

Preface

The following text emerged from a public symposium hosted by the Department for the Study of Religion at the University of Toronto on March 7, 2003. The symposium, entitled, "Apocalypticism, Anti-Semitism, and the Historical Jesus: Subtexts in Criticism," was organized by Professor John S. Kloppenborg, and underwritten by the Chancellor Jackman Program for the Arts at the University of Toronto. Having been invited to produce a short paper dealing with scholarly representations of the Judaism of the historical Jesus for this symposium, I proceeded to write 129 pages on the topic, ranging from nineteenth-century anti-Semites to contemporary battles over the value of apocryphal texts, and still felt that my discussion was incomplete and under-documented. Even factoring in my own tendency to verbal excess, the issue was obviously one that could hardly be contained in an article-length paper. A short book on the subject seemed appropriate, given the wide range of issues implicated in the Judaism of Jesus, and the massive amount of scholarly output touching on this topic. I am grateful to Russell McCutcheon for inviting me to include this manuscript in his new series on "Religion in Culture: Studies in Social Contest and Construction." I could not think of a more appropriate home for this text.

I presented a vastly abbreviated version of this study at the Jackman symposium at the University of Toronto, on March 7, 2003, entitled, "How Shall we Save our Souls? The Cipher Judaism in Contemporary Historical Jesus Scholarship," and circulated an early draft of the manuscript to my fellow participants in the symposium. All of the papers presented at that symposium will be appearing as a special issue of the *Journal for the Study of the Historical Jesus*. A short version of my paper was also presented to the Saskatoon Theological Union Graduate Studies Seminar on February 13, 2004, under the title, "Subtexts in Scholarship: Historical Jesus Research and the Construction of Judaism." I wish to thank all those who have given me feedback on the addresses based on this work, and especially my fellow presenters at the Jackman symposium: Dale C. Allison, Paula Fredriksen, John S. Kloppenborg, Amy-Jill Levine, John W. Marshall, and Robert J. Miller. In addition to being first-rate scholars, these individuals are without exception also engaging and enjoyable people, and it was a pleasure to get to know them, or to get to know them better, as the case may be.

An unedited draft of the entirety of chapters 2–4 was circulated "unofficially" to a number of participants in the Society of Biblical Literature's seminar on "Ancient Myths and Modern Theories of Christian Origins," namely Ron Cameron, Barry Crawford, Burton Mack, and Merrill Miller. I wish to thank all four of them for their feedback and encouragement.

Indeed, this seminar has been my intellectual “home away from home” for the last six or seven years, and has provided an excellent forum for creative discussion of ancient Christianity, and so my appreciation extends to the entire group, whose papers and deliberations have influenced my thinking more than I would have thought possible. John S. Kloppenborg is owed particular thanks for inviting me to the conference that ultimately led to this manuscript, as are the graduate students and faculty members in the Department of Religious Studies at the University of Regina, who provide an ideal intellectual environment in which to think about and study religion. And, as always, my boundless thanks go out to Dr. Darlene Juschka—comrade-in-arms, rabble-rouser extraordinaire, indispensable intellectual influence, terrific friend.

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