



The Manichaean Body: In Discipline and Ritual

By Jason David BeDuhn

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Reconstructing Manichaeism from scraps of ancient texts and the ungenerous polemic of its enemies (such as the ex-Manichaean Augustine of Hippo), BeDuhn reveals for the first time the religion as it was actually practiced. He describes the Manichaeans' daily ritual meal, their stringent disciplinary codes (intended to prevent humans from harming plants and animals), and their secretive religious procedures designed to transform the cosmos and bring about the salvation of all living beings.

Overturing long-held assumptions about Manichaean dualism, asceticism, spirituality, and the pursuit of salvation, *The Manichaean Body* changes completely how we look at this ancient religion and the environment in which Christianity arose. BeDuhn's conclusions revolutionize our understanding of the Manichaeans, clearly distinguishing them from Gnostics and other early Christian heretics and revealing them to be practitioners of a unique world religion.

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Review

The work marks an entirely bold and novel approach to the study of Manichaeism.

(History of Religions)

[This book] is a well-crafted work whose theoretical and practical interests can affect not only the way that scholars look at Manichaeism but also the way that they do religious studies as a whole.... [A] fascinating and important work.

(Horace Jeffery Hodgegs Journal of the American Academy of Religion)

Clearly written, and featuring a useful bibliography along with a central section of black-and-white plates. A solid work of scholarship which will be essential to further study in the areas he has marked out and which ought to interest scholars in many other fields of religious studies.

(Wendy Love Anderson Journal of Religion)

BeDuhn has done a great service here by reinterpreting the primary source material with a view to establishing the actual day-to-day religious practices of the Manichaeans... A most valuable work, sure to be consulted by specialists and students alike.

(Choice)

Scintillating work... BeDuhn's interpretation of much of the evidence is penetrating and evocative.

(Samuel N. C. Lieu Catholic Historical Review)

A significant study on the rationale of Manichaeism.

(Desmond Durkin-Meisterernst Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society)

About the Author

Jason David BeDuhn is an associate professor of religion at Northern Arizona University. He is the author of articles on Manichaeism and early Christianity, and he has coedited, with Paul Mirecki, two volumes of Manichaean studies: *Emerging from Darkness: Studies in the Recovery of Manichaean Sources* and *The Light and the Darkness: Studies in Manichaeism and Its World*.

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