Samuel N. C. Lieu, Lance Eccles, Majella Franzmann, Iain Gardner, and Ken Parry. *Medieval Christian and Manichaean Remains from Quanzhou (Zayton)*. Corpus Fontium Manichaeorum, series archaeologica et iconographica (SAI 2). Turnout, Belgium: Brepols; Ancient Cultures Research Center, Macquarie University, NSW, Australia, 2012. x + 282 p., 127 b/w ill + 73 color ill. ISBN: 978-2-50352187-8. 125 Euro.

In 1346 or 1347, a Florentine traveler named John of Marignolli arrived in the port city of Zayton on the south coast of China in Fukien province. Like Marco Polo and other Europeans who passed through Zayton in the same era, John marveled at the scale and bustling international trade of this *mirabilis civitas*. He was particularly proud of the city's "three very fine churches" held by the local Franciscan community and the custom-made bells that they had installed in the "very middle of the Saracen community" (p. 9).

John neglects to mention the existence of Zayton's non-European Christian population, in particular its polyglot Nestorian community, which achieved its greatest extent and influence as allies of China's Mongol rulers under the Yüan dynasty (1271–1368). In this splendid new volume, a team of Australian scholars led by Samuel N. C. Lieu offers a window into the history of this medieval Christian community, drawing upon the results of their meticulous research in the modern city of Quanzhou (medieval Zayton) between 2001 and 2008. The book that has emerged from this ambitious collaboration is a testament not only to these scholars' erudition and insight, but also to their ability to work effectively with Chinese scholars, museum directors, and other officials. Appropriately, the book is dedicated to the memory of Wu Wenliang (1903–69), the local biology teacher and archaeologist whose dedicated research saved many of his city's medieval Christian artifacts from destruction.

The story of how these Christian monuments resurfaced is itself instructive. Their discovery began as an inadvertent result of modernization and war. In 1938, in the early phases of the second Sino-Japanese War, the Nationalist government of China ordered the demolition of the medieval walls of Quanzhou and ten other coastal cities in Fujian to deny their use to the Japanese forces that were preparing to invade the province. A portion of Quanzhou's city walls had already been leveled in the 1920s to make way for a railroad; now the job was completed, exposing dozens of inscribed tombstones and other stone artifacts that had been used as foundation blocks or infill for the walls (p. 15). Wu Wenliang began collecting and photographing these monuments in the late 1930s, storing many of them in his backyard during the turmoil of the war. His catalogue of the artifacts, published in 1957, became a standard reference work for Chinese historians of the Yüan, but received little attention outside China until his son published a revised and expanded edition in 2005. Today, most of the tombstones and related monuments (including nine items found since 1975) are on display in the Quanzhou Maritime Museum, which opened in 1991, although some of the original stones have been moved to Beijing and replaced with copies.

The present book presents a catalogue of the decorated and inscribed Christian and Manichaean artifacts of medieval Quanzhou. This diverse and complex corpus of material features more than seventy-five objects that are or could be Christian (14 headstones, 36 inscribed tombstones and sarcophagus–panels, 6 column drums or other cylindrical stones, and 18 "Islamic style sarcophagi with Christian motifs"). The majority of these objects bear no inscriptions, and the catalogue organizes them by shape and decoration: the most common image is a cross floating on a lotus cloud, often held by a single angel or supported by a pair of winged figures. The inscriptions are mostly in Syro-Turkic — that is, medieval Uighur written in a Syriac script — a writing system used by Christians throughout much of Asia in the fourteenth century. As Eccles and Lieu explain in an invaluable introductory essay to the epigraphy (pp. 151–69), the closest parallels for the Quanzhou inscriptions come from the roughly contemporary tombstones from Semirechye (Kyrgyzstan), which often employ other similar phraseology.

Many of the Quanzhou epitaphs, as also in Semirechye, include dates rendered in the Seleucid calendar, sometimes juxtaposed with the equivalent date computed according to the Turkic or Chinese calendar. In a curious bit of antiquarianism, some of the Quanzhou inscriptions attempt to make the Seleucid dating formula even more precise, citing the year according to the reckoning of "Alexander the Great King (*ilig xan*), the son of King Philip from the city of Macedonia" (p. 163). The faulty identification of Macedonia as a city (*balïq*) shows how Turkic speakers misunderstood the original Syriac dating formula, which identified Alexander simply as the "Macedonian" (as attested, for instance, in an eighth-century inscription from the Syrian village of Kefr Lab). Here and elsewhere in their commentary on the Quanzhou inscriptions, Eccles and Lieu demonstrate the pan-Eurasian horizons required for the decipherment of these Christian epitaphs. This decipherment — which Majella and Lieu modestly describe as "an ongoing process" (p. 179) — has been greatly aided by the discovery in 1981 of the bilingual (Chinese and Syro–Turkic) tombstone of a certain Lady (*xatun*) Elizabeth, the consort of Ioannis Sam–Sha of Dadu (Beijing), who was laid to rest "in the year 1628 of the reckoning of King Alexander, in the Turkic reckoning of the Snake Year," i.e., in 1317 CE (pp. 172–74). A recently published Syro-Turkic inscription from Inner Mongolia, whose language and phrasing closely resembles that of the Quanzhou epitaphs, provides further evidence of the strong linguistic and cultural links between the Christian communities of Inner Asia and southern China. As Eccles and Lieu observe, we must remember that the port at Zayton was only the "southernmost major outpost" of this larger world of Turkic–speaking Christians under Mongol rule (p. 169). Other Christian inscriptions from Quanzhou written in various combinations of Latin, Uighur, and Chinese — the last sometimes written in the Phagspa (Mongol–Tibetan) script — underscore the ethnic diversity of the city's churches (pp. 129–42).

This publication also provides suggestive new evidence for the potential antiquity of Zayton's

Christian community. The Christian tombstones of Quanzhou all date to the Yüan era, but their imagery and language preserve echoes of much earlier phases of Nestorian culture in China. As Parry argues in his analysis of the iconography (pp. 243–62), the imagery of the cross being carried by a pair of winged spirits has easily identifiable roots in Hellenistic and early Christian art. An inscribed Christian pillar discovered at Luoyang in 2006 confirms that very similar imagery was already being used in China in 829 when the pillar was erected. In other words, the Yüan–era grave markers at Quanzhou clearly built on a tradition of Chinese Christian funerary art with roots in the Tang dynasty (618-907). Linguistic markers in several Syro–Turkic and Chinese inscriptions from Quanzhou hint at the same legacy. For example, the bilingual epitaph of the bishop Mar Solomon, who died in Quanzhou in 1313, refers to his jurisdiction over "the *Yelikewen*, the followers of the Qin–sect, and the Light–sect." Lieu suggests (p. 33) that the first two terms refer to different segments of the Christian community at Quanzhou. In this interpretation, the followers of the "Qin–sect" — *Qinjiao*, an archaic term alluding to the Church's origin in the Roman Empire (*Da Qin*) — may have had local roots in Quanzhou extending back to the Tang era, while the *Yelikewen* (a term of uncertain etymology) consisted mainly of Turkic-speaking foreigners who multiplied in Quanzhou with the advent of Mongol rule. Lieu's reconstruction here, while speculative, has much to recommend it. The identity of the third group placed under Bishop Solomon's jurisdiction is more certain: they were Manichaeans.

The Manichaean material from Quanzhou offers an especially intriguing case of religious survival and transformation. The religion of the prophet Mani (pp. 216–76), introduced to China by the end of the seventh century, gained an extensive following in South China during the Song dynasty (960–1279), where it was known as the *Mingjiao* or "the Religion of Light." As Lieu explains (pp. 62–65), building on the arguments of his pioneering 1985 monograph, the adoption of two major Manichaean treatises into the Daoist canon (compiled in 1019) ensured the dissemination of Manichaean teaching in new hybrid forms. It is not known when "the Religion of Light" arrived in Quanzhou, but the survival of a Manichaean shrine on Huabaio Hill, 27 km southwest of Quanzhou, is indicative of the religion's tenacity in the area. The shrine, apparently founded in 1148 (p. 75, n. 35), is still in operation today, although its main temple has been completely rebuilt and its cult refocused on Mani in his guise as the Buddha of Light. Eccles and Lieu provide editions and translations of five Manichaean inscriptions found at the shrine or in nearby villages. These include a shallow ceramic bowl, probably from the late Song period, incised with the Chinese characters *Mingjiao hui*, literally, "Society of the Teaching of Light" (p. 146). The discovery of some six hundred fragments of similar bowls in the same area offers strong support for Lieu's hypothesis that these bowls were once used for the sect's ritual vegetarian meals — a habit that drew derision from the Confucian scholars who denounced the followers of the *Mingjiao* as "vegetarians and demon worshippers" (p. 70). A dedication stone erected at the same shrine in 1445 implores visitors to recite "Purity, Light, Great Power, Wisdom, the highest and unsurpassable truth, Mani the Buddha of Light" (p. 143). Thus, echoes of Manichaean hymns first formulated in third-century Mesopotamia could be heard on the shores of the South China Sea in the mid-fifteenth century.

By this period, the Nestorian community of Quanzhou had long since fallen upon hard times. Although no literary source describes this decline, a report from another city suggests that the troubles may have begun already in the early decades of the fourteenth century. In the reign of the Yüan Emperor Buyantu (r. 1311–20), Buddhist monks in the city of Zhenjiang successfully petitioned for the return of properties that had been seized by an abusive Christian official named "Mar Sargis" (a good Syrian name) and the destruction of Christian images in the monasteries "which the heretic *Yelikewen* trusting in their strength [had] built" on the property confiscated from the Buddhist monks (p. 47). In this context, it may be significant that none of the dated Syro–Turkic inscriptions of Quanzhou postdates Buyantu's reign. Some of the undated monuments are presumably later — for instance, the four funerary inscriptions engraved in Phagspa script, which cannot be earlier than the late fourteenth century — but it appears that no Christian remains from the city can be securely dated later than ca. 1400. The xenophobic atmosphere of the early Ming Dynasty, which replaced the Yüan in 1368, ensured that medieval China's most international port lost its official status and fell into rapid decline. As Lieu observes, "The writing was clearly on the wall for Quanzhou when the Maritime Trade Commission was moved to its traditional rival Fuzhou c. 1472" (p. 13). It was probably during the early Ming, if not before, that the gravestones and other monuments of the city's Nestorian community were reused as construction material for the city's walls, placing them in an archaeological storage chest from which they would re-emerge only in the early twentieth century.

Finally, it must be noted that this book's scope is considerably larger than its title indicates. A series of wide–ranging historical essays explicates the place of the Quanzhou material in its broadest Eurasian

context. Lieu's essay on the "Church of the East in Quanzhou" (pp. 25–48), for example, constitutes an important synthesis of recent work on Christianity in medieval China. Gardner's essay on the Franciscan mission to China (pp. 53–60) chronicles the formation of the Catholic diocese of Zayton; incidentally, he finds little evidence for missionary success beyond the forty slave boys whom Bishop John of Montecorvino (c. 1247–1330) bought and baptized. Finally, a lengthy essay by Franzmann, Gardner, and Parry (pp. 215–42) explores the connections between South China and India under the Yüan. Here, we learn of yet another dimension of Zayton's religious pluralism, since the city possessed at least two medieval Hindu temples: a Shiva temple implied by a bilingual (Tamil and Chinese) inscription discovered in 1956 and a Vishnu temple attested by the survival of its decorated stone pillars. In total, some "300 sculptural and architectural fragments relating to the Hindu monuments" of Quanzhou have been identified (p. 224). Noting the strength of the maritime ties with India implied by these finds, the authors ask whether Manichaean and Nestorian teachers may have traveled the same routes. While this question takes them into speculative territory, their discussion includes a notably well–informed review of our earliest evidence for Manichaeans and Syrian Christians in India.

The book is beautifully produced in a large format (210 x 297 mm) with extensive black-and-white and color illustrations of the artifacts. Its price, while hefty, is not unreasonable given the complexity of the book's production elements. The catalogue presents each of the Syro–Turkic inscriptions in Syriac script, transliteration, and translation, and all Chinese names and key terms are given in both transliteration and Chinese characters. The authors and publisher have thus done a commendable job of making the book accessible to those with or without their cumulative philological expertise. Color maps of the region and the city make it relatively straightforward to identify the find spots of individual artifacts. Although the index is somewhat cursory, in all other respects, the production quality is exceptional. In sum, this is a scholarly tour de force that deserves to reach a wide audience of advanced readers in the fields of medieval Eurasian history, archaeology, and philology.

Joel Walker
Associate Professor of History
University of Washington, Seattle