

pretative detail has found its way into the translation; thus Qi Jiāng 齊姜 is identified in the translation (but not the source text) as “[Lord Xian’s] father’s concubine” (p. 213), yet the accompanying footnote observes that sources disagree on her identity. In one instance, the practice of adding detail identifying women by their husbands leads to error: 夫人姜氏 is translated “Lord Min’s wife, Lady Jiang” (p. 235); in fact, this was Ai Jiang, wife of the late Lord Zhuang and (as noted subsequently, p. 237) elder sister of the young Lord Min’s mother and complicit in his murder. (Here I hasten to add that I read the entire translation closely, and this was the only such error I discovered.)

Another type of addition to the translation is the occasional insertion of the word “barbarian,” which has no equivalent in the *Zuo Tradition* or “*Annals*.” Thus the phrase 蠻夷, “the Man and Yi,” is rendered “the Man and Yi barbarians” (p. 1507), and 在夷 is rendered “among the barbarians” (p. 773) rather than “among the Yi.” These groups are identified as “tribes,” a term that (like “barbarians”) does not correspond to any word in the source text. The translation also employs form to make distinctions not present in the source; thus, in a single sentence, 狄人 is rendered “the Di” whereas the parallel form 晉人 is translated “Jin leaders” (p. 797); similarly, “Chi, the Rong Man Master” for 戎蠻子赤 appears on the same page as “Jie, the Master of Teng” for the parallel form 滕子結 (p. 1855). The Man, Yi, Rong, and Di were certainly considered “other,” a point confirmed by the simple fact that the *Zuo Tradition* makes no reference to their having states or “domains” 國. Less certain is the extent of their “otherness”: in the later reception of the “*Annals*,” the pejorative term “barbarian” was undoubtedly appropriate, but whether this loaded term was warranted so early remains open to debate.

These issues deserve considered attention precisely because of the strengths of this translation. The choices made by the translation team are likely to supersede previous conventions to set new standards in the field, and their work will exert major influence on the field of early China studies and sinology more broadly for many decades to come. More important still, this translation will at last allow the *Zuo Tradition* to take its proper place among the classics of world literature and ancient history. Those who take a fundamentalist approach to translation could argue that the goal of translation is simply to replicate a work in a different language, whereas certain innovations, such as the decision to standardize names and the addition of commentary linking together narrative chains of events, have reshaped the text in essential ways. Yet this reshaping has generated an accessible work that is likelier to be read, appreciated, and engaged with than a less innovative (and hence less readable) translation.

Finally, the University of Washington Press has done a beautiful job with the physical production of this work. Thin but high-quality paper allows the entire source text plus translation to be printed in three volumes, elegantly presented in traditional cloth binding. No e-book is available at present writing and thus, at nearly five pounds, this is not a work for travel reading. However, physical bulk is the only respect in which this splendid new translation is not entirely accessible to readers.

NEWELL ANN VAN AUKEN
UNIVERSITY OF IOWA

“*Die Geheimnisse der Vorväter*”: Edition, Übersetzung und Kommentierung einer esoterischen mandäischen Handschrift aus der Bodleian Library Oxford. By BOGDAN BURTEA. Mandäistische Forschungen, vol. 5. Wiesbaden: HARRASSOWITZ VERLAG, 2015. Pp. 153, illus. €49.

The Mandaeans of Iran and Iraq are the custodians of a vast library of religious literature in their own idiom, a form of Aramaic similar in many respects to the language of the Babylonian Talmud, albeit recorded in its own distinct script. While the canonical works of Mandaean literature, edited and translated into various scholarly languages, have been the subject of much scholarly discussion, a substantive corpus of esoteric priestly texts has received much less scholarly attention. Bogdan Burtea, our chief translator and interpreter of this corpus, identifies within it two sub-genres, *šarh* or “commentary” texts and *diwān* “scroll” or *tafsir* “explanation” texts, such as the *1012 Questions*, the *Greater First World*, the *Lesser First World*, the *Scroll of Exalted Kingship*, and *Zehrun, the Hidden Mystery*, in

which lightworld beings listen to questions from mortals and pose answers. His most recent contribution to the study of this corpus, accessioned as MS Asiat. Misc. C 13 (R) at the Bodleian Library of the University of Oxford, belongs to the latter sub-genre. This manuscript, entitled *Diwān w-Tafsīr d-Rāzi d-Abāhātā* “Scroll and Explanation of the Secrets of the Ancestors,” is an illustrated roll roughly 32 cm wide and 257 cm long. The text divides into 378 lines.

The copyist, *Rabbay* (“my lord,” henceforth R.) Yaḥyā Rām Zehrūn, son of R. Mhattam, of the Sābur clan (not R. Yaḥyā Rām Zehrūn’s son, *pace* Burtea), is known to us from at least three other manuscripts that he copied between 1815 and 1823. In the colophon to this manuscript, he notes that he completed it in Šuštār, Iran, in the house of his father-in-law, Sālem, son of Mosā‘ed, of the Dorrāji clan, on Thursday, the second day of the middle month of summer (*meššay Gaytā*), Aylul/ Šombeltā (Virgo), in the year of Pisces, which is a “Wednesday year,” corresponding to AH 1238. Mandaean years are reckoned by the day of the week in which the new year falls, and the “Wednesday year” corresponding to AH 1238 began on Wednesday, September 4, 1822. 2 Aylul/ Šombeltā fell 211 days later, on Thursday, April 3, 1823, this being the date on which he finished copying this manuscript.

Among other historical trivia, R. Yaḥyā Rām Zehrūn notes that the Mandaean community of Maqdam (*jamā‘ā d-šeršā Maqdam*, hardly “der Woche der Sonne ungefähr”), a village in the vicinity of Huwayza which is well attested in other colophons, comprises sixty households, who are subject to three rulers: Ḥammad, Sheikh of the Muntafiq tribal confederation; Dāwūd Bāšā, the last Mamluk ruler of Iraq; and Kāzēm Āḡā, the governor of Basra.

R. Yaḥyā Rām Zehrūn informs us that he copied the manuscript from one of R. Yaḥyā Yuhānā, son of Rām, who copied it from R. Mhattam, son of Yaḥyā Bayān, who copied it from “an old scroll that had no beginning and no end.” This is rather unusual for these priestly texts, which are among the most frequently copied Mandaic manuscripts and often have long colophons detailing the history of their transmission. Both copyists are known from the transmission history of the *Diwān Harrān Gawaytā* (DC 9 and 36), of which they are the earliest copyists of record, and they appear to belong to the seventeenth century (Buckley 2010: 291). It is perhaps significant that they are associated with these damaged manuscripts, which appear not to have been frequently recopied. R. Yaḥyā Yuhānā, son of Rām, is not to be confused with the nineteenth-century *ganzebrā* R. Yaḥyā Yuhānā, son of Zehrūn Ādam, who was the father of R. Behram Sām (p. 66, ln. 376), R. Yaḥyā Rām Zehrūn’s maternal uncle (*kaluiia*, colloq. Arabic *khālūya* “my maternal uncle,” hardly “Vollender”), and a prolific copyist in his own right. In his copy of another esoteric manuscript, *Dmut Koštā* (MS Asiat. Misc. C 12), R. Yaḥyā Rām Zehrūn notes that both these two men (the father and the son) have been banished, and as a consequence there is no *ganzebri* or high-ranking priest in the world (Buckley 2010: 271).

Burtea’s edition consists of fifty-nine pages (pp. 8–67) of transliterated text and translation (on facing pages), and forty-six pages of commentary (pp. 69–115). Included among the appendices are a brief glossary, some images of Mandaean banners (*drabši*) from other manuscripts, and a monochrome reproduction of the original manuscript, which occupies five pages. The images of banners are appropriate in the context of the illustrations with which the manuscript begins, a series of fourteen banners and fourteen lightworld beings, and Burtea includes a brief but wide-ranging excursus (pp. 78–84) on Mandaean banners in their Iranian and Semitic context, as well as the earliest European references to them. He proposes that today’s familiar Mandaean banner (colloquially called a *darfaš*), which adorns the cover of each volume in this Harrassowitz series and which differs so markedly from those depicted in the illuminated manuscripts at our disposal, owes its present form to the seventeenth-century encounter between Mandaeans and Carmelite missionaries. This is an intriguing and provocative thesis.

Another noteworthy contribution consists of his even briefer excursus on the Mandaic cosmic term *tannā* (pp. 92–94), which Drower and Macuch divide into two lemmas: **tana** 1 “vapor; smoke” and **tana** 2 “vessel,” deriving the latter from Akkadian. While the latter has uniformly positive connotations, the former seemingly pertains both to the worlds of light and the worlds of darkness. To explain this apparent contradiction, Burtea tentatively proposes that the two terms both derive from a single term, cognate with Syriac *tennānā* “smoke,” by way of a detour through Theodor bar Kōnay’s description of Manichaeans, to whom he attributes a belief in five primal worlds of darkness consisting of smoke, fire, wind, water, and darkness. Each finds its equivalent in the Mandaean cosmogony, Burtea

asserts, but the semantics of the first element have gradually evolved from its original negative connotations to a more neutral sense as a cosmological locus and eventually to the uniformly positive connotations of **tana** 2. This is another intriguing thesis and could provide a model by which the texts in which this term appears might be assessed according to its semantic development. For this reason, it deserves further consideration.

Not all of his contributions are quite as convincing. In his introduction (pp. 1–5), Burtea appeals to a frequently cited and somewhat trite tripartite classification of priests (*tarmidi*), laity (*mandāyi*), and Naṣoreans (*nāṣorāyi*), which he collapses into a bipartite classification, namely Naṣorean priests and Mandaean laity. He proposes that the former are of western origin, Jewish-Christian, and early; the latter are Mesopotamian, Gnostic, and late. Leaving aside the tendentious Jewish-Christian hypothesis and its relevance to the question of Mandaean origins, I am not convinced that our texts justify any such typology. Within the *Great Treasure* or *Genzā Rabbā*, which is largely regarded today by Mandaeans and non-Mandaeans alike as their chief scripture, the term *nāṣorāyi* is employed as an autonym fully fifty-four times, including three times in the phrase “the Naṣorean people” (*ammā d-nāṣorāyi*) and is almost always unmarked in its reference.

By contrast, the term “Mandaeans” or *mandāyi* only occurs twelve times outside of the colophons, primarily in the books that Mark Lidzbarski, its pioneer translator, deems “younger,” and in most examples it stands in opposition to the term *tarmidi*, which is reflected in the present dichotomy between *tarmidi* as priests and *mandāyi* as laity rather than as ethnic designations. Another lopsided proportion, seven to three, obtains in the *Book of John*, which is generally characterized as a later composition, and while the term *nāṣorāyi* appears fully thirty-four times in the *Diwān Harran Gawaytā*, a demonstrably medieval composition, the term *mandāyi* does not appear at all.

On these grounds, it appears that *nāṣorāyi* was never a synonym for *tarmidi* at all but rather a generic term for the community today known as Sabians or Mandaeans, which was supplanted by these later designations and which has survived today only in a much more restricted sense. Nor does it seem that *tarmidi* has always referred to “priests” in the contemporary sense of the word; both the *Great Treasure* and the *Book of John* refer to *tarmidyātā* “female *tarmidās*,” even though the Mandaean priesthood today is an exclusively male fraternity. Either the term *tarmidā* once had a broader reference than it currently encompasses (as broad, perhaps, as Hebrew *talmîd* “disciple,” which is its proximate source), or we are obliged to consider that women must have formerly been admitted to the priesthood. In the absence of any corroborating evidence, we must be wary of projecting the present-day connotations of these words or our own classification schemes into the texts, where it is not always warranted.

Similarly suggestive is his commentary on the phrase *b-ṣehyon paqātā* (p. 25, l. 103), which he glosses as “in die Ebene der Dürre [in den Şion], ein Tal.” In his 1875 *Grammatik*, Nöldeke compares *ṣehyon* with Syriac *ṣahwān* “thirsty,” but the fact that *paqātā* “valleys” stands in apposition to it logically suggests a toponym rather than a common noun, in which case Syriac *ṣehyon* and Arabic *ṣahyūn* furnish potential cognates. Nonetheless, I am not confident that we need identify this “Zion Valley” with Mount Zion as Drower and others have. This passage and the parallel from *1012 Questions* (DC 36) to which Burtea refers might recall the Septuagint to Isaiah 22:1 and 22:5, in which “the valley of vision” (*gê ḥizzāyôn*) is rendered with *fāragx Siôn* “the valley of Zion,” against the Peshitta, which merely transcribes the Hebrew, and other traditions, which simply translate it. No other valleys would bear the name of Zion until Mormons settled the American Southwest in the latter half of the nineteenth century.

It is possible that these sparse references to a “Zion Valley” reflect a kind of recondite intertextuality, but the vague contexts in which they appear do not furnish us with much license to speculate on what it might have meant to Mandaean readers, nor for that matter to conclude, as Burtea does, that it is “not only a clear example of the Mandaean reinterpretation of biblical content, but also evidence for the dependence of Mandaicism on Judaism” (p. 97). We cannot entirely exclude the possibility that some other place, whose name transparently derives from a root meaning “to thirst,” was thereby intended, a parched canyon better recalling the arid landscapes of Deseret than those of the Land of Milk and Honey.

After its brief introduction, the manuscript commences with an illustration of fourteen banners in its upper register (the names of three of which, Barmʿil, Šišlamʿil, and Manharʿil, are repeated) and fourteen lightworld beings in its lower register. These beings are flanked by the banner of Manharʿil on either side. As Burtea notes (p. 71), the names of some of these beings correspond to those known to us from Iranian traditions, such as Behram (Avestan Vərəθraϥna), Behdād (Avestan Vaŋhu-šata), Behrun (perhaps Vərəθraϥna again), and possibly Barmʿil, which he compares to the progenitor of the Barmakid dynasty, endorsing Justi’s old etymology of “watercress” (1895: 64); more recently, H. W. Bailey derives this same name from a Sanskrit title, *pramukha* “principal” (1943: 1–5 [2]).

Other names are seemingly derived from finite and non-finite forms of the Mandaic verb, such as Manharʿil (from the participle *manhar* “illuminating” or “illuminated”) and Shaqʿil (from the perfect *shaq* “he jumped (for joy); he frolicked”). The latter verb often parallels the verb *rwaz* “he rejoiced; flourished,” and it is transparently cognate with Hebrew *šāḥaq* / *sāḥaq* “he laughed (derisively); he sported.” As an aside, this form of the root with an initial sibilant does not appear elsewhere in Aramaic, and in fact outside of Mandaic and Hebrew it is attested only in Ethiosemitic languages like Gəʿəz (*šāḥāqā* “he jeered”).

It is not quite so clear that the name of the lightworld being Sām Rabbā derives from the root *s-w-m* or *s-y-m* “to place” as originally argued by Drower and Macuch in *A Mandaic Dictionary* (q.v.) and endorsed here by Burtea (p. 73), as opposed to another etymon such as the Greek *ásēmon* “unmarked; bullion,” which gives us a seeming cognate in Syriac *seʿmā* and Middle Persian (*a*)*sēm*, both of which mean “silver,” and Mandaic *simā* “treasure; precious thing.” The evidence for this hypothesis is provided by the correspondence between the male Sām [*Heyyi*] and his female counterpart *Simat* [*Heyyi*]. In loan words, Greek *ē* often corresponds to the letters ʿ in Syriac and a in Mandaic, e.g., *kāluzā* from Greek *kêruks* ‘herald’ and *kāwilā* from Greek *khēlós* ‘large chest.’ (In his *Handbook* [q.v. §8b] Macuch notes other occasional uses of *halqā* to represent word-internal /e/, but these appear to be unrelated to these historical spellings.)

This reflects an orthographic convention whereby this sound was represented by the character *halqā* (historically ʿ), which must have originally served as a *mater lectionis*, but later came to be read as *ā* in the learned pronunciation of these classical words.

Nor for that matter is it clear that the figure Bezbāṭ should be identified with Muḥammad, as Lidzbarski suggests in his translation of the *Book of John* (q.v., vol. 2: 193 n. 3), and Burtea reiterates here (p. 79), citing that particular passage as an anti-Islamic polemic. This same name also appears once in an unpublished lead amulet from the British Museum collection, which Lidzbarski cites in his translation but nonetheless deems pre-Islamic, and twice in the *Great Treasure* as the father of the prophet Muḥammad, never Muḥammad himself (for the first time on p. 30, l. 15, according to Lidzbarski’s 1925 translation (q.v.), and p. 29, l. 21 according to Petermann’s 1867 edition (q.v.), and for the second time on p. 54, l. 16 in Lidzbarski, and p. 61, l. 7 in Petermann).

Şinasi Gündüz (2008: 75–78) rightly notes that this relationship need not be interpreted literally, but rather simply to identify Muḥammad as a follower of Bezbāṭ. Given that the anxieties of the age of Bezbāṭ are identical with those of the age of Mars (*Nireg*), which concluded on Friday, 4 June 678 CE according to the present reckoning of the calendar, it seems more likely that the two figures are one and the same. Indeed, the emergence of Islam during this age is frequently attributed to Mars’s agency in post-Islamic texts, such as the aforementioned passages of the *Great Treasure*.

Following the illustrations are two sections, the first on the esoteric teachings of lightworld beings (ll. 6–157) and the second on interpretations of prayers and rituals (ll. 158–362). It is in the latter that Burtea’s philological skills and his intertextual intuitions shine. The text concludes with the short colophon (ll. 363–78) mentioned above. With the exception of this last section, which differs markedly in language from the remainder of the text in ways that Burtea has clearly not anticipated, I struggle to improve on his translations.

Throughout his translation, Burtea has highlighted textual cruces for the reader by asterisking them, and generally returns to these asterisked items in his commentary. Such is the case, for example, with *malaiia* (possibly *mālyi*) on p. 9, which he glosses as “die Fülle; das Pleroma” in the phrase *hayyi mālyi hennon b-haylā* “das Leben ist *die Fülle durch die Kraft des [...]”. It seems equally

possible that this is merely the plural of *mālyā* “full,” i.e., the Life is (ful)filled by the power of the excellencies mentioned.

Burtea’s translation is lucid and his commentary, though concise, is nonetheless valuable. He has identified numerous lexical items not found within the pages of Macuch and Drower’s dictionary and which are potentially unique to this short manuscript. Most importantly, this edition represents the fruit of original research, and his insights—particularly when original to him and not uncritically accepted from his predecessors—are quite valuable.

REFERENCES

- Bailey, H. W. 1943. *Iranica. Bulletin of the School of African and Oriental Studies* 11: 1–5.
 Buckley, J. 2010. *The Great Stem of Souls*. Piscataway, NJ: Gorgias Press.
 Gündüz, Ş. 2008. Islamic Influence and Speculation in Mandæan Literature and Tradition. In “*And Life Is Victorious*”: *Mandæan and Samaritan Literatures in Memory of Rudolf Macuch*, ed. R. Voigt. Pp. 71–86. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz.
 Justi, F. 1895. *Iranisches Namenbuch*. Marburg: N.G. Elwert.

CHARLES G. HÄBERL
 RUTGERS UNIVERSITY

Kings, Countries, Peoples: Selected Studies on the Achaemenid Empire. By PIERRE BRIANT, translated by AMÉLIE KUHRT. *Oriens et Occidens*, vol. 26. Stuttgart: FRANZ STEINER VERLAG, 2017. Pp. xxv + 633. €99.

“Magisterial” is an adjective one often finds applied to the work of Pierre Briant, especially to his *From Cyrus to Alexander* (2002), but it is equally applicable to the book under review, a collection of his French papers rendered elegantly in English by Amélie Kuhrt (herself a magisterial scholar of Achaemenid history). The papers span the years 1979 to 2008, with most dating to the 1990s and 2000s. In fact, the two papers from the 1970s (chaps. 10 and 20) were already included in Briant’s (1982) first volume of collected papers. Chapter 18, a commentary on and analysis of the Aramaic customs from Egypt, is coauthored with Raymond Descat. The papers have not been changed, save for providing references to English editions of books where available (including, notably, Briant 2002) and the very welcome insertion of cross-references. The exceptions are chapter 14, which is abridged, and chapter 28, which condenses two longer papers.

A lengthy preface follows a full bibliography of Briant’s work (which begins with his 1964 MA thesis). This preface contains some biographical details, such as the happenstance that led to Briant’s initial involvement in the Achaemenid History Workshops (p. 3 n. 7). Primarily, however, it discusses the reception of the papers in the collection, and provides references to recent bibliography and overviews of relevant developments and new discoveries. In this respect it serves a similar purpose to his “*Bulletins d’histoire achéménide*” (Briant 1997; 2001). It also includes remarks on how Briant’s own thinking has changed. For example, in discussing chapter 5, he notes that:

I have to admit (although I do not reject) that the concept of the of ‘*ethno-classe dominante*’, which has entered the vocabulary of Achaemenid history specialists, requires some clarification, in view of numerous studies published in the last thirty years on the concept of ethnicity and the realities of intercultural contacts. (p. 5)

For the most part, however, he stands by his findings. This is especially evident in his discussion (pp. 26–29; see also pp. 600–601 n. 37) of the reaction to his 1979 remark that Alexander “could be regarded as the ‘last of the Achaemenids.’” After making some observations on how and why this remark has been accepted or rejected, he reiterates his view that “it is crucial to realize that Alexander had no other imperial model, save for the one constructed by the Achaemenids ... available to him—