

## Zostrien (NH VIII, 1)

---

Author(s):

Barry, Catherine  
Funk, Wolf-Peter  
Poirier, Paul-Hubert  
Turner, John D.

E.I. Peeters (Leuven)  
Presses de l'Université Laval (Quebec City)  
«Bibliothèque copte de Nag Hammadi [section «Textes»]», 24  
2000  
xxii + 709 p.  
ISBN: 2-7637-7591-8

---

The tractate entitled *Zostrianos* is an apocalypse that is presented as the account of Zostrianos' journey to the beyond. Zostrianos, son of Iolaos and father of Annenios, who Plato claims (*Republic* 10.614) was the father of Er (the Pamphylian), was later compared to Zoroaster (Clement of Alexandria, *Stromata* 5.103.2). Composed in Greek, most likely in Alexandria at the end of the second century or at the beginning of the third, this work survives only in a Coptic translation made during the first half of the fourth century. As the longest text discovered at Nag Hammadi (132 pages), this tractate reflects the traditions and practices of a non-Christian form of Sethian Gnosticism that was known to the circle of Plotinus, during the third quarter of the third century in Rome. In fact, the *Apocalypse of Zostrianos* is mentioned among those apocalypses possessed by the Gnostics who frequented Plotinus' philosophical school and which he directed his students to refute. Thus, it is important both for the history of the Gnostic movement and for Platonism. Also, the discovery of precise parallels between *Zostrianos* and certain passages of Marius Victorinus demonstrates that the author of the Gnostic treatise and the Latin Neoplatonist utilized a common source, one closely related to the anonymous commentary on Plato's *Parmenides*, which some attribute to Porphyry. Therefore, *Zostrianos* is a crucial witness to the parallels between certain Gnostic circles and Platonism.

The present volume provides a well-developed introduction to *Zostrianos*, a newly established Coptic text, a French translation, an exhaustive commentary (the first to be dedicated to this work), as well as a complete *index verborum*. The introduction and commentary attempt to explain this long, difficult, and poorly preserved text, a text of great importance for the history of the Gnosticism and philosophy of the second and third centuries.

The introduction is written partially in French and partially in English by C. Barry and J. D. Turner. The Coptic text is edited and translated into French by C. Barry, W.-P. Funk, and Paul-Hubert Poirier. In addition, the English commentary is written by J. D. Turner.