile des Hébreux*, sans doute de la première moitié du 1^{er} siècle, qui n’est conservé de manière fragmentaire que dans des œuvres patristiques. Ce titre, figurant dans les plus anciens et meilleurs manuscrits, est attesté dans la tradition chrétienne dès la fin du II^e siècle comme l’indique le P46 qui est de cette époque”.

²⁶ See G. HARVEY, *The True Israel. Uses of the Names Jew, Hebrew and Israel in Ancient Jewish and Early Christian Literature*, AGAJU 35 (Leiden: Brill, 1996).

2. The German *Apokryphisierung* and the French “apocryphisé”: postures and research concerning *(According) To the Hebrews*

2.1 *Concepts, postures and identities*

The title of the aforementioned 2011 Zürich meeting was “Apokryphisierung – von kanonischen zu apokryphen Traditionen” and indicated its provenance as a New Testament scholarly point of view. New Testament scholars are indeed used to speaking about *Apokryphisierung* / apocryphication to describe a chronological phenomenon that transforms canonical texts into apocryphal texts. This process is often perceived as a depreciative phenomenon, at least at the historical level. Such an attitude is explicitly present in the 2003 study by Petri Luomanen on a logion attributed by Origen to the *Gospel according to the Hebrews*²⁷. Luomanen attempts to demonstrate that the logion on the Rich Man, attributed to this gospel in a Latin text by Origen, is a Judeo-Christian rewriting of the canonical gospels that would be clearly posterior to Matthew, Luke, and the Diatessaron. In so doing, he evokes the isolated testimony by Epiphanius that links the Diatessaron to the Gospel according to the Hebrews; his main methodological choice is to use the two sources theory to evaluate this logion. All his argumentative efforts serve to read this logion in a strict *Apokryphisierung* chronological line: he wants to demonstrate that “a sort of re-Judaization of gospel traditions [happens] in the eastern parts of Christendom [...]. The early gospel traditions about Jesus appear as a common stock of stories from which different Jewish-Christian/Christian writers took material and to which they contributed”²⁸.

A methodological problem appears here: arising in the 19th century, in the context of a printed culture that propounded that the texts could only be fixed objects²⁹, the two sources theory was constructed from the canonical gospels only, and from only three of them. It is too restrictive a base to consider the diversity of ancient Christian traditions/textualities on a large scale. To further enlighten this notion, one should contrast Luomanen’s approach to that of Enrico Norelli’s in his 2009 article on the *Gospel according to the Hebrews*. In contrast, he argues that the *Gospel according to the Hebrews* has to be considered as a parallel source to the canonical Gospel, and even as a potential source

²⁷ P. LUOMANEN, “Where Did Another Rich Man Come From? The Jewish-Christian Profile of the Story about a Rich Man in the ‘Gospel of the Hebrews’ (Origen, *Comm. in Matth.* 15.14)”, *VigChr* 57/3 (2003), 243–275.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 274.

²⁹ For a general background on this topic, see for example C. CLIVAZ, “Digital religion out of the book: the loss of the illusion of the “original text” and the notion of a “religion of the book””, in *Scripta Instituti Donneriani Aboensis 25: Digital Religion*, ed. B. Dahla/R. Illman, Turku: The Donner Institute for Research in Religious and Cultural History, 2013, 26–41.

for approaching the question of the historical Jesus³⁰. Norelli highlights four potential topics in such a perspective: the commandment of reciprocal love, the topic of the kingdom, the link between Jesus and the spirit in the context of ecstatic experiments and the figure of James, brother of the Lord. Interestingly, he considers Lk 10:18 – Jesus seeing Satan falling down from heaven – and the logion of the Gospel according to the Hebrews, in which the mother Holy Spirit takes Jesus and brings him to the Tabor³¹. This logion will be further examined in section 3.2.

We have here a stark contrast between a New Testament scholar – Petri Luomanen – defending the clear chronological anteriority of the canonical Gospels, and a historian – Enrico Norelli – proposing the *Gospel according to the Hebrews* as a potential approach to the figure of the historical Jesus. If Luomanen illustrates the German New Testament notion of *Apokryphisierung*, the Italo-Swiss scholar Norelli illustrates rather the use of “apocryphisé” in brackets³². The latter’s approach is widespread within French speaking historical research³³, and designates a way of reading or classifying certain Ancient Christian texts, rather than a writing process. Behind this divergence of perception stands a tension inherent to the Ancient Christian sources, between ancient traditions of “special teachings” and the recent modern list of apocryphal texts. On the one hand, one can count early New Testament passages evoking specific teachings of Jesus (Mk 13:3–4) or the “apocryphal” (hidden) wisdom of God (1 Co 2:7). On the other hand, as pointed out in a previous article, according to the work of Eric Junod³⁴, the list of the so-called “apocryphal” Christian texts was only established by Fabricius³⁵ in the 18th century. All New Testament scholars and historians of Early Christianity/Judaism are embedded in this long Western history of interpretation. There is no way to escape to it: one must attempt to be conscious of it, and to explain as objectively as possible the place from which we are expressing ourselves.

³⁰ See E. NORELLI, “Gesù in frammenti. Testi apocrifi di tipo evangelico conservati in modo frammentario,” in: *Un altro Gesù? I vangeli apocrifi, il Gesù storico e il cristianesimo delle origini*, *Oi christianoi* 9, ed. A. Guida/E. Norelli (Trapani : Il pozzo di Giacobbe 2009), 39–88 (81).

³¹ *Ibid.*, 82–83.

³² See as representative of this trend MIMOUNI, *Les fragments évangéliques judéo-chrétiens “apocryphisés”* (note 13), (2006).

³³ See as representative MIMOUNI, *Les fragments évangéliques judéo-chrétiens “apocryphisés”* (note13) (2006).

³⁴ See E. JUNOD, “‘Apocryphes du Nouveau Testament’: une appellation erronée et une collection artificielle; discussion de la nouvelle définition proposée par W. Schneemelcher”, *Apocrypha* 3 (1992), 17–46; here 22–23.

³⁵ See C. CLIVAZ, “Categories of Ancient Christian texts and writing materials: ‘Taking once again a fresh starting point’”, in *Ancient Worlds in Digital Culture*, *Digital Biblical Studies* 1, ed. C. Clivaz/P. Dilley/D. Hamidović, in coll. with A. Thromas (Leiden: Brill, 2016), 35–58; here 48–51.

Two metacritical remarks are worth noting about my own posture, since I am a New Testament scholar. First, I have noticed that, in keeping with this identity, I started this article with the *Epistle to the Hebrews*, then attempted to cross it with the *Gospel according to the Hebrews*. This starting point was assumed: it is impossible to start from nothing. As a counter point, it is worth noticing that Simon Mimouni, a historian, after having commented on the *Gospel according to the Hebrews* for years³⁶ has recently begun to study the *Epistle to the Hebrews* as an intriguing *terra incognita*. Whatever academic starting point we have, the important key is to keep an open, flexible mind. The common title I have proposed for both the writings – *(According) To the Hebrews* – tells of the hope to sometimes be able to go beyond the limits of a specific starting posture, whatever it is.

Secondly, as NT scholars, we are used to keeping the titles of the NT writings in upright type: the Epistle according to the Hebrews. We are conscious of the fact that they are chapters of a common book, the New Testament: the common cover matters more than the independence of the chapters in this scholarly subculture. In the submitted version of my 2007 PhD, I chose to put all the NT writings titles in italic characters, to go beyond this norm, but in the final printed version, it was decided to stay with the convention in order to avoid presenting an isolated position in my field. Nine years later, in this article, I decided to again put all the titles in italics, but ‘Hebrews’, the shortened title of the *Epistle to the Hebrews*, has been kept as *unforgettable* trace, in Derridean terms: Hebrews has come to me under the cover of New Testament culture.

In a parallel way, Simon Mimouni began to evolve in his writing habits: in his 2006 book, *Les fragments évangéliques judéo-chrétiens “apocryphés”*, he keeps the titles of the New Testament writings in upright type. But in his 2016 articles on the *Epistle to the Hebrews*, ten years later, all titles are in italics³⁷. Could such observations be representative of a possible evolution in a part of the field? Time will tell how this progresses, however, it is important to be conscious of such aspects at a meta-critical level. Such an awareness of the history of concepts in research is absolutely necessary to understanding why these Hebrews and the *Gospel according to the Hebrews* are usually never read or studied together. The background of Hellenistic wisdom will be used as a test case in this issue.

³⁶ See MIMOUNI, “Le «grand prêtre» (note 11); IBID., “L’Épître aux Hébreux est-elle un texte sacerdotal chrétien? Histoire, tradition et épistolarité”, *Annali di storia dell’esegesi* 33/1 (2016), 11–14.

³⁷ See the previous footnote.

2.2 Hebrews and the Gospel according to the Hebrews: Hellenistic wisdom background and the topic of the rest

As mentioned in part 1, the topic of the rest is present in the first attestation by Clement of Alexandria in the *Gospel according to the Hebrews*, a topic also present in an important passage of Hebrews (He 3:7–4:15). Nevertheless, Andrew Gregory does not make any connection to Hebrews when he comments on the quotation by Clement, and quotes Frey in the same sense³⁸. The problem is double here: first, Gregory is too dependent on the gospel literary genre to compare Clement's quotation to a potential letter; secondly, he thinks too much in terms of "contradiction" between the canonical sources and this gospel. He concludes that "it [is] difficult to draw any firm conclusions about the attitude of its author to the writings contained in the New Testament except to repeat that, if he were aware of them, he appears not to have felt greatly constrained by them"³⁹. As for Enrico Norelli, he stresses that the topic of the "rest" in this gospel, is common to several sources of Jewish-Hellenistic wisdom, such as Philo and the *Wisdom of Salomon*. This line of reasoning follows a description by Klijn, but neither Klijn, nor Norelli add the *Epistle to the Hebrews* to this group⁴⁰. Such a proximity between Hebrews and the Jewish-Hellenistic tradition is nevertheless already attested to by Irenaeus who quotes Hebrews with the *Wisdom of Salomon* according to Eusebius (*HistEccl* 5.26). As Mimouni highlights, the main problem in Hebrews interpretation is to consider it as strictly "frontier writing" instead of considering it as "an internal discussion in the Judean people of the Second Temple period"⁴¹.

Thus it remains difficult for the majority of New Testament exegetes to deal with the proximity of Hebrews to Egyptian Jewish-Hellenistic wisdom, notably Philo. For example, Spic considered that the Hebrews author was a "converted Philonian"⁴²; surprisingly, in his 2009 monograph Svendsen argues that the

³⁸ GREGORY, "Jewish-Christian Gospel" (note 19), 53 and 56.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 57.

⁴⁰ See KLIJN, *Jewish-Christian Gospel Tradition* (note 13), 51; NORELLI, "Gesù in frammenti" (note 30), 69–70.

⁴¹ MIMOUNI, "L'Épître aux Hébreux est-elle un texte sacerdotal chrétien?" (note 36), 12: "Ainsi, le principal problème dans l'interprétation et dans la compréhension de l'Épître aux Hébreux repose sur une volonté, consciente ou inconsciente, d'en faire un écrit à la frontière ou érigeant une frontière alors que, paradoxalement, il n'existe pas encore, du moins à cette époque, de frontière entre le "judaïsme" et le "christianisme" ou, en d'autres termes, entre les communautés judéennes chrétiennes et judéennes non chrétiennes. L'Épître aux Hébreux ne peut alors être comprise que comme une discussion interne au peuple judéen de la période du Second Temple."

⁴² See C. SPICQ, *L'Épître aux Hébreux*, Etudes bibliques, vol. 1 (Paris: Gabalda, 1952), 111; Barret was strongly opposed to this point of view, see C.K. BARRETT, "The Eschatology of the

Hebrews author uses the Philonian allegory but to “denigrate Judaism. [...] Philo and the author of Hebrews would have agreed on practically nothing”⁴³. Is it really necessary to domesticate in such a way, echoes to the Philonian voice in the New Testament canon, either by integration (conversion) or by an opposition? Modern exegetes seem here to reproduce the judgment of the majority of Christianity at the end of the second century: this epistle is a text addressed to another group – not to “us”, but to “the Hebrews”. So Hebrews was integrated as a text addressed to the “others” even if it stands as an internal discussion, as Mimouni rightly pointed out. I will also argue that the title of *the Gospel according to the Hebrews* signals that the people who have transmitted quotations of it considered this text as belonging to another group – not to “us”, but to “the Hebrews”. Let’s consider these titles from a scribe/reader point of view, assuming the fact that they tell us with more certitude something about the early readers than about the milieu of production. It remains to be seen whether data supports the following hypothesis: to entitle a text *To the Hebrews* or *According to the Hebrews* would mean that people, scribes or readers, who gave these titles did not consider themselves as *Hebrews*.

3. An Epistle Addressed to – and a Gospel According to – the “Others”, to the “Hebrews”

3.1 *The Epistle to the Hebrews*

Before the arrival of digital culture, very scant information was available to scholars regarding the evidence of the title of the *Epistle to the Hebrews*. If one looks at the NA28, no indication is given in the apparatus concerning the title. Before the opening of the *New Testament Virtual Room of Manuscripts*⁴⁴, one could for example consult Karl Jaros’ monograph⁴⁵. Now, everyone can look at the *subscriptio* of P46 online and see how ancient the title Πρὸς Ἑβραίους is. At the same time, nobody hesitates to qualify this title as a later addition, because we have no other mention of Ἑβραῖος in the writing. As we have seen, Ἑβραῖος is also not mentioned in the few quotations we have from the *Gospel*

Epistle to the Hebrews”, in *The Background of the New Testament and Its Eschatology, Festschrift for C.H. Dodd*, ed. W.D. Davies/D. Daube (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1956), 363–393.

⁴³ S.N. SVENDSEN, *Allegory Transformed. The Appropriation of Philonic Hermeneutics in the Letter to the Hebrews*, WUNT 269 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2009), 247 and 248.

⁴⁴ <http://ntvmr.uni-muenster.de> (last accessed 02/18/17).

⁴⁵ K. JAROS (ed.), *Das Neue Testament nach den ältesten griechischen Handschriften. Die handschriftliche griechische Überlieferung des Neuen Testaments vor Codex Sinaiticus und Codex Vaticanus*, (Ruhpolding/Mainz/Wien/Würzburg: Verlag Franz Philipp Rutzen / Echter Verlag, 2006).

according to the Hebrews. Ἑβραῖος is a very seldom used term in the entire New Testament: it is used eleven times in relation to a linguistic question, notably in the *Gospel according to John*; where it is used three times; it is also used in reference to the designation of a group, in Ac 6.1, in 2 Co 11,2 and Phil 3,5: in Acts, it probably corresponds also to a linguistic group. By Paul, it corresponds to an argument of loyalty and authenticity, as Graham Harvey underlines⁴⁶.

In his inquiry on the name “Hebrew” at the beginning of the common era, Harvey puts forth that it can have both meanings, a linguistic one but also the meaning of loyalty, authenticity and faithfulness. For example, the inscriptions found on synagogues in Rome and Corinth reflect both meanings⁴⁷. The sense of faithfulness to tradition appears only in the second century before CE: “these associations are highlighted by the proximity of foreigners and the persecution they inflict on those who will not compromise or assimilate”⁴⁸. Such a notion is notably used by Josephus, where “Hebrews” is “a label for those related to the ‘good’ ancestors and ancestral traditions”⁴⁹; as it is in the sense of the Pauline affirmation in Phil 3,5: Ἑβραῖος ἐξ Ἑβραίων. As Mimouni explains, when religious conflict happens inside of the Judean world, sometimes the innovators affirm themselves as “Hebrews” to be distinguished from the excluded people (see Phil 3:5)⁵⁰. Consequently, the title Πρὸς Ἑβραίους cannot be limited to the Judean community in Rome, and has to be understood in the new meaning of *Hebrews* that existed from the 1st century CE according to Mimouni: “the Hebrew terminology is often used in polemics as auto-designation, by those who want to change the tradition or impose a tradition instead of another”⁵¹.

Since Ἑβραῖος is almost absent in Qumran and in the New Testament, the title Πρὸς Ἑβραίους is striking. Based on Harvey’ and Mimouni’s remarks, I hypothesise that, at least for the scribes/readers, Πρὸς Ἑβραίους designates a group of “others”, a group different from themselves. This hypothesis can be demonstrated in three steps. Firstly, we have echoes from a period preceding the moment where the epistle was entitled *To the Hebrews*, in *1 Clement*. It has

⁴⁶ See HARVEY, *The True Israel* (note 26), 130.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 146.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 118–119.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 129.

⁵⁰ MIMOUNI, “Le «grand prêtre» Jésus” (note 11), 81: “Il est à observer que dans les conflits religieux à l’intérieur du monde judéen, les innovateurs se donnent parfois comme étant dans la tradition par rapport à d’autres qui se voient exclus: c’est ainsi qu’ils se proclament souvent comme Hébreux. C’est le cas des chrétiens et notamment de Paul de Tarse qui, par deux fois (2 Co 11,22; Ph 3,5), se déclare “Hébreu”: il utilise, en effet, dans ses lettres ce vocable, avec une perspective rhétorique, afin de faire valoir ses origines qui sont ainsi irréprochables car pleinement judéennes et pleinement dans la tradition”.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 81; my English translation.

been argued in a previous study that *1 Clement* is not quoting Hebrews but uses a common source because both texts offer several opposing points of view. They differ on the usages of the title “high priest”; *1 Clement* does not evoke Melchisedek but gives a double genealogy to Jesus – Levi and Judas – to the contrary of He 7:11–12; both texts also diverge on repentance, which is not possible for those who have fallen in He 6:4–6 but is still possible in *1 Clem* 8:1–5⁵². These fundamental divergences introduce a more complex literary schema of interdependence and confirm the use of a common source, rather than a quotation of Hebrews by *1 Clement*. Later, by around 140 CE, the situation already evolved in the *Pastor of Hermas*: the point of view of Hebrews – no repentance for those who have fallen – is related here to “some teachers” (Mand. 4:3). It is presented as a minor point of view included in Hermas’ milieu.

Secondly: in the last third of the second century, the situation was evolving. Indeed, Irenaeus, Tertullian and Clement of Alexandria speak about the *Epistle to the Hebrews*, as does the P⁴⁶ (dated around 200). This designation deeply influences their perception of the epistle, notably the impact of the “we” that appears in He 1:2, then in He 2.1: “Therefore we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things that were heard, lest haply we drift away from them”. The attribution of a title mentioning another group, the Hebrews, introduces a tension between this “we” and certain readers in Egypt: who is this “we” if the title is *To the Hebrews*? Interestingly, P46 tries to diminish this tension by adding ΗΜΩΝ above ΠΑΤΡΑΚΙΝ in He 1:1⁵³. Thus, in Egypt around 200, a scribe/reader wanted to affirm the “fathers” as “ours” in this writing addressed to the Hebrews: the proximity to the addressees is at stake here. Another early Egyptian papyrus, the P12, shows the same variation. This small documentary papyrus written between 264 and 282 CE and sent from Rome to the Arsinoite nome, has been fully studied in a previous article⁵⁴. He 1:1 has been copied in the margin on the top of the document. So, in the Arsinoite nome, in the third century, another scribe/reader transmitted a version that accentuated the proximity of the addressees to Hebrews by speaking about “our fathers” in He 1:1⁵⁵.

⁵² See CLIVAZ, “Heb 5.7, Jesus’ Prayer on the Mount of Olives and Jewish Christianity” (note 23), 207.

⁵³ See JAROS, *Das Neue Testament* (note 45), 1240, or <http://ntvmr.uni-muenster.de/manuscript-workspace> (last accessed 02/18/17).

⁵⁴ C. CLIVAZ, “The New Testament at the Time of the Egyptian Papyri. Reflections Based on P¹², P⁷⁵ and P¹²⁶ (Amh. 3b, Bod. XIV–XV and PSI 1497)”, in *Reading New Testament Papyri in Context – Lire les papyrus du Nouveau Testament dans leur contexte*, BETL 242, ed. C. Clivaz/J. Zumstein, with J. Read-Heimerdinger and J. Paik (Leuven: Peeters, 2011), 15–55; here 45–51.

⁵⁵ See JAROS, *Das Neue Testament* (note 45), 4389–4391, or <http://ntvmr.uni-muenster.de/manuscript-workspace> (last accessed 02/18/17).

Egypt has provided two early attestations that these “Hebrews fathers” were considered “ours” by some people or communities.

P46 and P12 offer such important clues to confirming that identity is at stake between diverse groups through the title *To the Hebrews*. Moreover, another small fragment of papyrus, P126, shows that Hebrews often changes place in the manuscripts of the NT letters. The number at the top of the recto in P126 indicates a place for Hebrews among the Pauline letters not attested to in any other manuscript⁵⁶, just like the minuscule 2892⁵⁷. In the Codex Vaticanus, one finds for example Hebrews after Galatians, as Bruce Metzger pointed out⁵⁸. So, P126 is a useful reminder that one ought not to overestimate the significance of the specific place of Hebrews in P46, as Clare Rothschild did: she uses this element to consider Hebrews as deliberately composed as a Pauline forgery and put after Romans. Unfortunately, she was apparently not paying attention to Metzger’s remarks on Vaticanus and the place of Hebrews⁵⁹. Moreover, if P46 puts Hebrews among the Pauline letters, it does not present it as written by Paul. One can say that the presentation of Hebrews in P46 is consistent with the description given by Clement of Alexandria (Eusebius, *HE* 6,14.3–4):

But [Clement] says that the words, ‘Paul the Apostle’, were probably not prefixed, because, in sending it to the Hebrews, who were prejudiced and suspicious of him, he wisely did not wish to repel them at the very beginning by giving his name. Further on he says: “But now, as the blessed presbyter said, since the Lord being the apostle of the Almighty, was sent to the Hebrews, Paul, as sent to the Gentiles, on account of his modesty did not subscribe himself an apostle of the Hebrews, through respect for the Lord, and because being a herald and apostle of the Gentiles he wrote to the Hebrews out of his superabundance.”⁶⁰

According to Clare Rothschild, this passage shows that “Clement evidently knows the tradition of Pauline authorship of Hebrews to be very old.”⁶¹ On the contrary, Clement clearly attests to the fact that Hebrews is still an anonymous letter at the end of the second century. “The blessed presbyter” to whom he refers has to make huge interpretative efforts to justify why Paul did not put his name in this letter. During Clement’s time, Hebrews was known as a text

⁵⁶ See C. CLIVAZ “A New NT Papyrus: P126 (PSI 1497)”, *EChr* 1 (2010), 156–160; here 157.

⁵⁷ For a description of the double place of Hebrews in 2892 (VK 908), see J. HARGIS, “Two New Manuscripts in One: VK 908”, *TC Notes archives*, 27/12/2008; <http://www.csntm.org/TCNotes/Archive/TwoNewManuscriptsInOne> (last accessed 02/18/17).

⁵⁸ B.M. METZGER, *A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament* (Stuttgart: Dt. Bibelgesellschaft, USA: United Bible Society, 2007), 591–592; here 591, n. 2.

⁵⁹ See C.K. ROTHSCHILD, *Hebrews as Pseudepigraphon. The History and Significance of the Pauline Attribution of Hebrews*, WUNT 235 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2009), 146, note 118. A careful reading of Metzger’s information, together with P126 and 2892, re-opens the debate.

⁶⁰ Eusebius, *HE* 6,14.3–4; translation: *NPNF*², vol. 1, cha XIV.

⁶¹ ROTHSCHILD, *Hebrews as Pseudepigraphon* (note 59), 5, n. 15.

without an author's name and the claim of Pauline heritage or relationship seems artificial and is difficult to defend. Origen transmits traditions going in the same direction: Hebrews' verbal style is not rude like the language of the apostle; Clement of Rome or Luke could have written it⁶². He 13:20–25, often perceived as “Pauline” by the modern exegesis, can absolutely not be used as argument here.

In the testimony of Clement of Alexandria, we find the third step in the confirmation of our hypothesis: the title *To the Hebrews* is to be understood as designating *the others*, an external group, in other words: “the Hebrews, who were prejudiced and suspicious of him” (quoted above). For Clement and the “blessed presbyter”, the so-called Hebrews are perceived as “the others”, whereas in P46 and P12 they are referred to as “our fathers”. Taking all the traces of the early readers together shows us that the identity of the Hebrews addressees is really at stake for the early Christians, who themselves consider as belonging to “them” or not. If we focus on only the content of the epistle, we can observe that this “we” is not limited to a sociological group: in He 5:9, the people for whom Jesus is praying are simply defined as “those who are obedient”; in He 6:18, the “we” is composed of those “who find refuge in God”. The concept here is very close from a Philonian perspective: the category of the “refugee in God”, or the “suppliant”, draws a frontier between the dead and the living (see *De fuga et inventione* 56). Depending on the political circumstances of Philo's life, the “living people” category was more or less open, sometimes quite universal, sometimes represented by the Judean people, like in the *Legatio ad Caium* 3, as has been demonstrated⁶³. Against Svendsen⁶⁴, one can argue here in favour of a common point between Philo and Hebrews regarding the status of the refugee in God: it is an open category that does not fit with a constant or clear sociological definition⁶⁵.

This flexible categorisation explains the diversity of early readings of the identity of Πρὸς Ἑβραίους: Clement of Alexandria refers to a tradition considering “the Hebrews” as “prejudiced and suspicious of [Paul]”, whereas the scribes/readers of P46 and P12 were trying to reintroduce a proximity between the readers and the addressees by calling these fathers “ours”. To conclude, we

⁶² See Eusebius, *HE* 6,25.11–14.

⁶³ See CLIVAZ, “L'Évangile du Sauveur” (note 23), 127.

⁶⁴ See SVENDSEN, *Allegory Transformed* (note 43), notably 248.

⁶⁵ See CLIVAZ, “L'Évangile du Sauveur” (note 23), 127: “Si la catégorie des réfugiés et suppliants est représentée de façon exemplaire par les Lévites pour Philon, elle déborde aussi largement cette catégorie, puisqu'il considère également les veuves, les orphelins et les prosélytes comme le type des suppliants. Par extension, ce sont les âmes suppliantes qui trouvent la voie royale pour parvenir à la sagesse, et la capacité à se réfugier auprès de Dieu crée une ligne de partage entre les ‘vivants’ et les ‘morts’: ‘car Moïse sait que seuls sont vivants ceux qui se réfugient auprès de Dieu et se font Ses suppliants, les autres sont morts’ (*De fuga et inventione* 56)”.

can say that the perception of the distance to the “Hebrews” can vary in Egypt, depending on times and milieu, but also on the political events, such as the Jewish war, the Bar Kochba revolt, or following persecutions and problems. Similarly, we can discern diverse points of view about the *Gospel according to the Hebrews*, even among the Christian writers. “Others” or not, that is the question.

3.2 *The Gospel according to the Hebrews*

Unfortunately we have no manuscript of the *Gospel according to the Hebrews*. Thus, early readings cannot be cross-examined with manuscripts and scribes’ data, as has been done for Hebrews. However, reading the evidence from Clement of Alexandria and Origen, we can see that a historical evolution between both of them regarding the perception of this group, the “Hebrews”. Clement offers only one clear quotation from this Gospel (*Strom* II,IX,45,5) and an allusion to a similar logion (*Strom* V,XIV,96,3), which attests to the idea that at his time, this logion was probably circulating in different forms and texts. In the quotation, Clement simply evokes this writing, as it was similar to any other Christian text⁶⁶: “As it is also written in the *Gospel according to the Hebrews*: ‘He who marvels king and he who marvels should be king and who is king shall rest’” (*Strom* II,IX,45,5)⁶⁷. Origen however, needs to add a clause of acceptance, when he refers twice, to this gospel: “if somebody accepts the *Gospel according to the Hebrews* ...” (*comm. in Ioh* II,12; *in Jer* XV,4)⁶⁸. Why this difference?

First, Clement has a very flexible relationship to what are considered Christian Scriptures: he is able to give special recognition to the canonical Acts by simply calling them “the Acts” (*Strom.* I.23,153,3; I.23,154,1; VI.8.63.5.), and he also frequently refers to traditions present in non-canonical Acts⁶⁹. Secondly, as Bogdan Bucur masterfully demonstrated in a 2006 article, Clement was able to use several Judean traditions from the Second Temple thanks to the teaching of some “elders” or *mustikai*, mentioned in the *Hypotyposes*, the *Abstracts of Theodotus*, the *Eclogae Propheticae*, and the *Adumbrationes*⁷⁰.

⁶⁶ Didymus has the same attitude than Clement, see FREY, “Die Fragmente des Hebräerevangeliums” (note 13), 604.

⁶⁷ GREGORY, “Jewish-Christian Gospel” (note 19), 53, and FREY, “Die Fragmente des Hebräerevangeliums” (note 13), 603.

⁶⁸ GREGORY, *ibid.*, 54 and FREY, *ibid.*, 603.

⁶⁹ See C. CLIVAZ, “Reading Luke-Acts in Alexandria in the Second Century: from Clement to the Shadow of Apollos”, in *Reading Acts in the Second Century*, ed. C.R. Dupertuis/T. Penner (Durham: Acmen Publishing, 2013), 209–223.

⁷⁰ See B.G. BUCUR, “The ‘Other Clement’ of Alexandria: Cosmic Hierarchy and Interiorized Apocalypticism”, *VC* 60 (2006), 251–268; here 252.

When Clement speaks about a “secret tradition”⁷¹, it could mean, according to Bucur, “contemporaneous rabbinic circles and initiation to the mystic *ma’asse bereshit* (‘what belongs to the creation), and initiation to the mysteries of the divine trone (*ma’asse merkavah*), initiations led on the basis of the exegesis of key-texts in Genesis and Ezechiel”⁷². When Bucur enounces such ideas, representing a switch in the classical perception of Clement, he has gathered them together under the label “the ‘other Clement’”, a terminology already absent from the title of his 2009 monograph⁷³. The “other” terminology is necessary in research at a meta-critical level, to try to overcome fixed categories that prevent the grasping of the historical flexibility of ideas at the second century CE in Egypt. If Bucur is right by claiming that Clement was actually immersed in such circles and traditions, the *Gospel according to the Hebrews* was for him indeed a reference among the others, not more special than the non-canonical Acts, or the diverse ancient Christian oral traditions.

Bucur’s presentation of Clement’s milieu is convergent with Mimouni’s proposal about the *Epistle according to the Hebrews* – to consider it as “an internal discussion in the Judean people of the Second Temple period” rather than as frontier writing⁷⁴. We could say exactly the same for the *Gospel according to the Hebrews*, considering Clement’s “elders”, or *mystikai*, as figures belonging to his world, rather as to a foreign world. Clement does not express feelings of distance from the *Gospel according to the Hebrews*; the scribes/readers of P46 and P12 were trying to get closer to the “Hebrews”, by calling their fathers “our fathers”. It is not possible to draw any conclusion about the proximity between Πρὸς Ἑβραίων and the title of the apocryphal gospel. However, what we can usefully compare here is a similar process among the ancient Christian readers: depending on their background, they consider themselves as closer or further from the “Hebrews”. The Hebrews are more or less “others” for them.

From the present evidence, Origen assumes more distance from the “Hebrews”, in comparison to Clement. Whereas Clement was speaking about “elders” and secret traditions, Origen speaks about his “Hebrew master”⁷⁵, a mas-

⁷¹ See C. MORESCHINI/E. NORELLI/M. ROUSSET, *Histoire de la Littérature chrétienne ancienne grecque et latine* (note 18), 299.

⁷² BUCUR, “The ‘Other Clement’ of Alexandria” (note 70), 253.

⁷³ B.G. BUCUR, *Angelomorphic Pneumatology. Clement of Alexandria and Other Early Christian Witnesses*, SVigChr 95 (Leiden/Boston, Brill, 2009).

⁷⁴ MIMOUNI, “L’Épître aux Hébreux est-elle un texte sacerdotal *chrétien*?” (note 36), 12.

⁷⁵ See for example Origen, *Hom. Num.* 13,5; *Tract. Princ.* I,3,4; G. DORIVAL, “Origène, témoin des textes de l’Ancien Testament”, in *Lectures et relectures de la Bible. Festschrift – M. Bogaert*, BETHL CXLIV, ed. J.-M. Auwers/A. Wénin (Leuven: Leuven University Press/Uitgeverij Peeters, 1999), 351–366; here 362–366; S. MIMOUNI, “A la recherche de la communauté chrétienne d’Alexandrie aux Ier-IIème siècles”, in *Origeniana Octava. Origen*

ter coming thus from another group. Consequently, it is not surprising that Origen adds this clause of precaution evoking the apocryphal gospel: “if one recognizes the *Gospel according to the Hebrews* ...” For him, this writing has become frontier writing, whereas for Clement, it still belonged to his internal heritage. One century later, Eusebius presents the next step of the evolution of this inside/outside perception of the “Hebrews”: for him, this term designates people who recognize Christ, or not (*HE* III,25,5). In other words, “Hebrews” can be close “others” or absolute “others”; the *Gospel according to the Hebrews* for Eusebius is related to the former.

This article’s purpose was to underline that an attentive reading of the manuscripts of Hebrews and of the early Christian witnesses to Hebrews and the *Gospel according to the Hebrews* allows one to avoid opposing these texts, or to neglect one of them. It makes it possible to read them as not coming from the same production source but rather as they were read in their earliest place of reception: Egypt in 2nd and 3rd centuries. They attest to the diverse understandings of the “Hebrews” label among early readers feeling themselves closer to or further away from this group. This methodological approach is based on the manuscripts and evidence we currently have; we have no access to versions of Hebrews or the *Gospel according to the Hebrews* beyond their earliest Egyptian readers. Thus, one can only comment on and study the documents available.

and the *Alexandrian Tradition*, BEThL CLXIV, vol. I, ed. L. Perrone et al. (Louvain: University Press, 2003), 137–163; here 161.