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EVE'S CHILDREN

*The Biblical Stories Retold and  
Interpreted in Jewish and  
Christian Traditions*

EDITED BY

GERARD P. LUTTIKHUIZEN



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An image of Lilith from an amulet: a nineteenth-century Persian amulet intended to protect newborns against Lilith in her aspect of baby stealer (or killer, depending on the tradition)

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## PREFACE

The fifth annual symposium of the Department of Biblical Studies, University of Groningen, held in June 2001, was devoted to the reception of the biblical stories of Cain, Abel and Seth in various Jewish and Christian traditions. In accordance with the previous conferences, the emphasis was on early rewritings and interpretations, both within mainstream Judaism and Christianity and within marginal or sectarian groups. The proceedings are contained in this book, the fifth volume in the series *Themes in Biblical Narrative*.

The opening essay draws attention to the first mention of Eve's childbearing in the sentence which God pronounced on the woman after her transgression, and to interpretations of this sentence in biblical and early Jewish texts (Jacques van Ruiten). The studies by Florentino García Martínez, Lieve M. Teugels, and Marcel Poorthuis discuss further questions related to the coming into being of the second generation. They explain how the crime committed by Cain could lead commentators to believe that Eve's first child might not have been Adam's son but an offspring of the serpent, a wicked angel, or the Devil himself. Ancient interpreters were also puzzled by the fact that the Bible does not mention females of the same age as Cain and Abel. The articles show how the missing daughters were added in the Targumim, in rabbinic sources and in later speculations.

Several contributions deal with the tragic relationship between the first two brothers, Cain and Abel. The subject is introduced by Jan N. Bremmer who discusses fraternal relations, more particularly tensions between brothers and the theme of fratricide in Israel, Greece and Rome. Ed Noort analyses the Genesis account of Cain's killing of his brother in the light of the judicial texts of the Hebrew Bible. Hindy Najman argues that Philo's typological interpretation of the Cain and Abel narrative should be understood as an exercise in moral psychology and pedagogy. The somewhat enigmatic references to the voice of Abel in the New Testament Letter to the Hebrews are discussed by Ton Hilhorst, who concludes that the author presents Abel as the earliest example of true faith and as a prophet of future justice and salvation. Rick Benjamins offers a critical examination of two different interpretations of the Cain and Abel story in the works