

**Introduction to the New Edition, in The Great Treasure of the Mandaeans, a new edition of J. Heinrich Petermann's Thesaurus s. Liber Magni, with a new introduction and a translation of the original preface by Charles G. Häberl**

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**Citation to Publisher** No citation available.

**Version:**

**Citation to *this* Version:** Häberl, Charles. *Introduction to the New Edition, in The Great Treasure of the Mandaeans, a new edition of J. Heinrich Petermann's Thesaurus s. Liber Magni, with a new introduction and a translation of the original preface by Charles G. Häberl*, 2007. Retrieved from [doi:10.7282/T3C53J6P](https://doi.org/10.7282/T3C53J6P).

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# The Great Treasure of the Mandaeans

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Version 1.0

Document Template: Normal.dot.

Document Word Count: 4938

Document Page Count: 21



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## INTRODUCTION TO THE NEW EDITION

In her *Mandaeans of Iraq and Iran*, Ethel S. Drower relates a tradition that the Mandaean sacred books were brought down from the world of light and entrusted to Adam by the savior spirit Hibil Ziua. The source of this tradition, her chief informant (and good friend) Hirmiz bar Anhar of Baghdad, added that these books included *The Great Treasure*, *The Book of Souls*, *The Book of John*, *The Book of the Zodiac*, *The Scroll of Inner Harran*, *The Scroll of Abatur*, *The Thousand and Twelve Questions*, *The Scroll of Exalted Kingship*, and *The Canonical Prayerbook of the Mandaeans*, among others.<sup>1</sup> *The Great Treasure*, or *Ginza* as it is more commonly known, is the largest of these books, and the one most frequently associated with the Mandaeans. Furthermore, unlike most of the others, the *Ginza* can often be found in the homes of both priestly and lay Mandaeans. “Now a person who possesses a *Ginza Rabba*,” explained Hirmiz, “his name will remain in this world, and in the world to come the *Ginza Rabba* protects his soul from harm just as a tree spreads its branches to shelter his head from the sun.”<sup>2</sup>

The study of the Gnostics and of Gnosticism has elicited much interest over the past century and has even come to permeate the public consciousness in a way that few academic disciplines ever do. Despite the fact that the Mandaeans are the only Gnostic sect to survive from the period in which these sects first emerged, and the fact that the *Ginza* is the only Gnostic scripture in current use by any religious community, following an unbroken tradition from late antiquity, the *Ginza* continues to be one of the most inaccessible works of world literature. There are several reasons for this.

Until quite recently (1998, to be precise),<sup>3</sup> the Mandaeans did not print their sacred books, but rather copied them by hand. This was one of the chief occupations of the Mandaean priests, for it is believed that copying the *Ginza* was meritorious not only for the priest who copied it but also for the person who commissioned the copy. Over the last century, the number of priests has reduced drastically, as has the number of manuscripts copied in the traditional manner. Nor could the Mandaeans consult a vernacular version of the *Ginza* until an Arabic translation was published in Baghdad in 2001. Until then, Mandaeans had the option of reading their sacred text in the original language, which

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<sup>1</sup> Ethel S. Drower, *The Mandaeans of Iraq and Iran: Their Cults, Customs, Magic Legends, and Folklore* (Piscataway, NJ: Gorgias Press, 2002), 301. The Mandaic titles of these books are **Ginza Rba**, **Sidra ǰ-Nišmata**, **Draša ǰ-Iahia**, **Aspar Maluašia**, **Diuan Haran Gauaita**, **Diuan Abatur**, **Alf Trisar Šuialia**, **Diuan Malkuta ‘Laita**, **Qulasta** and **‘Niania ǰ-Rahmia**, respectively.

<sup>2</sup> Drower, *The Mandaeans*, 293.

<sup>3</sup> The first printed *Ginza* is the edition produced by Majid Fandi al-Mubaraki, Haitham Mahdi Saed, and Brian Mubaraki (eds.), *Ginza Rba: The Great Treasure* (Sydney: Majid Fandi al-Mubaraki, 1998).

is sadly incomprehensible to most lay Mandaeans, or in a single German translation, which is even more incomprehensible to them, as few Mandaeans speak German.

Despite the fact that Australia, Canada, the United Kingdom, and the United States are all home to growing Mandaean expatriate communities, the *Ginza* has not yet been fully translated into English. Some portions of the *Ginza* are already available in English, and there are several teams of translators working independently to create an English translation of the *Ginza* at the present date. Much of the delay is due to the inaccessibility of the manuscripts themselves, which is the chief obstacle to their study and translation, and the paucity of scholarly editions as a result.

### HISTORY OF THE SCHOLARSHIP ON THE *GINZA*

Originally known to European scholars as the *Codex Nazareus*, portions of the *Ginza* had already been translated as early as 1779, and, as Petermann notes in his preface, his edition was not even the first scholarly edition to be produced. Why, then, did Petermann's edition, which was published in 1867 under the title *Thesaurus sive Liber Magnus vulgo Liber Adami appellatus opus Mandaeorum summi ponderis*<sup>4</sup> become the standard for all western scholars of the *Ginza*, and why has it not been surpassed even today? At the time he produced his edition, Petermann was the scholar most familiar with the Mandaeans and their religion, having lived among the Mandaeans of Suq esh-Shuyukh in what is today Iraq for several months during the Crimean War.<sup>5</sup> In his account of his travels, published a decade before this edition, he makes the following observations about the Mandaeans and the *Ginza*:

Their whole religious system is outlined in the largest and most important work of their now inconsequential literature, which they therefore call **κατ' ἐξοχήν** **ܐܘܪܝܢܐ ܐܘܪܝܢܐ** *sidra rabba* 'the great book,' or **ܐܘܪܝܢܐ** *ginza*, i.e. *thesaurus* 'the treasure.' This consists of two parts, of which the first, which covers more than two-thirds of the whole, is called **ܐܘܪܝܢܐ** *iamina* 'the right,' and the second is called **ܐܘܪܝܢܐ** *smala* 'the left.' They are written so that the backs touch each other; therefore, whenever one opens the book, one of the two is always standing upside-down. The first is written for the living, and the second for the dead, in that it only contains prayers for the dead. In addition, the book also has the peculiarity that the titles of the individual sections, which are however found only in the first part, appear for the first time only at the end of each, which Norberg, the publisher of this work, did not know. He calls it 'The Book of Adam,' *liber Adami*, a name which is completely unknown to the Mandaeans. In a way, one could certainly deem it thus, since it is their opinion that it must have been brought to Adam in its present form from the clouds of light and explained by the angel Hibil Ziua; however, the same name would then have to be applied to their other holy scriptures as well, since they also claim the same thing for them, with only one exception.

Now, in this work, which comprises more than 100 individual sections in both parts without any relation to one another and of very unequal sizes, is contained the entire dogma of the Mandaeans. Nevertheless, because they obviously came from different authors and certainly also from different times, because they individually suffered multiple revisions and interpolations, because that very complicated system must have suffered many modifications over the course of time, and because the names of the divinities, angels, or æons often become mixed up with one another, and entirely different names also become associated with one and the same person, it is astonishingly difficult to disentangle oneself from this chaos and to describe a complete system of the Mandaean dogma, especially since Norberg's edition is almost entirely useless, partly because of the corruption of the text, partly because of the unreliability of the translation, and at last partly due to the fact that he allowed the text to be printed with Syriac characters, for want of a Mandaic type font.

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<sup>4</sup> Translation: "The Treasure; or, The Great Book, Commonly Called The Book of Adam, The Mandaeans' Work of Highest Authority."

<sup>5</sup> For more information about Petermann's escapades in southern Iraq, see Jorunn J. Buckley, *The Great Stem of Souls* (Piscataway, NJ: Gorgias Press, 2006), 129–41.

The Swedish scholar and traveler Matthias Norberg's edition of the *Ginza*, which preceded his by over half a century, was nothing if not thorough. Norberg transcribed the original text into Syriac characters, translated it into Latin, and supplemented his edition with two dictionaries (one of the complete lexicon and a second on the names found within it). Unfortunately, as Petermann notes, this edition was not without its problems. Norberg considered Mandaic to be a kind of debased Syriac, and not only transcribed the entire text into Syriac characters but also attempted to "improve" it on the basis of his knowledge of Syriac, rather than treating it as a language in its own right. Furthermore, his attempts at translation were severely handicapped by the lack of nearly any knowledge about Mandaic in Europe at the time. Petermann's assessment of his edition was universally adopted by the scholarly community, and Norberg's edition has since been relegated to a footnote to history.

Despite its limitations, however, Norberg's *Codex Nazareus* proved to be very popular with the scholars of his era, and through them had a profound influence upon the esoteric and Theosophical movements of the 19th century. In her writings, Madame Helena P. Blavatsky frequently and approvingly cites the *Codex Nazareus*, which she identifies as "the scripture of the Nazarenes, the real mystic Christians of John the Baptist and the Initiates of Christos."<sup>6</sup> Through the Theosophists, the *Ginza* (alongside the sacred books of other, more well-known religious traditions, such as Hinduism, Buddhism, and Zoroastrianism) influenced several generations of authors, musicians, and other artists, and ultimately contributed to birth of the contemporary New Age movement.

At the time that Petermann published his edition, there were at least eight complete *Ginzas* in Europe—one at Oxford's Bodleian Library (MS Huntingdon 6), three in the British Library, which had been purchased in Basra by Col. J.E. Taylor and subsequently donated by his widow (MSS Add. 23,599, 23,600, and 23,601), and four in the Bibliothèque Impériale (MSS Paris A, B, C, and D). MS Paris B was the basis for Norberg's edition. It was written in 1632 by the chief priest Baktiar Bulbul, son of Ram Ziua, in the village Maqdam, which is located near Huwayza in what is today Iran, although he appears to have begun his work in Basra.

Petermann based his edition upon MS Paris A, which had been written 72 years earlier in the same village, by a priest named Ram Baktiar, son of Bihram Šadan. Unlike Norberg, however, he also consulted the other manuscripts, including MS Paris C, written by Baktiar Bulbul's son, the chief priest Iahia Adam, in the city of Huwayza in 1680, and MS Paris D, which was written by the priest Iahia Bihram on a canal near Basra sometime in the early 1700s (only a partial date is given).<sup>7</sup> Petermann compared these four manuscripts with one another and collected all of the variant readings in the second volume of his edition.

As for the British *Ginzas*, they were apparently not well regarded on the continent. They were deemed inferior to those in Paris by Petermann's contemporary, Theodor Nöldeke, and almost completely ignored by Mark Lidzbarski.<sup>8</sup>

Petermann was unable to find a press with a Mandaic typeface (none existed at the time), and, unwilling or unable to commission one, turned to a lithographer in Leipzig to produce a facsimile edition of his own handwritten manuscript. First, he copied the entire manuscript out by hand in an oil-based ink, which was then transferred to a series of stone plates. The text was etched onto the surface of the plates with an acid wash emulsified with gum arabic, which was washed off with turpentine. During printing, the plates were dampened and coated with another oil-based ink, which was naturally repelled by the wet surfaces into the cavities etched by the acid. By means of this process, the lithographer produced 100 copies of the manuscript—of which Petermann kept 13 and sold the rest. The Prussian government purchased 12 and the remaining 75 were offered for sale to the general public. The edition has been out of print ever since.

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<sup>6</sup> Helena P. Blavatsky, *The Secret Doctrine*, vol. 1 (London: Theosophical Publishing Co., Ltd., 1888), 194.

<sup>7</sup> Buckley, *Great Stem*, 100–101 notes that the first British Museum *Ginza*, which was also copied by Iahia Bihram, was completed in 1735–36.

<sup>8</sup> For further information on the history of these manuscripts, see Buckley, *Great Stem*, 25–108.



In the same year Julius Euting published his edition of the *Qulasta* (the *Canonical Prayerbook*), which Petermann mentions in his preface. The two editions had an immediate and lasting impact upon scholarship. In that same year Theodor Nöldeke deduced from these texts that Mandaic was an Eastern Aramaic dialect, more akin to the Aramaic portions of the Babylonian Talmud than to Syriac, as Norberg and a generation of scholars following him had presumed. Drawing principally upon both editions, he published his pioneering grammar of Mandaic eight years later in 1875. In the following decade, Wilhelm Brandt published a comprehensive study of the Mandaean religion, again based upon Petermann and Euting's works, and attempted to make a full translation of the *Ginza*. In his study, he included his translations of the tractate on Hibil Ziua's descent into the underworld (the fourth book of the *Right Ginza*, conventionally designated GR 4) and two smaller tractates (GR 5.4 and GR 12.7).

Unfortunately, a full translation of the *Ginza* based upon Petermann's edition would not appear for more than a half century after its release, in the form of Mark Lidzbarski's *Ginza: Der Schatz oder das grosse Buch der Mandäer* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht, 1925). Unlike Norberg, Petermann never attempted to translate the *Ginza* or any other Mandaean manuscript, but devoted his remaining years to the study of Armenian, the subject for which he continues to be known primarily even today. In the introduction to his grammar, Theodor Nöldeke remarked "It is [...] urgently wished that the highly esteemed scholar would publish his research on the traditional interpretation of the Mandaean books; if these were to be lost, we would be robbed of a possibly irreplaceable aid for the understanding of the writings."<sup>9</sup> Petermann died the following year, without having published this research. One can only hope that his notes yet survive in some archive, to be published at last by some enterprising scholar.

In the century that followed, a scholarly consensus, represented by Lidzbarski, Drower, Rudolph, and Buckley among others, emerged around Petermann's remarks that the *Ginza* is a composite of several different texts, which were collected and redacted into the canonical form we now possess. Due to the presence of several clearly post-Islamic sections in the *Right Ginza*, its final redaction is generally maintained to have occurred sometime during the early Islamic period. A *terminus ante quem* for this final redaction is suggested by the *Scroll of Inner Harran*, which asserts that a manuscript answering to the description of the *Ginza* was presented to the Muslims by the semi-legendary Mandaean ruler, Anuš bar Danqa, at the time of the Islamic conquest of Mesopotamia. In order to be considered a "people of the book" under Islamic law, and therefore free to continue following their own religion and traditional way of life, it was necessary for the Mandaeans to assure their new rulers that they followed a monotheistic religion, revealed by a divinely inspired prophet (in this case John the Baptist, among others who were known to the Muslims and revered by them), and set down in the form of a sacred scripture. Whether it had already been redacted as a book prior to the advent of Islam (in which case all references to the Muslims are later interpolations) or rather immediately following it is still the subject of some scholarly debate.

## THE COMPOSITION OF THE *GINZA*

As noted above, the *Ginza* is in reality not one but two volumes bound together in one codex. The first volume, the *Right Ginza*, which is the larger of the two, is an eclectic assortment of legends, prophecies, prayers, hymns, historical anecdotes, and no less than seven differing accounts of the creation of the world. The second volume, the *Left Ginza*, is concerned exclusively with death and the fate of the soul in the afterlife. The two are always bundled together, the latter being placed in an upside-down relation to the former, so that when a reader has concluded reading the *Right Ginza*, he can flip the entire codex over and begin reading from the *Left Ginza*. The *Right Ginza* and the *Left Ginza* are, in turn, subdivided into 21 smaller books, 18 in the former and 3 in the latter, each of which is divided into smaller

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<sup>9</sup> Theodor Nöldeke, *Mandäische Grammatik* (Halle: Waisenhaus, 1875), vii.

sections or tractates.<sup>10</sup> The remarks about each book which follow are not intended to be comprehensive, but rather to identify each individual section within them and give a general idea of their contents.

### **BOOKS ONE AND TWO OF THE *RIGHT GINZA***

The first book of the *Right Ginza* (GR 1) and the first portion of the second book (GR 2.1) are two versions of the same tractate, which Lidzbarski believes to have received its final redaction in Islamic times, even though he maintains that it originated in earlier centuries. Both versions of this tractate contain an account of the creation of the world and of humanity, a detailed moral code concerned particularly with ethical and moral duties, which was given to Adam, and a series of admonitions against false religions. The author of GR 12.6 makes an apparent reference to the detailed description of the world of light in GR 1. On the basis of this reference, as well as a number of similarities of style and content, Lidzbarski has attributed GR 12.6 and 12.7 to the same author as GR 1. The content of GR 2.1 is also similar to that of GR 1, and is identified at the end as *The Book of the Lord of Greatness*. GR 2 contains three other short sections: GR 2.2, *The Book of the Jordan*, which is a confession of sins; GR 2.3, a message in verse from the messenger of light; and GR 2.4, some admonitions to the faithful, particularly regarding married life.

### **BOOK THREE OF THE *RIGHT GINZA***

GR 3, entitled *The Book of the Living First Teachings*, is the largest of the tractates in the *Ginza*, and is composed almost entirely in verse. It is also one of the most complex tractates. According to Lidzbarski, it is a patchwork of texts from diverse origins, stitched together with little or no attempt to reconcile the various pieces. Like the first two books of the *Ginza*, the subject of GR 3 is an elaborate cosmogony, involving the principal figures from Mandaean mythology, such as the “evil spirit” Ruha and her offspring the planets, the demiurge Ptahil, the savior spirit Manda d-Hiia “Knowledge-of-Life,” and the first man Adam and his wife Haua (the biblical Eve). All of these figures are described in elaborate detail within the tractate. This tractate offers the first of several accounts of the savior spirit’s descent into the underworld, which is repeated in the following two books.

### **BOOK FOUR OF THE *RIGHT GINZA***

The fourth book, GR 4, is a fragmentary account of the savior spirit’s descent into the underworld, similar to the descent described in the preceding book. The chief difference between the two is the protagonist; in GR 4, the savior spirit is identified as Hibil Ziua rather than Manda d-Hiia. Manda d-Hiia does, however, make an appearance in this chapter: together with Mara d-Rabuta “The Lord of Greatness,” he baptizes Hibil Ziua in the Jordan prior to his descent. Intriguingly, portions of the Mandaean liturgy also found in the *Canonical Prayerbook* (CP) are incorporated into this text. These include CP 82 and the investiture hymns CP 180–88.

### **BOOK FIVE OF THE *RIGHT GINZA***

GR 5 is composed of five tractates. GR 5.1, the lengthiest of the five, is the most important account of the savior spirit’s descent into the underworld in the entire corpus of Mandaic literature. As in GR 4, the protagonist of this legend is Hibil Ziua, who is identified here as the son of Manda d-Hiia, the protagonist of GR 3’s version of the same legend. As with other portions of the *Ginza*, this tractate is not consistent stylistically (for example, Hibil Ziua is described in the third person at the beginning of the composition, but his narrative switches to the first person in the course of the account), and appears to have been abstracted from a longer composition (as it begins abruptly).

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<sup>10</sup> The following discussion of the contents of the *Ginza* depends heavily upon the introductory notes for each tractate in Lidzbarski’s translation and Buckley’s remarks on the *Ginza* in her *Great Stem*, 19–24.

The following tractate, *The Destruction of the Idols of the House* (GR 5.2), details the appearance of Manda d-Hiia and the destruction of this world's idols, as suggested by the title (the "house" being a metaphor for the material world). Following this account is another series of admonitions. Of all the tractates of the *Ginza*, this one appears to preserve the most material from the Hebrew Bible, including direct references to Psalm 114 and Isaiah 5. GR 5.3 details the progress of the departed soul to the realm of light through a series of "toll-stations" populated by demons, and GR 5.4 describes John the Baptist's baptism of Manda d-Hiia and John's subsequent death and ascension.

The final tractate, *The Book of Šilmai, Lord of the House* (GR 5.5), is unusual for several reasons, not the least of which is the negative light in which it presents its eponymous subject, who is elsewhere (e.g. GR 15.3) described in more positive terms. In this book, Šilmai is the ruler of the material world, a member of Ruha's entourage, and quite possibly her son. His father Iatron, on the other hand, is simply identified as "the Good" and stands at the gate to the world of light. Following Ruha's advice, Šilmai approaches his father, who conceals himself. He challenges Šilmai with a long series of questions about the world and the different elements of nature. According to Lidzbarski, these questions and answers are the original core upon which the rest of the tractate was constructed. Šilmai answers them all to Iatron's satisfaction, save for the last, which is about the end of the world. Thereupon Hibil Ziua appears and teaches him the answer. When Iatron learns how Šilmai has learned the answer, he becomes displeased and refuses to reveal himself. Lidzbarski believes that this tractate was not originally Mandaean, but rather was appropriated by them at some point after it had been composed by some other community.

### BOOK SIX OF THE *RIGHT GINZA*

*The Book of Dinanukt* (GR 6) has been the subject of much scholarly discussion due to its apparent connections to the literatures of Mesopotamia, the Zoroastrians, and late antique Gnostic sects such as the Dositheans mentioned by Theodore Bar Khoni in his *Scholion*. The name Dinanukt is clearly of Iranian rather than Semitic origin, meaning "he who speaks in accordance with the religion." This figure is an unusual creature, half-man, half-book, who passes his time continuously poring over old and new books, seeking to fathom the secrets of the universe. Another such creature, smaller than he, appears before him, but Dinanukt is unable to make sense of its contents. He tries to destroy it several times by water and by fire before giving up and falling asleep. In his dreams, the divine spirit Din Mlik 'Utra guides him through a series of toll-houses, past the wicked and the sinners, to Abatur, the judge of the dead. There, Din Mlik 'Utra tells Dinanukt that he must return to preach the true faith for sixty years and sixty months, whereupon he will receive his reward in the House of Life. When Dinanukt awakes, he tosses all of his old books into water and fire to destroy them, and follows the instructions of the divine spirit. After the appointed time, he returns to collect his reward.

### BOOKS SEVEN AND EIGHT OF THE *RIGHT GINZA*

GR 7 contains words of wisdom from John the Baptist. As John the Baptist appears throughout this tractate (and only in this tractate) with the Arabic name Yahya (Mandaic **Iahia**), rather than the earlier Yuhana (Mandaic **Iuhana**) it seems almost certain that this book was first composed in the Islamic period. Lidzbarski notes that the frequent accumulations of related concepts in this tractate and its use of sharp contrasts are reminiscent of tractates GR 1 and GR 12.6, but stops short of attributing them to common authorship on the basis of these stylistic features. GR 8 consists of further admonitions from Manda d-Hiia against Ruha.

### BOOK NINE OF THE *RIGHT GINZA*

GR 9 comprises two separate tractates. The first, *The Destruction of the Seven Planets*, is a series of polemics against false religions, including the Christian sects and Islam. Their founders are identified with the seven planets (hence the name of the tractate). Muhammad is identified with Mars (Mandaic **Nirig**), the planet to which the belligerent Muslims will

be eventually led back. According to Lidzbarski, the reference to wars of religion suggests that this text belongs to the Umayyad or early Abbasid period, and consequently he dates it to the 8th c. CE.

The second tractate tells of a “young boy,” an “only-begotten son” created from the heavenly Jordan by the command of the Great Mana (another name for the Supreme Being; Nöldeke argues that the word **mana** is of Iranian origin, and means something akin to “mind” or “soul”). In his notes to this chapter, Lidzbarski notes other occurrences of the young boy motif in Mandaic literature and explicitly identifies this figure with a variety of similar figures, including the Hellenistic Harpocrates, the *puer phosphorus* of Syrian mythology, Ἰεοῦδ, the only-begotten son of Χρόνος in Philo of Byblos’ *Phoenician History*, and the θεὸς μονογενής of the Orphic Mysteries.

### BOOK TEN OF THE *RIGHT GINZA*

*The Book of the Radiance that Shines Forth from the Pihta* (GR 10) contains yet another creation myth. The **pihta** is a round, flat, biscuit-like wafer which is consumed during the course of rituals such as the baptism or the consecration of new priests. The tractate found within this book is clearly a composite of several different texts riddled with lacunae and inconsistencies in terms of the narrative; in some portions of the tractate, Hibil Ziua serves as the protagonist, but in others, a figure named Adakas (the Hidden Adam) appears in his role.

### BOOK ELEVEN OF THE *RIGHT GINZA*

GR 11, entitled *The Mystery and the Book of the Great Anuš*, contains one more creation myth, featuring a battle between the forces of light and the forces of darkness, here represented by Ruha and the planets. According to Lidzbarski, its title would be more appropriate for the following tractate. This tractate is so unclear that Lidzbarski was initially tempted to leave it untranslated, but ultimately decided to translate it due to its unusual nature. It is filled with “linguistic peculiarities,” archaisms not found in other Mandaic texts (such as the demonstrative pronouns and the form of the prefix of the Causative stem of the verb) which suggest that the author of this tractate derived it from another account, written in a more conservative dialect of Aramaic, which he superficially rendered into Mandaic.

### BOOK TWELVE OF THE *RIGHT GINZA*

This book comprises seven tractates. In the first, GR 12.1, the divine spirit Anuš addresses the reader. The following four tractates are acrostic hymns built upon the 24 letters of the Mandaean alphabet. The third acrostic hymn, GR 12.4, is identical to the prayer CP 214, recited during the consecration of a new priest and during the marriage ceremony. Following these acrostic hymns is a tractate on the world of evil and its king (GR 12.6). Before beginning his description of these things, the author of this tractate addresses the reader directly, writing “first I taught you about the Light King, who is praised for all eternity. I spoke to you about the praised worlds of light, which are incorruptible, and about the *’utras* [semi-divine beings who carry out the commands of the Great Life, the principal divinity of the Mandaeans], the Jordan, and the dwellings, which are wonderful and full of light.” This is an apparent reference to GR 1. The final tractate (GR 12.7) concerns the north (the direction towards which Mandaeans pray), and the cosmic ocean.

### BOOK THIRTEEN OF THE *RIGHT GINZA*

GR 13 is a priestly prayer addressing the pious and faithful of the community, and warning them against impiety and disobedience (a common theme throughout the *Ginza*). It is followed by the first of seven colophons (in Mandaic, the Arabic loanword **tarik** “history” is used) in the *Ginza*. Colophons usually conclude a manuscript, and the presence of this one in the middle of the *Right Ginza* suggests that at one point the preceding thirteen books were considered to be a complete (and free-standing) work on their own. Jorunn Buckley notes that all the fundamentals of the Mandaean religion are amply attested in the first thirteen books concluded by this colophon, which, as we have seen, run the gamut of genres from creation myths, wisdom literature, liturgy, moral instruction, and religious polemics. In a post-

script which follows this colophon, the copyist Ram Baktiar paints a rather idyllic picture of life under the Musha‘sha‘, an Arab Shiite dynasty which ruled southwestern Iran from Huwayza at the time when MS Paris A was copied.<sup>11</sup>

### BOOK FOURTEEN OF THE *RIGHT GINZA*

*The Book of the Great Nbat* (GR 14) is another creation myth, similar to GR 3 but containing the same linguistic peculiarities as GR 11. Nbat is the name of a being from the world of light who stands at the apex of creation. The two beings Iauar and Iušamin emanate from him. The Great Life becomes suspicious of Iušamin’s intentions, but Iauar manages to calm him. Iušamin attempts to create a second creation but is thwarted by a guard who is placed over him. He does, however, create some sons (including two demiurges, Bhaq-Abatur and Ptahil) who press him to create a world of their own. He gives them the order, and they create a lower world, which is filled with planets created by Ptahil. This section is followed by the second of the seven colophons.

### BOOK FIFTEEN OF THE *RIGHT GINZA*

According to Lidzbarski’s division of the text, the following 20 sections compose a single book, GR 15. Lidzbarski cites the third colophon, which follows these twenty sections, as justification for combining these sections into a single book. Furthermore, the sections are stylistically and thematically related to one another. Most follow the same formula: a higher being is sent forth into the world to admonish and instruct the believers and other beings. This higher being is sometimes described in the first person, and at other times in the third person. For the most part, the contents of the twenty sections are composed in verse. The common stylistic features consist of repeated formulae and the frequent occurrence of the number 61. Lidzbarski suggests that some of these sections are possibly the work of a single author, but acknowledges that it would be very difficult to ascertain whether this is the case.

In GR 15.1, Anuš (here described as “the Word”) goes forth into the world on behalf of the Great Life to rouse the believers to action, teaching them and admonishing them. In the following section, GR 15.2, the Great Life commissions Hibil Ziua to travel to Taruan, where he will teach the *‘utras* whom the Great Life has created there. He carries out the order and then goes on to visit other divine beings, such as Iušamin and Ptahil. This section is not internally consistent and shows signs of having been revised. In GR 15.3, the living water complains of having been brought down to the material world. Its guardians, Šilmai (whom we first encountered in GR 5.5 presented in a negative light) and Nidbai console it by informing it that it has been brought down to serve in the baptism. The living water then expresses its fear that it and the Nasoreans (the Mandaean priesthood) will eventually be called to account for their sins, but Šilmai and Nidbai inform it that the material world will one day come to an end, and at that time even its creators will find grace.

GR 15.4 is about Sin, the Moon, describing its destiny and its effect upon the world and mankind. This same section (with some slight changes) also appears in *The Book of John* (JB 192f.), where it is paired with an analogous piece about the sun. In GR 15.5, the Great Life commissions and equips Sam Ziua to be a guardian for the believers. In the following section (GR 15.6), Iukabar Kušta leaves the House of Life and sets forth to prepare the pious believers for their battle against evildoers, by bringing them instruction, admonitions, and revelations about the past and the future. Likewise, in GR 15.7, the Great Life sends another messenger (here either Manda d-Hiia or Iauar) to the material world to teach and admonish the Nasoreans, telling them about the rewards of the pious believers and the punishment that awaits those who are unworthy. Iauar appears once again at the beginning of GR 15.8, prepared and instructed in great secrets by unnamed “higher beings;” later in this tractate he becomes Hibil Ziua, who is taught by the Supreme Being (here designated as Mana Rba, “the Great Soul”) and sent to instruct the Nasoreans. He is particularly

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<sup>11</sup> A complete translation of the postscript can be found in Buckley, *Great Stem*, 32–34.

entrusted with teaching them the importance of the oil that is used for the “sealing”—whosoever is “sealed” by this oil will be able to view all hidden things.

In GR 15.9, the soul—for such it is, Lidzbarski argues, even if it comes to be designated as an *‘utra* later in the tractate—descends to the material world as a fragrant scent and settles into the heart of man. In a melancholic state, it ponders why it has been sent here. The Great Life hears its lament and sends it a helper to teach it and comfort it. In the following section (GR 15.10), the Great Mana (Mana Rba) discusses its desire to create *‘utras* to stand by his side with his mirror image (designated as feminine in the text). At first the Great Mana is dissuaded from following through with this, but without preamble we find him creating a group of companions (suggesting a lacuna in the text). As justification for this act of creation, he notes the created being should serve the pious as a helper. Later in this tractate, the Great Mana becomes the Great Life and his messenger is identified as Manda ḍ-Hiia. He descends into the depths and fights against the wicked.

Anuš *‘Utra* appears in the following section, GR 15.11. He descends to Earth to rouse the Mandaeans. Ruha learns of his plans and conspires against him with her sons, the Seven Planets. Their first act is to build Jerusalem. They travel to Bethlehem, where they begin to build the city, only to be stopped by Anuš, whose voice issues forth from a cloud and warns them that 365 youths will follow from the city if they build it. As they travel further, initially to a place called Bit Mṭalalia and then to another place named Krak Nṣab (both of which are unknown), they receive the same warning, until they arrive at the present site of Jerusalem. They build the city, which is settled by the Jews. Anuš comes to Jerusalem and acquires a following there. At the end of this section, his followers are killed by the Jews, whereupon he destroys the city.

In GR 15.12 as in other sections, the Great Life sends an unnamed *‘utra* forth to assist and instruct the pious and believers. The piece ends abruptly with a description of the fate of the soul, both on Earth and in its ascent (probably borrowed from elsewhere, as Lidzbarski notes).

GR 15.13 is a short account of the creation which agrees with GR 3 in terms of its content. Abatur sends his son Ptahil down to create the lower world and its inhabitants. Ptahil descends into the black waters and attempts to create the Earth from them, but fails. He reports his failure to his father, who climbs up to the Great Life and, with his permission, sends Hibil Ziua to a place called “the side of the Stallion” to collect the necessary ingredient. Hibil Ziua gives this ingredient to Abatur who gives it to Ptahil. First he forms the realm of the ideal, Mṣunia Kuṣṭa, then he creates the material world, Tibil, and finally he builds the world of darkness for Ruha and the Planets. He agrees to do this as he plans to use them as stewards of the world. For this reason, he is punished and tied up. Hibil is sent down in order to bring order to the world. In GR 15.14, the Great Life dispatches yet another *‘utra* to the material world to teach the youth. The evil spirit Namrus (Ruha) attempts to tempt him, but he defies her.

Hibil Ziua, Iušamin, Abatur, and Ptahil figure prominently in each of the following sections. In GR 15.15, the Great Life sends Hibil Ziua to teach and comfort Iušamin. From Iušamin he proceeds to Abatur, and from Abatur to Ptahil, who resists him. Hibil relates Ptahil’s recalcitrance to Abatur, who then informs Iušamin, who rushes back to flog Ptahil. In the end, Ptahil is forgiven by the Great Life. In GR 15.16, the *‘utras* ask Manda ḍ-Hiia to approach Iušamin. Manda ḍ-Hiia asks Hibil Ziua to approach Iušamin, but eventually goes himself after being ordered by Malka ḍ-Nhura (the Light King). He succeeds in appeasing Iušamin, but not Ptahil, who is eventually appeased by Hibil Ziua. From Ptahil, Hibil Ziua goes to Abatur, and then to Iušamin, receiving their greetings at each stage. Finally, Hibil Ziua climbs back to the heavens and is received by the heavenly beings with speeches.

Manda ḍ-Hiia is once again dispatched to the Earth, this time by the Great Life, to free it from the error that has consumed it. Ruha and her associates try in vain to keep him away. In order to protect her sons from him, she hides them in the earth, then the sea, and then a mountain; finally, she tries to conceal them in the cisterns of the firmament. Manda ḍ-Hiia retrieves them from there and chastises them for their acts of seduction, demanding that they give him his robe back. He then curses them to become like their father Ur. This section ends with a polemic against asceticism.

The following two pieces are also found in *The Book of John* (JB 170 and 173). GR 15.18 consists of an admonition, and GR 15.19 is a song about the descent of the soul. The final section, GR 15.20, is yet another brief account of the creation. The book concludes with a warning to the believers to be ever mindful of their otherworldly origin.

### BOOK SIXTEEN OF THE *RIGHT GINZA*

Much like the preceding book, this book consists of several sections in verse (either 10 or 11, depending on the manuscript in question), collected together and sealed with a colophon. Lidzbarski notes that GR 16.1 is similar in content to the tractates of GR 15, particularly GR 15.2, and argues that it should be classified with the preceding book. It is followed by short anthems and prayers, some of which are also found in Mandaean texts. GR 16.2 is an *'utra*'s admonitions for Adam; the first part of the piece is also found in *The Book of John* (JB 245f.). GR 16.3 consists of Manda  $\underline{d}$ -Hiia's admonitions for his friends, and GR 16.4 contains an announcement of the messenger of light to the believers. GR 16.5, a poem of "unusual beauty" in Lidzbarski's opinion, is about the progress of the believer to the world of light with the help of gifts from the personified Truth (Kuṣṭa).

GR 16.6 is a teaching of the messenger of the Great Life to mankind, the sons of Adam: only pious works (and not earthly possessions) will lead to grace. In GR 16.7, an *'utra* regrets having cast the soul into the body, and promises that the hour of redemption will come for those on the Earth. In GR 16.8, the wicked try to tempt the descended savior into becoming disloyal, but without success. GR 16.9 is a prayer to Truth for aid in the material world and on the way to the hereafter; it also appears in *The Book of John* (JB 178). The following section, GR 16.10, glorifies the Great Life, requesting its aid to survive on Earth and to reach the world of light. This request is granted.

Other manuscripts of the *Ginza* contain a final section, GR 16.11, which does not appear in any of the Paris manuscripts. In it, Manda  $\underline{d}$ -Hiia warns his chosen people, who do not wish to hear his warning.

### BOOK SEVENTEEN OF THE *RIGHT GINZA*

In the first section of this colorful book, a higher being talks about the position it holds in the hereafter, and about learning and enlightenment under the *skinas* and *'utras*. Shining beings and grapevines are created, and from these the chosen people become enlightened about the world of light. After a piece that, according to Lidzbarski, does not belong here, the pious among the sons of Adam require teaching, and the Great Life asks Hibil Ziua to teach the chosen people on Earth about the hidden things, namely the clouds which serve as seats for the higher beings. Following this is a list of the prayers that were created in the world above, but were not withdrawn from those who were left behind (namely, the believers). Lidzbarski notes that the Supreme Being, who is more frequently known as the Great Life (Hiia Rbia) or the Lord of Greatness (Mara  $\underline{d}$ -Rabuta); is here given the epithet the Great Mana (Mana Rba Kabira) alongside these others.

In the following section, GR 17.2, a "being" of the Great Life appears with an abundance of brilliance, bringing instruction and secret wisdom to the world. Loosely attached to an account about Adam is a speech about the temptations of Ruha and the planets, and the punishments which befall those who are disloyal. It is followed by further admonitions to the believers, urgent warnings about the use of colored things, and a description of the reward of the pious. As with the preceding books, this book is followed by a colophon.

### BOOK EIGHTEEN OF THE *RIGHT GINZA*

The final book of the *Right Ginza* is a history of the world unlike any other book of the *Ginza*. In the beginning of this tractate, Ptahil creates the heavens and the Earth, everything that is upon the Earth, and the first human couple. The entire duration of the world is given as 480,000 years. This span of time is divided among the planets and the symbols of the Zodiac. Following the division of the ages is a statement about the ages leading up to the flood, and an account of Noah and the flood. After the time of Noah's son Sam (Shem), Jerusalem is established by Adunai-Iurba. Abraham travels to Egypt, and later his descendents the Jews, under Iurba's leadership, leave Egypt and travel across the sea,

through the desert, and finally settle in Jerusalem. 400 years later, Jesus is born. At this point in the text is given a list of the Old Iranian and Sasanian kings, and a history of events in the world from the years 791–803 and 850 of the Age of Pisces. The list of the Sasanian kings comes to an end when the dynasty is overthrown by the Arabs. The book concludes fittingly with an apocalyptic revelation about the end of the world.

Peculiarly, this tractate sets a 71-year limit to Arab rule. Logic dictates that it should not be dated later than the beginning of the 8th century. Lidzbarski suggests that the author would have been very unlikely to adopt such a short period of time for Arab rule once the Arabs had already established themselves, and therefore sets the date of its composition to the first years of their rule in the middle of the 7th century. He also notes that the author of this composition must have used older material, due to the references to pre-Islamic Arab kings (likely the kings of Hira, to whom the Mandaean lived in close proximity) and the generally pagan flavor of portions of the text. Lidzbarski calls for a closer examination of this book—a call which went unheeded until quite recently.<sup>12</sup>

While the *Right Ginza* has a primarily didactic character, describing the relationship of good and evil to the world and to the people, and instructing the believers in their duties in this world, the *Left Ginza* focuses almost exclusively upon the fate of the soul, particularly after its separation from the body. As a result, it has been called “the Mandaean Book of the Dead.” It comprises three books, which are followed collectively by a single colophon.

### BOOK ONE OF THE *LEFT GINZA*

The first book of the *Left Ginza* is composed in four parts. It is also entirely written in prose. The first section of the book concerns Adam and his three sons, Hibil (the biblical Abel), Šitil (the biblical Seth), and Anuš (possibly Enosh, who is the son of Seth in the biblical account). The Great Life decides that Adam’s life, which has lasted a thousand years, must now come to an end. Previously, no human being had experienced death. The Great Life sends the angel of death, Šauril, to collect Adam’s soul. Adam begs the angel to take the life of his son Šitil instead. Šauril confers with the Great Life, who agrees to take Šitil’s soul in place of Adam’s, and sends Šauril to him. At first Šitil sends him back to Adam, but eventually he is persuaded to accept this arrangement. At that point, he sees the world of light, and offers a prayer that causes Adam’s eyes and other senses to become opened to it. Upon seeing the world of light, Adam desires to depart for it, but he is rejected by Šitil, who is lifted into the heights and welcomed by the Great Life and the *‘utras*.

In GL 1.2, the Great Life sends a messenger to Adam in order to free his soul from its earthly bondage and retrieve it. The messenger comes to Adam and demands that he finally depart the material world. In response, Adam begins moaning and wailing about his indispensability in the world. The messenger emphasizes the iniquity of the material world and again asks Adam to leave it. It pains Adam to see his body abandoned unguarded, and requests that he be permitted to bring it along with him. When this request is denied, he begs for his wife and children to accompany him along the way. The messenger lectures him on the worthlessness of all worldly possessions and warns him that the way will be very difficult. Adam complains, and argues that the body has certain advantages as well as its deficiencies. A cloud guided by four *‘utras*, who ask Adam to climb aboard, arrives. He continues to prove recalcitrant, and asks once again to be allowed to bring his wife Haua along with him. He is informed that Haua will follow after him, and eventually his entire tribe. At that point, he is taught about the suffering that will accompany the end of the world, and reassured that he is fortunate to have left the world before the apocalypse arrives. Adam begs the Great Life to save the world from desolation, and the Great Life consents, promising him and his people eternal grace.

In the following section, we find Haua mourning the death of her husband Adam. The Great Life dispatches Hibil Ziua to Haua, to comfort her and convince her to abandon her mourning. He manages to convince Haua, but Ruha and the planets conspire to make her begin mourning Adam again. Meanwhile, Hibil Ziua returns to the Great

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<sup>12</sup> Dan Shapira of the Open University of Israel is currently preparing an edition of Book 18.



Life and informs him of the success of his mission. As Haua is being assailed by Ruha and the planets, she calls upon Manda ǧ-Hiia for help. He hears her call and comes to retrieve her from her body, but Ruha strives to keep her on the Earth. At that point, Hibil Ziua appears and retrieves her from her body (as in the other sections of the *Ginza*, Hibil Ziua and Manda ǧ-Hiia seemingly alternate between one another). Hibil Ziua advises their children, who have been deprived of their guardians, to take care of themselves, and promises that they too shall be redeemed. He then brings the young Šitil back to heaven. The section concludes with an admonition from Manda ǧ-Hiia against mourning.

The final section of the first book, GL 1.4, describes the soul as it progresses from the material world to the world of light, with detailed descriptions of the toll-stations in which the soul is detained and their rulers.

### BOOK TWO OF THE *LEFT GINZA*

The second book consists of 28 short pieces. At the beginning of each piece, the words “I am a Mana of the Great Life” appear. In addition to the common introductory formula, most of the pieces also agree with one another in content.

The Mana bemoans the fact that it has been expelled from its original homeland and cast into a physical body, trapped on the transitory Earth, which is ruled by the wicked. Upon hearing its lament, a helper comes to its aid—generally alone, but in two sections (GL 2.8 and GL 2.27) accompanied by others. The helper comforts the Mana, but cautions it to stand firm and promises it with a reward for its commitment and salvation in the afterlife. This helper is usually named a **našba**, a word which can also mean “creator.” It is often glossed with the Middle Iranian term **adi-aura** “(divine) helper,” which indicates that the former sense of the word is intended.

Some pieces deviate from this pattern, and there are also contradictions between them. Comparing the various sections of this book to GR 15.9, which is similar in content but lacks the introductory phrase “I am a Mana of the Great Life,” Lidzbarski argues that they were composed by different authors and were later brought together by a single editor, who added the introductory phrase to those pieces that lacked it. In GL 2.1, the helper or **paruanqa** (another Middle Iranian term) is sent by Manda ǧ-Hiia. In GL 2.10, a being named the Father is first mentioned, to whom the Mana turns for help. The Father then sends the Mana a helper. In GL 2.15, the Mana is told to enter a trunk and to pass under the planets. The planets attempt to ensnare it, but it thwarts their attempts. The Mana then calls upon its helper to guide it into the heavens; the helper does so, in agreement with the Great Life. In GL 2.16 and 2.19, the Mana is instructed to enter the physical body. In GL 2.14, 2.19, 2.21, 2.24, and 2.25, the Mana is named Adam, in GL 2.18 it is called Adakas “the Hidden Adam” in contrast to the bodily trunk, while in GL 2.8 he is merely called Adam.

In his comments on the book, Lidzbarski identifies it as a *Trostbuch*, a book intended to elicit faith, which was likely read aloud by those who were literate for the benefit of those who were not. He notes that Richard Reitzenstein identified the number of sections, 28, with the 28 “stations of the Moon;” while Lidzbarski agrees that the number 28 was undoubtedly popularized by the stations of the Moon, he doubts that the editor of this book had them in mind as he was redacting it.

### BOOK THREE OF THE *LEFT GINZA*

The final book of the *Left Ginza* consists of 62 poems, of which all are concerned with the fate of the soul after death. Many of these are also found in the Mandaean liturgy; some of the longer poems alternate with shorter ones, which brings to mind communal responses (indeed, as Jorunn Buckley notes,<sup>13</sup> four of the shorter ones belong to the **‘niania** or “ritual response” genre of the *Canonical Prayerbook*). The liturgical use of this book in the **masiqta**, or death

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<sup>13</sup> Buckley, *Great Stem*, p. 24. The prayers in question are four **‘niania** (GL 3.2/CP 96, GL 3.3/CP 94, GL 3.4/CP 92, and GL 3.7/CP 98), two **masiqta** (“death mass”) hymns (GL 3.20/CP 68 and GL 3.43/CP 66), and one oil-prayer (GL 3.27/CP 73).

mass, is indicated by a comment in the margin of MS Paris A: “When one reads the book for the departed, whether it be a man or a woman or a priest, first he reads the **rahmia** (prayers) for himself, and then for the entire generation.” At the beginning of GL 3.14, another comment in the margin of MS Paris C notes, “When you arrive at ‘As the darkness forged plans,’ then place the departed in the grave, if he is a priest or a ganzibra.”

The chain of copyists named in the colophon that concludes the *Left Ginza* extends back to the turn of the 3rd c. CE, suggesting that the texts contained within it were composed sometime before that time.

## CONCLUSION

Petermann’s work was a boon to scholarship at the time of its publication and continued to inspire several generations of scholars following him. Were it not for the lack of a Mandaic typeface and the limitations of the technology in his era, as described in his preface, it would undoubtedly have been more widely distributed. The value of his edition may be gauged by the fact that, despite these handicaps, it has served as the basis for all scholarship on the *Ginza* following him, and the edition of his predecessor has been all but forgotten. Furthermore, though new manuscripts of the *Ginza* have become available to western scholars since its publication, no new critical edition has emerged to unseat it from its position of prominence in the scholarly literature.

The *Ginza* is indeed a great treasure, and one that has thus far been underappreciated outside of the Mandaean community. As a cardinal religious text of the period of late antiquity, bearing the imprint of this period throughout, it has as much to offer scholars of Gnosticism as those of Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. As the seminal work of Mandaean literature, and the largest composition in their language, it is also of great interest to scholars of the languages and literatures of the Middle East. Today, 140 years after its first and only print run, Petermann’s edition is finally being made available to a new generation of scholars and Mandaeans alike. It is earnestly hoped that the Gorgias Press publication of this scholarly edition will provide the impetus for further study and translations of the *Ginza*, at a time when Mandaean studies are once again coming into vogue.

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## PETERMANN'S 1867 PREFACE

*Translated from the Latin by Charles Häberl*

I submit to the benevolent readers the text of a most remarkable work of the Mandaeans,<sup>14</sup> which is commonly but falsely called “The Book of Adam” among our people, and is of both the highest importance and greatest size. I am indebted to Codex Parisiensis 309.A., which I copied by hand, not by way of a page for a single page, but the lines still correspond to the original lines. This effort was certainly inferior in its execution, the work being far too great to use virgin ink alone in copying it, and since therefore it was mixed with oil, the result was that the letters often turned out very thick. Other problems occurred. In the first place, because I am admittedly ignorant of the skill of painting letters beautifully or indeed even well, and did not wish to attain anything beyond a certain degree of clarity, those who are about to read will be forced to examine my rough and rude hand with their eye, and perhaps they will be given offense by the forms less well written, which are by no means infrequent. Then, at the time when the book was finally able to be printed, once the entire work had been copied, I thereupon suffered the birth pangs of certain other calamities. For, seeing as the liquid of the ink had dried out, it happened on occasion that Pietz, the lithographer, a most learned man, was unable even with great work and his own distinguished craft to bring it about that single letters were restored with the care that he had provided. Furthermore, because the errors had been committed while writing, one can correct them, if we take advantage of the printing; in fact, on some occasions I copied the same thing with my hand three or four times, and on other occasions (but indeed more rarely) I have marked an error by means of written points placed below, and have added the proper writing above, in the manner of the Mandaean scribes. Nor do I wish to suppress that the most evident of the ancient copyists’ errors were not infrequently corrected by me without mention.

Now, thanks to the help of the unparalleled Bibliothèque Impériale of Paris, and also the generosity and goodwill of the Royal Ministry of the Prussians, I received not only this codex, of which I have been speaking, but successively also three other manuscript copies of this book, indicated by the letters B, C, and D, of which I added a selection with the colophons of the scribes in a single book, in which they indicate not only their own clan and family, but also the origin, time, and place in which they wrote the copies that they made. Moreover, it ought to be known first that the more wealthy Mandaeans are compelled by their own particular sense of duty to see to the copying of this book for their own use, and second that this is both a duty and a privilege of the priests, to whom the task of copying is entrusted. For this reason, these priests praise the names of those for whose use they copy, along with the entire household, at the beginning of the entire work and of individual chapters, as well as at the end, and attach their blessing. Now those who were able to write many books, and thereby made a greater profit, produced each and every one with a speeding pen, as a result of which they lapsed into many errors, of which it was tedious to count and point out all.

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<sup>14</sup> Concerning which, see my *Reisen im Orient*, vol. 2 (Leipzig: von Veit & Co., 1865), 447ff.

Lest any escape the readers, I have added both the colophons and the corrections, as I noted above. Without a doubt, it would have been better to provide for the readers had I added everything to a single page, but I was compelled against setting down that path, because I did not have all the books together at hand, and was unable to compare them. All these books are in the greatest shape, as they are accustomed to be, and A was certainly written in the city of Huwayza in the year 968 AH (1560/1 AD), B in the city of Basra in the year 1042 AH (1632/3 AD), C in the city of Huwayza like A but in the year 1091 (1680/1 AD), and D on the Šamania canal in the year 11-- (that is, the remainder is missing, a lacuna left behind that the scribe intended to fill once the entire work was complete, no doubt); cf. Dr. Julius Euting, in the *Zeitschrift der Deutsche Morgenländische Gesellschaft* XIX, pp. 120ff. Whatever was lost or missing in manuscript A, I have inserted in its place, exempting only chapter P. II, p. 117, which I have placed in the second volume below, which was not found by the copyist in the original copy. You will also find any lacunas of the remaining manuscripts as well as the colophons along with their individual readings there.

Perhaps there will be those who decide that this new edition of this book, which will follow shortly, is a useless and unnecessary version, in comparison with two which Matthias Norberg, a most worthy scholar of Oriental literature, has already brought to light fifty years ago. I am not the sort of man who wishes to belittle the accomplishments of such a man, the keenness of whose intellect, which restored the corrupted text in the more difficult places, and rendered the sense of both individual words and sentences well, I do greatly respect. Occasionally, however, when he was quickly engaged in his work, he did not so much correct as corrupt, according to his own judgment without the support of the texts, and yielded a less probable version. It happens, that which the Mandaeans use for a system of writing, regularly writing the vowel letters as consonants, just as the Ethiopians employ in the formation of their letters something much like those combinations, for which neither Syriac, which Norberg used, nor any other scripts are well suited as a means of rendering a transcript. Moreover, it ought not be denied that there are so many things to be discovered in nearly all books of the Mandaeans, which could not be understood unless someone had used an educated Mandaean man as a guide. It truly turned out to be so fortunate that I came upon one such man, who possesses accurate knowledge of that religion today, whom I won over to me and who shared his knowledge with me, so that I thereby could acquire a better judgment of them despite the yet unwilling and reluctant nature of the religion of the Mandaeans.

In short, many things have helped me, as is evident from these words, as they roused me to embark upon this work, its copying, its editing, and its publication, and drove me thus far, so that with this work being completed, I am planning to publish the other books of the Mandaeans. Nevertheless, I will begin with that which Dr. Julius Euting, PhD, distinguished at a young age with an abundance of erudition and very well-versed in interpreting the letters of the Mandaeans, will make available very soon.

As for the rest, I need to point out that this work consists of two parts, of which the first one is called the "right," and the other one indeed following, which is read by the priest also in the funeral rites, and written for the sake of the dead, is called the "left," and the bookbinder had to put these together in an upside-down relationship according to the custom of the Mandaeans, so that this edited copy appeared in every way to be similar to the written copies.

Of this book, only a hundred copies exist, of which the Ministry of the King of the Prussians will have purchased twelve copies for the use of the State Libraries of Prussia, the editor will have reserved thirteen copies for his own fair use, and only seventy-five will be sold publicly.

