

JORUNN J. BUCKLEY\*

SELECTED ENOCH-TRADITIONS  
IN THE MANDAEAN *GINZA*

This study begins with a specific story in the Mandaean *Right Ginza* 6 in order to detect connections in this text to late antiquity ascent literature<sup>1</sup>. My topic concerns the final authoritative source of wisdom : is it written, found in books, or revelatory, in the Mandaean World of Light, the heavens ? In terms of the colloquy's focus on good and evil, I will show how the Mandaean materials demonstrate connections to the Enoch traditions. So far in scholarship, such affinities have not been pointed out in Mandaean studies, and I therefore appreciate the opportunity to present my findings here. I hope this study will begin to relate the Mandaean literary genre of ascent literature to the Enoch literature.

THE STORY IN *RIGHT GINZA* 6

Dinanukt is a wise scribe – half-book, half-human – an Utnapisthim or Noah-figure, who sits between the waters (rivers ?)<sup>2</sup>. He seems to be the quintessential intellectual, as he seeks knowledge, studying past, present and future in the old and new books which are strewn around him.

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\* Bowdoin College, Brunswick, Maine, USA.

1. A much longer version was given at the international ARAM conference, on the Mandaean, in Sydney, July 2007.

2. M. LIDZBARSKI, *Ginza, Der Schatz oder das grosse Buch der Mandäer*, Göttingen, Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht, 1925 (reprint 1978) (hereafter abbreviated *GR* for *Right Ginza* and *GL* for *Left Ginza*). Dinanukt's story is found in *GR* 6, p. 205-212.

One of Dinanukt's epithets is the « ink-book of the gods »<sup>3</sup>. Unfortunately, he is haughty and self-contained, powerful and prideful, and he thinks that he has no equals. But he will soon have trouble, for on his heavenly journey, he discovers that there is a Lord superior to and older than himself.

First, another half-book, half-human, named Dişai, appears, and Dinanukt opens the human book and studies it. Language pours forth vigorously from Dişai, disturbing Dinanukt. Dişai is smaller than Dinanukt, but he has access to another knowledge, for he states that there exists an older wisdom (which is evidently not Dişai – or even present *in* Dişai – himself). This wisdom is characterized by the words : « There is a Life that was from the beginning, and there is a Truth that was even earlier, from the beginning. There is Radiance, there is Light ; there is Death, there is Life ; there is Darkness, there is Light ; there is Error, there is Truth ; there is Destruction, there is Construction ; there is Wound, there is Healing. There is an elevated Man, who is older and earlier than the builder of heaven and earth<sup>4</sup>. »

Dinanukt asks where he can find all this, but Dişai does not answer. The text's style reverts to the 1<sup>st</sup> person sing., with Dinanukt as the speaker. He says that he tried to burn Dişai. A repetitive pattern follows in the narrative, an incantatory pattern similar to what is found in some ancient Near Eastern texts. We read the description of Dinanukt, again, sitting between the waters, studying, and Dişai returns, with the same message. Again disturbed, Dinanukt attempts to destroy the loquacious little book, but now he does not try to burn him but puts him in the water to drown him. No success.<sup>5</sup> For the third time, Dişai appears, and now Dinanukt gives up and lets the little book rest in front of him for an entire day.

Then, while Dinanukht is evidently asleep, the holy spirit Ewath-Ruha comes to him and chides him for loving sleep (is this a critique of lazy scholars?). She states that she comprises the dichotomies that Dişai declared. Indeed, she identifies herself as « the elevated Man ». At the end of the dichotomies she adds to Dişai's proclamation, stating that she « has no comrades among kings, and there is no crown in my kingdom. There is not a single human being who could give me a message in the foggy clouds of darkness<sup>6</sup>. »

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3. *Ibid.*, p. 206. All *Ginza* translations into English are my own.

4. *Ibid.* For Ruha in *GR 6* (and elsewhere), see chapter 4 in J. J. BUCKLEY, *The Mandaeans, Ancient Texts and Modern People*, Oxford, New York, Oxford University Press, 2002.

5. Here LIDZBARSKI, obviously tired, skips another repetition in his translation (p. 207).

6. *GR 6*, p. 207.