This is the third volume of Tony Burke’s much-acclaimed *New Testament Apocrypha*, in which he and a team of collaborators continue to publish the vast diversity of Christian Scripture outside of the traditional canon (the first volume appeared in 2016). The new collection offers writings in Greek, Church Slavic, Old English, Coptic, and others and spans fifteen centuries, from the formation of the canonical New Testament to the high Middle Ages. The translations offered here represent some of the least-studied apocryphal texts, many of which have not previously received an English translation or a critical edition. Among the latter are The Martyrdom of Zechariah, The Decapitation of John the Forerunner, The Birth of John, The Revelation about the Lord’s Prayer, and The Dialogue of Mary and Christ on the Departure of the Soul. Each text is accompanied with an introduction, bibliography and notes.

The writings are divided into four categories, thus following a traditional division. The sections and their texts and translators are as follows: (1) Gospels and Related Traditions of New Testament Figures: The Hospitality and Perfume of the Bandit, by Mark G. Bilby; The Gospel of the Twelve, by James Toma; The Dialogue of Jesus and the Devil, by Chance E. Bonar and Slavomir Čéplô; The Story of the Image of Edessa, by Nathan J. Hardy; The Dream of the Rood, by Alexander D’Alisera and Samuel Osborn; The Eremitic Life of Mary Magdalene, by Brandon W. Hawk; The Martyrdom of Zechariah, by Tony Burke and Sarah Veale; The Decapitation of John the Forerunner, by Tony Burke; (2) Apocryphal Acts and Related Traditions: The Acts of Andrew and Paul, by Christian H.

A word has to be said about the terminology apocrypha and (non-)canonical, a question already elaborated upon in detail in the introduction to volume 1 (xx–xlvi) and as such going back to M. R. James’s 1924 collection. Despite the many excellent arguments offered there, of which the main argument is that the term had already been used extensively before (by Migne, James, Hennecke, Schneemelcher, Elliott, Marksches, and many others), the term remains problematic. To call writings from the Middles Ages New Testament apocrypha and noncanonical is confusing and even misleading. They are neither apocrypha nor noncanonical, as these terms have been and should be reserved for writings that at any moment in time stood in close chronological proximity to and/or could have been or were included in the New Testament canon at some point in the first centuries CE or had some form of authority in the early church. In the same way, we speak about the Old Testament Apocrypha and limit the use of the term to those writings in close proximity to or in the past being part of any Old Testament canon (MT, LXX, Old Greek, Syriac, etc.). All other writings should be called pseudepigrapha (see Gerbern S. Oegema, ed., Oxford Handbook of the Apocrypha, 2021). Obviously, this cannot be changed at this point, as the editor and publisher have now completed a third volume and are planning a fourth volume of New Testament Apocrypha (see Tony Burke’s introduction in volume 3).

Most of the writings covered in New Testament Apocrypha are actually what we otherwise would call pseudepigrapha, writings that use the names of New Testament authors and figures but have not been written by them or originated in close proximity to them, unless one can show with evidence that they are later copies of such earlier writings. We could also call them fan fiction or fan literature, to use a modern term, but it is easier to call them simply pseudepigrapha. The reason why this is important is that they give examples of the later reception history of New Testament writings, figures, and ideas and are therefore important for historical reasons. Another important reason is that in the recent discussion about the artificial and arbitrary use of the term canon in

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order to differentiate between canonical and noncanonical during the Second Temple period, which is a theological distinction and not a historical one, any writing that is labeled apocryphon could mistakenly lead to the impression that they are arbitrarily distinguished from the New Testament canon. In reality, they have been written hundreds or even more than a thousand years later and have no place in this discussion.

In few examples will suffice here. In the gospels category, The Hospitality and Perfume of the Bandit originates from France and can be dated at the earliest to the late twelfth century. How can this writing be labeled an apocryphon? In the apocryphal acts, The Acts of Andrew and Paul predates the earliest manuscript containing it (i.e., the tenth century), but specific proposals, such as the fifth or sixth century, as has sometimes been suggested, are speculative. In the category epistles, The Correspondence of Ignatius with John the Baptist and the Virgin Mary is witnessed by many (mostly Latin) manuscripts. Here the most convincing theory is that the Latin text was a translation of a Greek version by the thirteenth-century English scholar Robert Grosseteste and that any reconstruction of an earlier phase is difficult; hence it is a thirteenth-century product and not an apocryphon in the strict sense of the word. In the category apocalypses, The Revelation about the Lord’s Prayer is found in a manuscript from the thirteenth century as the earliest date, and although it may be related in contents to writings from the seventh and eighth centuries, it again, like so many other writings in this collection of so-called apocrypha, originates from the early to high Middle Ages. It clearly belongs to a scribal activity in the later church that tends to rewrite and complement earlier traditions in an act of faithful reception. But they are not apocrypha, which is the point I want to make here and want to suggest for future discussion and research. By refraining from using the terms canon, canonical, and noncanonical, one can reset the discussion and focus more on the different historical contexts in which these pseudepigraphic writings came into existence, what spiritual authorities there are based on, and how they interpret Scripture by using specific genres, such as gospels and epistles.

Finally, it is clear from this volume that a fourth and maybe even a fifth volume will be needed to introduce and translate more of the so-called apocrypha that are known and not yet part of any collection or that could be discovered in the near future, such as in the Slavic tradition. It is also clear that the setup of a future volume cannot be changed any more given the previous volumes. However, the discussion about the importance of these writings should move away from what they possibly could mean for early Christianity to what they mean for the much later reception history, in short, an excellently edited and rich volume and a welcome source for scholars and students of the world of Christian apocrypha, interpretation and reception history, and hagiography of the first fifteen centuries CE.