

Early Christianity in Alexandria

Alexandria was the epicenter of Hellenic learning in the ancient Mediterranean world, yet little is known about how Christianity arrived and developed in the city during the late first and early second century CE. In this volume, M. David Litwa employs underused data from the Nag Hammadi codices and early Christian writings to open up new vistas on the creative theologians who invented Christianities in Alexandria prior to Origen and the catechetical school of the third century. With clarity and precision, he traces the surprising theological continuities that connect Philo and later figures, including Basilides, Carpocrates, Prodicus, and Julius Cassianus, among others. Litwa demonstrates how the earliest followers of Jesus navigated Jewish theology and tradition, while simultaneously rejecting many Jewish customs and identity markers before and after the Diaspora Revolt. His book shows how Christianity in Alexandria developed distinctive traits and seeded the world with ideas that still resonate today.

M. David Litwa cowrites and coedits the journal *New Testament Abstracts* at Boston College. He is the author of many books, including *The Evil Creator* (2021) and *Found Christianities* (2022).

Early Christianity in Alexandria

From its Beginnings to the Late Second Century

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*For David T. Runia
friend and mentor*

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Note on the Text

All translations in this book, unless otherwise noted, are mine. Although it is common practice to italicize “apocryphal” works to distinguish them from “canonical” texts, I have chosen to italicize all ancient book titles. Nag Hammadi texts are followed by parentheses (e.g., II,1) indicating the codex and number of the treatise among the Nag Hammadi codices.

Abbreviations

Abbreviations of ancient texts and modern works in this volume follow the *SBL Handbook of Style*, 2nd ed. (Atlanta: SBL Press, 2014). Other abbreviations are as follows.

AAH	<i>Against All Heresies</i> = <i>Adversus Omnes Haereses</i> by “Pseudo-Tertullian”
AH	<i>Against Heresies</i> by Irenaeus of Lyons
BG	Berlin Gnostic Codex
CH	Corpus Hermeticum
CPJ	<i>Corpus Papyrorum Judaicarum</i>
DGWE	<i>Dictionary of Gnosis and Western Esotericism</i> , ed. Wouter Hanegraaff
Exegesis	<i>Exegesis of the Soul</i>
HE	<i>Historia Ecclesiastica</i> by Eusebius of Caesarea
LCL	Loeb Classical Library
NHC	Nag Hammadi Codex
Or.	<i>Oration(s)</i>
PG	<i>Patrologiae Cursus Completus. Series Graeca</i>
Ref.	<i>Refutation of All Heresies</i> , ed. M. David Litwa
SH	Stobaeon Hermetica
SHA	<i>Historia Augusta</i>
Testimony	<i>Testimony of Truth</i>
Thomas	<i>Gospel of Thomas</i>