

## Contents

<i>Preface</i>	<i>page</i> ix
<i>Acknowledgments</i>	xv
<i>List of Abbreviations</i>	xviii
<i>Note on the Text</i>	xix
Introduction: “Diamonds in a Dunghill”: Seeking New Approaches in Early Christian Studies	I
The Paradigm of Exceptionalism	4
Premises and Debts	15
1 The Myth of Christian Origins	20
Rectifying Our Categories: Terminology, Vocabulary, and Anachronism	23
The Invention of Tradition	31
“Hero-Paul”: A Case Study	37
Demystifying Early Christian Literature	42
2 The Romantic “Big Bang”: German Romanticism and Inherited Methodology	50
“Longing for Myth”	58
Homeric Precursors	71
The <i>Nibelungenlied</i> and the Brothers Grimm	74
The Romantic Genius	78
The Death of the Author	85
Herder, Möhler, and the Study of Biblical Literature	88
The “Primitive” Christians	97
Conclusion: What Is a Classic?	103

3	Authorship in Antiquity: Specialization and Social Formations	105
	Setting the Stage: Ancient Writers as Literate Specialists	112
	A Day in the Life of a Cultural Producer	113
	Locating Expertise	121
	Philo of Alexandria: A Case Study	127
	Literary Subfields and the Gospel Writers	131
4	Redescribing Early Christian Literature: The Gospels, the <i>Satyrica</i> , and Anonymous Sources	134
	The Gospels in Conversation: The <i>Satyrica</i>	138
	Eyewitnesses and Anonymity as Literary Strategy	155
5	The Gospels as Subversive Biography	170
	The Scope of Biography	171
	Xenophon and the Civic Tradition	174
	Xenophon and the Subversive Tradition	178
	The Two Faces of Alexander the Great	181
	Aesop and Oral Tradition	185
	The Gospels as Subversive Biography	192
	Conclusion: “Lions mate with lions”: Creative License and Future Directions	195
	<i>Bibliography</i>	201
	<i>Index</i>	222