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# The Wisdom of Egypt

Jewish, Early Christian, and Gnostic Essays in  
Honour of Gerard P. Luttikhuizen

*Edited by*

Anthony Hilhorst  
and  
George H. van Kooten



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**CONTENTS**

Preface .....	ix
PART ONE	
JUDAISM & EGYPT	
ED NOORT The Disgrace of Egypt: Joshua 5.9a and Its Context .....	3
FLORENTINO GARCÍA MARTÍNEZ La Genèse d'Alexandrie, les Rabbins et Qumrân .....	21
JACQUES T.A.G.M. VAN RUITEN The Birth of Moses in Egypt According to the <i>Book of Jubilees</i> (Jub 47.1-9) .....	43
ROB KUGLER Hearing the Story of Moses in Ptolemaic Egypt: Artapanus Accommodates the Tradition .....	67
JÁNOS BOLYKI Egypt as the Setting for <i>Joseph and Aseneth</i> : Accidental or Deliberate? .....	81
BERT JAN LIETAERT PEERBOLTE The <i>Wisdom of Solomon</i> and the Gnostic Sophia .....	97
JAN WILLEM VAN HENTEN Cleopatra in Josephus: From Herod's Rival to the Wise Ruler's Opposite .....	115
PIETER W. VAN DER HORST 'The God Who Drowned the King of Egypt': A Short Note on an Exorcistic Formula .....	135

## PART TWO

## EARLY CHRISTIANITY &amp; EGYPT

MAARTEN J.J. MENKEN 'Out of Egypt I Have Called My Son': Some Observations on the Quotation from Hosea 11.1 in Matthew 2.15 . . . . .	143
TON HILHORST 'And Moses Was Instructed in All the Wisdom of the Egyptians' (Acts 7.22) . . . . .	153
GEORGE H. VAN KOOTEN 'Wrath Will Drip in the Plains of Macedonia': Expectations of Nero's Return in the Egyptian <i>Sibylline Oracles</i> (Book 5), 2 Thessalonians, and Ancient Historical Writings . . . . .	177
HERMAN TE VELDE Looking at the Condemning Heart of 1 John 3.18-20 through the Eyes of an Ancient Egyptian . . . . .	217
HUUB VAN DE SANDT The Egyptian Background of the 'Ointment' Prayer in the Eucharistic Rite of the <i>Didache</i> (10.8). . . . .	227
JANNI LOMAN The <i>Letter of Barnabas</i> in Early Second-Century Egypt . . . . .	247
RIEMER ROUKEMA Paul's Rapture to Paradise in Early Christian Literature. . . . .	267
JOHN HERRMANN AND ANNEWIES VAN DEN HOEK The Sphinx: Sculpture as a Theological Symbol in Plutarch and Clement of Alexandria. . . . .	285
JAN N. BREMMER Foolish Egyptians: Apion and Anoubion in the <i>Pseudo-Clementines</i> . . . . .	311
HENK BAKKER Potamiaena: Some Observations About Martyrdom and Gender in Ancient Alexandria. . . . .	331
MONIKA PESTHY 'Mulier est Instrumentum Diaboli': Women and the Desert Fathers . . . . .	351

## PART THREE

## GNOSTICISM &amp; EGYPT

ATTILA JAKAB Le Gnosticisme Alexandrin aux Premiers Temps du Christianisme . . . . .	365
ALBERT L.A. HOGETERP The <i>Gospel of Thomas</i> and the Historical Jesus: The Case of Eschatology . . . . .	381
ABRAHAM P. BOS Basilides of Alexandria: Matthias (Matthew) and Aristotle as the Sources of Inspiration for His Gnostic Theology in Hippolytus' <i>Refutatio</i> . . . . .	397
JACOBUS VAN DIJK Early Christian Apocrypha and the Secret Books of Ancient Egypt . . . . .	419
EIBERT TIGCHELAAR Baraies on Mani's Rapture, Paul, and the Antediluvian Apostles . . . . .	429
F. LAUTARO ROIG LANZILLOTTA Devolution and Recollection, Deficiency and Perfection: Human Degradation and the Recovery of the Primal Condition According to Some Early Christian Texts . . . . .	443
JÜRGEN TUBACH Reisewege der Apostel in den <i>Acta Petri</i> aus Nag Hammadi . . .	461
ISTVÁN CZACHESZ The Identity of Lithargoel in the <i>Acts of Peter and the Twelve</i> . . . . .	485
MARVIN MEYER <i>Gnōsis, Mageia, and The Holy Book of the Great Invisible Spirit</i> . . . . .	503
JACQUES VAN DER VLIET Fate, Magic and Astrology in <i>Pistis Sophia</i> , chaps 15-21. . . . .	519

Bibliography of Gerard P. Luttikhuisen. ....	537
List of Contributors .....	545
Index of Subjects and Names .....	549
Index of Ancient Authors and Writings .....	552
Index of Hebrew, Greek, and Coptic Words. ....	557

## PREFACE

On the exact day that this volume will be offered to Gerard Luttikhuisen, he will pass the milestone of an academic career spanning some four decades, for the latter part of which he held the chair in New Testament and Early Christian Studies at the University of Groningen. Educated at the Catholic University of Nijmegen, where he had the good fortune to have Professor Bas van Iersel as his teacher for the New Testament, he developed a keen scholarly interest in the life and message of Jesus of Nazareth and its early reception, which would have resulted in a thesis on Mark's Gospel but for his appointment to the theological faculty in Groningen. That faculty's engagement in Jewish Christian literature eventually led him to tackle the Book of Elchasai, the study of which resulted in his 1984 thesis, *The Revelation of Elchasai: Investigations into the Evidence for a Mesopotamian Jewish Apocalypse of the Second Century and its Reception by Judeo-Christian Propagandists*, supervised by Professor Freek Klijn. The widening of his field of investigation had begun earlier than this, however, and gained a solid foundation from his study of Coptic in Münster. In Groningen his teaching duties comprised both the New Testament and Coptic. His initial love of the former area by no means diminished; in addition to the synoptic Gospels he delighted in studying the letters of Paul, to which he dedicated his inaugural lecture, and the book of Revelation. With regard to Coptic, this not only satisfied his love of linguistics but also enabled him to study that monument of Gnostic literature, the Nag Hammadi Library. In point of fact, he was—and, of course, still is—fascinated by Gnosticism, which, he never tires of stating, is so important in early Christianity. It comes as no surprise that almost all of his students have either written their theses on Coptic Gnostic texts, or at least when writing them used the proficiency in Coptic they had acquired from Gerard's lessons. His own interests can be surmised from the bibliography at the end of this Festschrift, and are well reflected by the titles of volumes to which he has contributed, and by the titles of his monographs, including his *Gnostic Revisions of Genesis Stories and Early Jesus Traditions* (Brill, forthcoming), and his *De veelvormigheid van het vroegste christendom*, a book in Dutch on the diversity of earliest Christianity.

Nag Hammadi and the Coptic language naturally point to Egypt, which Gerard first visited in 1976 and which interests him not just as