



Forbidden Oracles?: The Gospel of the Lots of Mary (Studien Und Texte Zu Antike Und Christentum / Studies and Texts in Antiquity and Christianity)

By AnneMarie Luijendijk

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In this volume, Anne-Marie Luijendijk presents for the first time a new early Christian divinatory text, preserved in a fifth-or sixth-century Coptic miniature codex, entitled The Gospel of the Lots of Mary, and places it within the context of practices of and debates about divination in the ancient Mediterranean world. Casting lots to obtain answers was applied in decision-making on all levels of ancient society. As a religious practice, lot divination was also highly contested, as access to these practices and thus to the divine meant control of powers, religiously and socially. The text, replete with biblical phrases but fundamentally materialistic in worldview, disrupts our concepts of what is religious in the ancient world. Luijendijk contributes to discussions in the study of religion that question the categories of religion and magic. She also contributes to scholarship on the production and use of books.

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Review

"This book contains everything a scholarly reader could wish to have in a book: a hitherto unknown ancient text in its original language with an English translation, a short commentary, an extensive introduction, photos of the complete manuscript, a full list of the text's vocabulary, various indexes, and a bibliography.

[...]

The book is a welcome addition to the dossier of 'non-orthodox' Christian material from late antiquity. The author shows her competence in this field at every page. And the book is written in a lively and fluent style which makes it a pleasure to read. Every student interested in early Christian divination should read it."

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