Recenzje


The two volumes under review belong to the series of annuals published by the ARAM Society for Syro-Mesopotamian Studies, based at the Oriental Institute of Oxford University. As a rule, the issues of the periodical contain the papers read at international conferences organized by the Society. They deal with the past of the Aramaic world and with its offshoots, inclusive of Syriac, Mandaic, Palestinian Christianity, etc. The two fascicles of vol. 1 (1989) appeared as a journal, but vol. 2 already provides the papers read at a conference on Nabataeans, held at Oxford in 1989, and vol. 3 contains the proceedings of a conference dealing with the Syriac-Arabic cultural interchange during the Abbasid era in Iraq, held likewise at Oxford in 1991. Vol. 4 contains the papers of the conference on Decapolis, held at Oxford in 1992, while vol. 5 was dedicated in 1993 to Sebastian P. Brock, a world-wide known specialist of Syriac, passed away a few years ago. Vol. 6 deals with cultural interchange during the Umayyad period in Bilād aš-Šām, i.e. in Syria-Palestine, while Palmyra is the subject of vol. 7, and the Near-Eastern trade routes constitute the central topic of vol. 8. Vols. 9 and 10, issued in 1999, concern the history and archaeology of the Mamluk and early Ottoman periods in Bilād aš-Šām. Vols. 11-12 deal with Antioch, Edessa, the Arabian Peninsula, also with the Mandaeans, which provide the special topic for vols. 16 and 22, presented here below. The history and archaeology of Beirut, as well as water problems in the pre-modern Near East, are the subject of vols. 13-14, while Palestinian Christianity since 500 A.D. is dealt with in vols. 15, 18, 19, concerning also pilgrimages and shrines. Related topics on Prophet Elijah, St. George, etc., are treated in vol. 20. Surprisingly, at first sight, alcohol is the topic of vol. 17. Instead, important contributions to modern Syriac literature are presented in vol. 21, issued in 2009.

Vol. 16, dealing with the Mandaeans and the Manichaeans, contains the proceedings of conferences held in 2002 at Oxford University, while vol. 22 on the Mandaeans includes the papers of the Sydney conference in 2007 and of the Oxford conference in 2009. The majority of Mandaeans immigrated to Australia live in or around the Liverpool quarter of
western Sydney and use an area at the Nepean River, west of Sydney, for their religious rites. This site at Penrith was specially allocated to them by the local council to undertake Mandaean ceremonies that incorporate their “baptism” in the river, a fundamental rite of Mandaean religious practice. These circumstances explain the organization of a scholarly conference on Mandaeanism at Sydney.

The Mandaean sect is a Gnostic sect of southern Iraq and south-western Iran, attested from the early first millennium A.D. on. The publication of their holy writings, the recent discovery of vernacular Mandaic still spoken by some emigrants, their present-day religious practices, and the fact that the language of their writings hardly differs from Jewish Babylonian Aramaic aroused great interest in recent linguistic, religio-historical, and ethnographic studies. Two new series of scholarly text editions and studies have been created by publishers to collect apposite works: Mandäistische Forschungen, edited by Rainer Voigt and published by Harrassowitz at Wiesbaden, and Corpus Codicum Mandaearum, edited by Rifaat Ebied and Erica Hunter, and published by Brepols at Turnhout. Besides, ARAM Society already plans conferences on Mandaeanism at Stockholm University in July 2013 and at Berlin University in July 2017.

The First paper of vol. 16 by Kurt Rudolph stresses The Relevance of Mandaean Literature for the Study of Near Eastern Religions (pp. 1–12), describing the particular place of the Mandaens in the Near Eastern history of the first and second millennia A.D. until their flight from their old Iraqi and Iranian settlements in the aftermath of the Gulf Wars of the 1980’s and the early 1990’s. One of their holy writings, the John-Book, is presented by Jorunn Jacobsen Buckley, A Re-investigation of the Book of John (pp. 13–23), in which John the Baptist plays an important role. The Author discusses it by comparing the little-known Danish doctoral dissertation by Viggo Schou-Pedersen, Bidrag til en analyse af de mandaeiske skrifter (Aarhus 1940) with Edmondo Lupieri’s book, The Mandaens: the Last Gnostics (Grand Rapids-Cambridge 2002). The next paper by Edmondo Lupieri himself deals with Friar Ignatius of Jesus (Carlo Leonelli) and The First “Scholarly” Book on Mandaism (1652) (pp. 25–46). This Carmelite missionary, working at Basra, regarded the Mandaens as “Christians of Saint John” and wrote a book dealing with their origin, rituals, and errors. Christa Müller-Kessler, well-known for having edited Syro-Palestinian texts, as well as Jewish Aramaic and Mandaic magical inscriptions, deals with The Mandaens and the Question of Their Origin (pp. 47–60), arguing that Mandaean creed and practices originated among the Aramaic population of Babylonia. Roberta Borghero then describes Some Phonetic Features of a Mandaean Manuscript from the 17th Century (pp. 61–83) housed in the Library of Leiden University. This is a handwritten glossary in Mandaic, Arabic, Latin, Turkish, and Persian, probably composed by an Italian Carmelite, called Matteo di San Giuseppe, who was one of the first missionaries in the Mandaean community of Basra. The paper of Bogdan Burtea, Šarh ʤ-Paruanaiia. A Mandaean Ritual Commentary (pp. 85–93), presents a Mandaean ritual text belonging to the Drower Collection (DC 24) in the Bodleian Library. It was the subject of his Ph.D. dissertation and was published by him in 2005: Das mandäische Fest der Schalttage (Wiesbaden 2005). His transcription system is unfortunately problematic, especially in
the case of pharyngeals, and it makes it difficult for the reader to trace the original spelling back.

The next article by Desmond Durkin-Meisterernst deals with *The Parthian mwqr’nyg b’s’h* (pp. 95–107), a Turfan fragment (M4a I V 3-16) containing a Manichaean hymn in Parthian and believed to be based on an Aramaic original. The Author refers to a somewhat similar passage in the *Ginza*, the main Mandaean holy writ, and assumes that both depend on Aramaic texts of the 3rd or 4th century A.D. Şinasi Gündüz then points at *Mandaean Parallels in Yezidî Beliefs and Folklore* (pp. 109–126), which is not surprising if the Mandaeans were native from Adiabene, as recorded in the 8th century A.D. by Theodore bar Koni, Nestorian bishop of Kashkar, near al-Waṣit (Iraq).


Vol. 22 deals only with Mandaeism, also in its present form, as practiced in Australia by expatriated Mandaeans. Beside the text editions at the end of the volume, only one article by Matthew Morgenstern considers linguistic questions: *Jewish Babylonian Aramaic and Mandaic: Some Points of Contact* (pp. 1–14). Phonological features dealt with are the loss of the pharyngeals and the widespread appearance of anaptyctic vowels. The second topic concerns the enclitisation of the prepositions b- and l- with the consequent assimilation of the final waw or nun of verbal forms, for instance amarillît, “I said to him”. The third subject dealt with is the conjugation of the irregular verb y-h-b. Jorunn J. Buckley then presents *New Perspectives on the Sage Dinanukt in Right Ginza 6*
(pp. 15–29), a wise scribe – half-book, half-human. In the next paper, Mark J. Lofts considers Mandaeism – the Sole Extant Tradition of a Sethian Gnosticism (pp. 31–59), a subject also dealt with in this volume by J.J. Buckley (pp. 495–507). Garry W. Trompf and Brikha H.S. Nasoraia are Reflecting on the “Rivers Scroll” (pp. 61–86), published in 1982 by Kurt Rudolph, while Iain Gardner is Searching for Traces of the ‘Utria in the Coptic Manichaica (pp. 87–96) and argues that there are unmistakable traces of these divine beings in Coptic Manichaean texts. The ritual of the Mandaean sacramental meal is then described by Edward F. Crangle and Brikha H.S. Nasoraia: Soul Food: The Mandaean Laufani (pp. 97–132). This article is illustrated by photographs taken by Crangle at the Laufa ceremony. Book 18 of Right Ginza is then examined by Dan D.Y. Shapira, On Kings and on the Last Days in Seventh Century Iraq: A Mandaean Text and Its Parallels (pp. 133–170). Jennifer Hart deals further with the parallelism between John the Baptist in Mandaean writings and Mohammed: Yahia as Mandaean Rasul? Some Thoughts on Islam’s Influence on the Development of Mandaean Literature (pp. 171–181). Further studies on Mandaean-Islamic relations are provided below by A.Sh. Gasimova, I.I. Nadirov, J. Hart, and E. Cottrell.

Mandaean manuscripts contain drawings of specific trees or plants; one of them is examined with illustrations by Sandi Van Rompaey, The Tree Šatrin and Its Place in Mandaean Art (pp. 183–207). Possible means to preserve Mandaean cultural heritage are then presented by Charles G. Häberl, The Cultural Survival of the Mandaens (pp. 209–226). The Mandaean Book of the Zodiac is compared by Daphna Arbel with Babylonian divinatory traditions and with the Hebrew III Enoch: “Acquainted with the Mystery of Heavens and Earth”: Sfar Malwašia, Mesopotamian Divinatory Traditions, and 3 Enoch (pp. 227–242). One turns back to the relations between Mandaeism and early Islam with the paper of Aida Shahlar Gasimova, dealing with Sabians in three Qur’anic passages and in the very confusing, mediaeval Arabic sources: The Sabi’ans as One of the Religious Groups in Pre-Islamic Arabia and Their Definition through the Qur’an and Medieval Arabic Sources (pp. 243–261). A second article of Sandi Van Rompaey deals with The Symbolism of the Drabša in the Mandaean Illustrated Manuscripts: The Drabša of Radiance (pp. 263–310). The drabša, “banner” or the like, was taken by 17th-century missionaries for a cross. Covered with a white sheet, as shown by the illustrations of pp. 299–310, it symbolizes radiating light. References to Mohammed in Mandaean holy writs are identified by Inur I. Nadirov, who regards Bišlom, Bizbaṭ, and Nirig as Mohammed’s cryptonyms: Encoded Names of Muhammad in Mandaean Religious Books (pp. 311–319). One does not understand why byšlwmi in the John-Book 45,2 should be translated “without peace”, with a Persian prefix be-, “outside”, instead of meaning “in peace”: “Lucky is the person who in the imperfect age lives in peace”.

Although the Cologne Mani Codex identifies the “baptists” of Mani’s youth with Elchasaites, Iain Gardner looks for a Mandaean perspective in Mani’s Book of Mysteries. Prolegomena to a New Look at Mani, the “Baptists” and the Mandaeans (pp. 321–334). John Flannery then presents The Augustinians and the Mandaeans in the 17th C. Mesopotamia (pp. 335–348), while Brikha H.S. Nasoraia and Edward F. Crangle describe
the Mandaean contemplative and healing practices: *The Asuta Wish: Adam Kasia and the Dynamics of Healing in Mandaean Contemplative Practices* (pp. 349–390), with illustrations. *Mandaean Macrohistory* is dealt with by Brihka H.S. Nasoraia and Garry W. Trompf (pp. 391–425) on a large background of biblical and Iranian conceptions, mixing myth and history. The impact of Islam on Mandaeism is examined further by Jennifer Hart, *Making a Case for a Connection between Islam and Mandaean Literature* (pp. 427–440), while David Hamidović looks for possible links with the Dead Sea scrolls: *About the Links between the Dead Sea Scrolls and Mandaean Liturgy* (pp. 441–451). The author contends that his study confirms the Jewish background of Mandaeism, although Mandaean liturgy as such cannot be attributed to the Essenes. Such considerations stop half-way up to the conclusion that Jewish Babylonian practices of the Parthian and Sassanid periods have influenced Mandaean rites and customs to a certain degree. A re-edition of DC 20 with its variant DC 43 E is then proposed by Christa Müller-Kessler, *A Mandaic Incantation against an Anonymous Dew Causing Fright* (Drower Collection 20 and Its Variant 43 E) (pp. 453–476). The whole text is provided in transliteration with an English translation and philological notes. Despite its spelling, the first word šʾḥā of the title is interpreted as Akkadian šiptu. This is obviously šapṭu, “lips, organ of speech”, used in the sense of “speech act”, like Hebrew šāpāh and Sabaic š2ft, which can mean “order, injunction”. The title šʾḥā d-dʾhlwlyʾ can thus be translated “Injunction for Frights”. Transliteration and translation can be compared with the first edition of DC 20 by B. Burtea in *AOAT* 317 (Münster 2005, pp. 71–96). This contribution is followed by Christa Müller-Kessler’s edition of a Mandaic lead roll: *A Mandaic Lead Roll in the Collections of the Kesley Museum, Michigan: Fighting Evil Entities of Death* (pp. 477–493). The transliteration and translation of two incantations are followed by philological comments. A third incantation on a lead roll in the Vorderasiatische Museum of Berlin is added as appendix. The printed photographs of the Kesley Museum lead roll, obverse and reverse, are unfortunately unreadable and no facsimile is provided, only a table of characters.


The volume closes with ARAM news announcing forthcoming conferences and publications. Its content is undoubtedly very rich. It mainly concerns religious history,