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Century Syriac References to Mandaeans by Name -- On the Kentaeans and Their Relationship with the Mandaeans -- The Account of al-asan ibn Bahll (Bar Bahlul), Second Half of Tenth Century -- Identifying Ab Al -- The Marshes of the bians -- Other Reports on the Mandaeans after Ab Al -- Back to the Question of Origins -- Pre-Mandaeian Noraeans -- The Religious Environment of Sasanian Iraq -- Mandaeism as a Changing Tradition -- Bar Konay on the Kentaeans, Dostaeans, and Nerigaeans, in English -- Ibn Wašya on Aramaic Dialects -- Bibliography -- Index.

Sommario/riassunto

This historical study argues that the Mandaean religion originated under Sasanid rule in the fifth century, not earlier as has been widely accepted. It analyzes primary sources in Syriac, Mandaic, and Arabic to clarify the early history of Mandaeism. This religion, along with several other, shorter-lived new faiths, such as Kentaeism, began in a period of state-sponsored persecution of Babylonian paganism. The Mandaeans would survive to become one of many groups known as bians by their Muslim neighbors. Rather than seeking to elucidate the history of Mandaeism in terms of other religions to which it can be related, this study approaches the religion through the history of its social contexts.
