Acknowledgements

First of all, a special word is due to my fellow editors, Judith Perkins and Richard Pervo, two major authorities in the field of Biblical, Early Jewish and Christian Literature. We have worked very closely together on this volume over the last two years, and I'm very much indebted to them for their wise and accurate reading of the papers, for their valuable suggestions and strong commitment to this project.

The early centuries CE were a period of significant social change, seeing the evolution of the Roman Empire as well as the rise of Christianity and rabbinic Judaism. The fictional narratives of the period confronted issues such as the interrelation of religion and imperial politics, hybridized identities, colonizer and colonized people in equality of resources. So the study of these narratives is important and relevant to contemporary concerns.

The editors wish to express their sincere gratitude to all contributors for their patient and enduring collaboration during the process of producing this book. Since this volume includes a selection of papers presented at the Fourth International Conference on the Ancient Novel (ICAN IV), which was held at Fundação Calouste Gulbenkian in Lisbon, 21-26 July 2008, I extend my gratitude to its President, Dr. Rui Vilar, and to the Director of the Gulbenkian Museum, João Castel-Branco Pereira, for the visit to the museum. It would be impossible to enumerate all sponsors, whose invaluable assistance and generous support made this project a reality. I'll only mention a few: the Mayor of Lisbon and Lisbon's City Hall, Dr. António Costa, and his councilwoman, Rosália Vargas; the Rector of the University of Lisbon, Prof. Dr. António Nóvoa; the Luso-American Development Foundation (FLAD), and its Director, Miguel Vaz; the Fundação Oriente, represented by Ambassador João de Deus Ramos and João Amorim, for the instructive tour of the recently inaugurated Museu do Oriente; the Manager of the Lisboa Convention Bureau, Alexandra Baltazar, for providing us with a memorable cruise on the Tagus river; the director of the Teatro Nacional D. Maria II, Carlos Fragateiro, for the theater performances in the ruins of the Monastery of Carmo and in the National Theatre. I express my profound thanks to them and to the following institutions: the Instituto Italiano de Cultura de Lisboa,

the Instituto Cervantes, the Goethe-Institut, the Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands, the Associação Cultural de Amizade Portugal-Egipto, and Edições Cosmos.

I would also like to thank the graduate students who provided valuable assistance during the conference. Special thanks are also due to my colleagues of the Organizing Committee and to my husband, Carlos Abrantes Pinheiro, who created and maintained the ICAN website.

I am also very much indebted to Dr^a Manuela Rêgo and to Professor João J. Alves Dias for all their efforts to obtain the image for the cover from the BNP archives.

To Maaike Zimmerman we owe appreciation for the diligent and accurate preparation of this volume's index, and Roelf Barkhuis deserves once more our special thanks for his permanent and kind professionalism through the entire process of publication of this volume, the sixteenth in the series of *Supplementa* to *Ancient Narrative*.

Marília P. Futre Pinheiro December 2012