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The Manichaeans of Kellis : religion, community, and everyday life
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Stellingen bij het proefschrift:

M. Brand, *The Manichaeans of Kellis: Religion, Community, and Everyday Life*.

1. If religions are comparable, they are also different, but if they are different, they are also comparable (*Paraphrasing Stock, Listening for the text*, 142).
2. The academic study of religion should be a comparative project, as all knowledge derives from comparison. If the discipline fails to live up to this task, it will crumble into a particularism that is difficult to defend intellectually and in the public sphere.
3. The study of lived religion can profit from cross-fertilization with the study of everyday nationalism (Brubaker, Fox and Miller-Idriss).
4. Religious terminology in ancient papyri tends to be grossly over-interpreted.
5. It is sometimes necessary to place claims on a continuous, coherent, religious tradition between brackets, in order to get a full understanding of local religious practice first. Every religion, especially one as widespread as Manichaeism, encompasses a broad variety of – sometimes contradictory – practices and ideas.
6. Manichaeism, despite being a modern category, can best be understood as an ancient “religion” (*Contra Nongbri*).
7. Individual, familial, authorial, or local agency has often been invisible in the study of Manichaeism, which has led to a reconstruction of a cosmological

and theological system with an essentialized core. This approach has prioritized textual, cosmological, and systematized features over the chaotic lived religious practice of ancient individuals.

8. Despite all our best intentions, we do not know Mani's original intentions for his religion.
9. Even though Manichaeans closely associated with Christianity, it is analytically unfruitful to re-brand it as a trajectory of ancient Christianity.
10. The Manichaeans in Kellis were not concealing their religious affiliation, nor is there reason to believe they fled the Nile Valley during a period of religious persecution.
11. There is little reason to believe there was a Manichaean monastery in the vicinity of Kellis (nor in fourth-century Egypt at all).
12. Even for Kellites with a strong affiliation with the Manichaean community, Manichaeanness was only one of their many identifications (after Rebillard).
13. Manichaeism in Kellis was not defined by the daily presence of the elect, nor by the preparation for – and performance of – the Manichaean ritual meal.
14. Contemporary newspaper coverage of religious identities frequently entails reified, totalized, and normative representations – especially when discussed in relation to migration. This “deeply crude intellectual move” (with Amartya Sen, *Violence and Identity*, 175) is hardly ever intellectually acceptable, and contributes to societal tensions rather than to a deeper understanding of everyday life.