

MANI AND MANICHAISM



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BERSERKER

BOOKS



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CHAPTER ONE

MANI'S BACKGROUND

The Political Situation in Mesopotamia and Neighbouring Territories – The Cultural Situation in Mesopotamia and Neighbouring Territories – The Religious Situation in Mesopotamia and Neighbouring Territories

The Political Situation in Mesopotamia and Neighbouring Territories

AT the beginning of the third century after the birth of Christ, Mesopotamia consisted of areas of political dispute, contrasting cultural influences and competing faiths which rendered the country the focal point of collision between two empires, the Roman and the Iranian, of encounter between two cultures, the Hellenistic and the Persian, and of rivalry between two religions as well as a host of sectarian beliefs. Christianity, the dawning Roman official creed, and Zoroastrianism, destined for a similar role in Iran, stood out as the two main spiritual contenders.

The Parthians had wrested Mesopotamia from the Seleucids about 150 BC. Though still its masters when Mani, this book's protagonist, was born, their domination was nearing its end. Their feudal empire had already begun to dissolve into a series of petty states. In the summer of AD 216 – the year of Mani's birth – the Roman Emperor Caracalla undertook an expedition through northern Mesopotamia without meeting serious resistance. His murder by the Praetorian Prefect Macrinus in the spring of 217 gave the Parthians a short respite. In the summer of the same year Macrinus sustained a reverse near the frontier-fortress of Nisibis at the hands of Artabanus V, last Parthian ruler of Iran proper, and was forced to sue for peace. Nevertheless the Parthian Empire's

days were numbered and Arsacid sovereignty – the royal family was descended from a certain Arsaces – was about to be replaced by that of the Sassanids.

Ardashir, a member of the princely Sassanian clan, attained supreme power initially (in the year 208) in the Persian ancestral region of Fars (Persis). After recognition in neighbouring provinces he succeeded in defeating Artabanus in a decisive battle. Following upon this victory he was able by a series of campaigns to extend his power to eastern Iran and even right up to the borders of north-western India. His progress was facilitated by his relationship through marriage to the overthrown Arsacid dynasty. This connection won to his side many of the most powerful Parthian feudatories.

In the west too Ardashir made considerable gains. A thrust towards Media Atropatene and Armenia met with little luck, but he managed to seize northern Mesopotamia (leaving aside Roman territory) and entered the imperial capital Seleucia-Ctesiphon in triumph. After his coronation there his suzerainty over the Iranian realms became indisputable.

Alexander Severus, the last of the Severans, now ruled at Rome. In 230 the city was startled by the alarming report of Nisibis lying besieged by the new Persian ruler. North-western Mesopotamia had been Roman since the days of Trajan. When the challenge was finally accepted two years later, the outcome was inconclusive. The *status quo* could be maintained for a short time, but in 237–38 Ardashir returned to the attack and Carrhae (Harran) and Nisibis fell into his hands. The Euphrates border was seriously imperilled. To secure it, the vassal state of Osroene with Edessa as capital was restored and briefly enjoyed a relative independence. Appointment of the Persian crown prince Shāpur as co-regent with his father signalized fresh activity on that side, although whether his capture of the desert caravan city of Hatra, despite stubborn resistance, should be dated before or after his co-regency is uncertain.

Shāpur's accession (he was probably crowned in 242) con-

fronted Rome with a foe even more dangerous than Ardashir had been. This was the era of the so-called Soldier Emperors. Military commanders, frequently of 'barbaric' extraction, swiftly supplanted one another on the throne and pretenders no sooner sprang up than they disappeared. Neglect of the imperial frontiers accompanied internal disorder. Their defence had often to be left to troops grown flabby from all too snug a garrison life. The Syrian legions, foremost among them the Legion III Gallica, had an especially bad name for fat living and lack of fitness. Being stationed amidst the luxuries of Antioch had had a demoralizing effect.

The intricate course of events remained largely unknown until shortly before the second world war. Then the excavation at Naqsh-i-Rustam of a monumental victory and memorial inscription by Shāpur threw abundant light on what had transpired.

The Emperor Gordian III, however unfavourable the prospects, was not wholly unsuccessful against Shāpur. On the other hand his successor, Philip the Arabian, in 244, after a defeat at Peroz-Shāpur on the Euphrates border, hurriedly sued for peace. While Rome was allowed to keep northern Mesopotamia and Lesser Armenia, the treaty disappointed a hitherto loyal ally, greater and independent Armenia. Its potentates were Parthian by origin and gradually Shāpur, by means that were not above conniving at assassination of the ruling Chosroes, won dominant influence inside the country. About 252 a military occupation was established and the loss of this flank protection meant a serious set-back for Rome.

Greater trials were to come. Armenia secured, Shāpur apparently lost little time in taking the offensive in Mesopotamia. A few attacks against the eastern Iranian frontier could not keep him from seizing in 254 Nisibis and about 256 the now celebrated Dura-Europos, at that time an important point of fortification in the Euphrates line of defence. The year 260 saw the King of Kings imposing a siege on Edessa. The Emperor Valerian reluctantly decided to relieve this

important city and provoked an engagement. It was a fateful decision. The Roman forces were outnumbered and allowed themselves to be encircled. The Emperor, trying to save the situation by personal negotiations with Shāpur, was taken prisoner. That this occurred through treachery, as classical sources maintain, does not necessarily tally with the truth; *dolo* or *per fraudem*, the terms used, were standing figures of speech in Roman reports. All the same, the prefects, provincial governors, senators and a large number of senior officers did fall into Shāpur's hands together with the Emperor. The army, composed of elements from all over the empire, disintegrated and mass capitulations occurred. It was one of the greatest catastrophes to Roman arms, far greater than the defeat at Carrhae.

Victory at Edessa was the prelude to Shāpur's conquest of northern Syria. In its capital of Antioch he set up a traitor by the name of Mariades as rival emperor. Not content with these achievements, he seized the occasion to dispatch his cavalry upon raids north and north-westwards. They descended into Cilicia, Cappadocia, Lycaonia and Pontus. Some columns may even have reached Galatia. The possibility of an earlier assault on Cappadocia and Pontus on the part of Shāpur's forces stationed in Armenia cannot be dismissed. His purpose in extending the campaign was not merely to cause confusion behind the Roman lines and acquire rich plunder; he aspired to overlordship of those provinces of Asia Minor whose populations, particularly the property-owning feudal aristocracies, had since Achaemenid days had a strong Iranian ingredient.

Pontus, Cappadocia, and Commagene had once been Iranian political entities. The Romans had done away with these and incorporated the areas into their empire. Here was a chance for Sassanian Iran to come forward as heir to the great Achaemenid traditions. How serious was Shāpur's dream of permanent possession of these territories is tolerably clear from his religious policy. An inscription discovered some twenty

years ago provides useful information. Though dating from Shāpur's time, the author was not the Great King but a senior Zoroastrian dignitary named Kartēr who was destined to intervene in a decisive, fateful way in the life of Mani. Under the successors of Shāpur he held office in a capacity corresponding to that of a Minister of Public Worship, was the real founder of the Sassanian established church, and a shrewd, ambitious, ruthless prelate. His sole weakness, judging at least by the boastful tones in which the inscription is couched, was a dose of vanity.

This Kartēr narrates how he – evidently accompanying Shāpur on his campaigns – not only restored dilapidated fire-temples in the conquered provinces but had new ones erected where none had been before. From the history of Armenia we know that the Persians set up Zoroastrian centres only when they felt sure of their hold on occupied territories. In such instances the latter were meant to undergo ideological assimilation also. The rigid application of the principle in this case makes manifest Shāpur's intention to 'Iranianize' these former portions of the Achaemenid empire whose populations probably still had Iranian minorities. Two more centuries and the Magi in these parts remained powerful enough to offer staunch resistance to the introduction of Christianity.

Nevertheless Shāpur's plans came nowhere near realization. Late autumn 260 saw the withdrawal of his army to Mesopotamia. The purely military grounds for his frustration cannot be discussed here. It is plain that many causes contributed to the Great King's decision. Increasing opposition from a few energetic Roman local commanders, lengthening lines of communication and consequent supply difficulties, fears of a winter campaign inevitably putting the main cavalry weapon at a disadvantage, possibly a certain disappointment regarding the passive attitude of the populations of the 'liberated' territories, and, finally, insecure conditions on the eastern Iranian frontier; all these factors together may have induced the Great King to abandon his far-ranging plans.

This is not to say that he relinquished them utterly then and there. On the contrary the war, whilst not displaying any real successes, continued for the period of Shāpur's reign. It is important to remember, however, that around the middle of the third century it seemed as if the government of the Great King would extend over the whole of the Near East. For the dissemination of Mani's teachings this fact was of outstanding importance.

The Cultural Situation in Mesopotamia and Neighbouring Territories

The rivalry between Iran and Rome proceeded both at a cultural and at a political level. For the purposes of army command and military administration the Romans of course used Latin, but in their civil service Greek was the accepted language. Intellectually it enjoyed a dominant position throughout the Near East and during the first three Christian centuries was the medium for a string of works by literary, philosophic and academic authors. This Hellenic influence was effective far beyond any political confines. The Parthians had annexed Mesopotamia about 150 BC and, in doing so, the Arsacid Great Kings took over the Seleucid empire's officials. The result, judging from available records, was the retention of Greek for bureaucratic matters and coin inscriptions.

The most important piece of testimony is a dispatch of AD 21-22 from King Artabanus to his agents at Susa in the province of Susiana (Xūzistan). One of them was probably an *epistatēs*, confidential appointment adopted from the Seleucid administration, whereas the other is certain to have been the Parthian satrap. Significantly the latter bore the typical Iranian name of Frahāt, the former the Greek one of Antiochos. In easily flowing Greek the Parthian king laid down what was to happen about the selection of municipal officials. His turns of phrase were identical with the formal style evolved as long ago as the days of Alexander's successors.

Susa has other examples of the continued vitality of Greek during this period within the limits of the Parthian empire. Several inscriptions show that members of the palace household and bodyguard had Greek names in addition to speaking Greek. Others underline its literary importance. Of great interest are those dealing with the dedication of male and female slaves to the service of Nānā, Goddess of Fertility.

The position still enjoyed not only by Seleucia, a Greek city, but by many Greek colonies such as the town of Artemisia in lower Mesopotamia attests the strength of Hellenic influence in Parthia. Unfortunately knowledge of such Greek-speaking centres is limited because excavations have hitherto been only very rarely undertaken on such sites. Dura-Europos does, however, give some idea of life there and inscriptions also confirm the predominance of Greek, even though other records and dipinti in Palmyrene and Pahlavi and a legal document in Syriac indicate the broadly oriental substratum in the Mesopotamian population.

All this shows the astonishingly vigorous authority preserved by Greek speech and ideas during the Parthian period in Mesopotamia and its neighbouring territories. The magnetism of Greek civilization was able to make itself felt in many ways and by many means whilst Babylonian influence had effectively dwindled by the last pre-Christian century. Certain transactions probably continued, especially at the old seats of learning, to be written in the inherited ancient language regardless of the fact that as vernacular it had been ousted by Aramaic as long ago as the sixth century bc. When used at all, it was often enough spelled with Greek letters in the same way as the Aramaic alphabet had earlier been introduced for the same purpose. Any employment of cuneiform after the beginning of the Christian era is doubtful. It should be recalled that even in early Seleucid times the Babylonian priest Berossos wrote down the sacred traditions in Greek to ensure their preservation for posterity.

Hellenistic culture is a symbiosis of Greece and the Orient.

Hence the literature of Mesopotamia at this period was not exclusively Greek. Indeed there are good grounds for believing that there were some literary works in Syriac dating from the first century AD for a number of elegantly turned grave epigraphs have survived. The inscriptions recently found in the surroundings of Edessa are of a later date, the second or third century. They are particularly enlightening in regard to the cultural development of northern Mesopotamia. The Epistle of Mārā bar Serapion is the oldest document that can properly be designated as literary and be firmly dated. It consists of maxims from the popular Stoa and has a quotation from a poem which has not yet been traced.

Royal records, sometimes in the form of annals, have been verified at Edessa from an early date. At Dura-Europos an important legal document, with fully-fledged professional terminology, bears witness to the refinement of speech attained. That the famous tale of Achiqar was in circulation in Syriac prior to revision at Christian hands is an established fact.

The gnostic Bardesanes was an outstanding personality of the second century. Philosopher, historian, ethnographer, astronomer, poet, Christian apologist and controversialist, he held an exceedingly important position at the Edessan court. His influence and reputation in royal Osroene circles can be ascribed not only to his abnormally penetrating intellect, but also to his astounding skill in the Parthian national sport of archery (cf. Julius Africanus, *Chronicles* – fragment). The well-known Syriac *Song of the Pearl* can also be dated from the same period. Its background indubitably reflects the geographic, social, and cultural structure of the Parthian empire and is so full of words and phrases borrowed from Iranian that, short of re-translation of expressions and allusions into Middle Iranian, many of its details are barely intelligible.

This Aramaic literary progress, the most dynamic since that of so-called 'imperial Aramaic' in the days of the Achaemenids, can be said to have been responsible for the development of a uniform Syriac literary language as derived

from the dialect spoken and written at Edessa, and it is significant that the Dura-Europos legal document displays no marked departures from this Edessene idiom.

The rise of Syriac to the primarily favoured literary language of Mesopotamia must be appreciated in order to understand why, regardless of his Iranian origin, Mani, as the founder of a religion, should almost without exception have made use of Edessene-tinged Syriac when he wanted to spread his gospel through his native land.

The Religious Situation in Mesopotamia and Neighbouring Territories

The divergency of religious belief in the Greek- and Aramaic-speaking regions at this date was remarkable. Mesopotamia itself displayed a number of broad groupings. The ruling Parthian and later Sassanian upper class subscribed in the main to various forms of Iranian 'national' religion. Veneration of the deities Mithra and Anāhīd, in circumstances that are encountered again in Zervanism, figured prominently. Zervanism itself is a topic that will recur frequently in these pages. Pure Zoroastrianism doubtless enjoyed strong support among the Iranian population of Mesopotamia, but just as plainly the dominant Magian priesthood gave its allegiance to Zervanism.

Large Jewish colonies had been a feature of the Babylonian countryside since ancient times. They carried on an active propaganda for their faith which made converts for a while even of the Parthian dynasty at Adiabene. Jewry's influence there, as well as at Edessa and in Babylonia, rendered the Old Testament and Jewish traditions widely familiar before the introduction of Christianity.

The old Babylonian religion with various shades of belief did conceivably still have many adherents; local deities like Ishtar of Arbela were honoured for many years. A progressive change in its character was however unmistakable and local

cults were inexorably doomed. A strange particularism, stemming from the old adoration of the planetary gods, was reported in much later days from the city of Harran in northern Mesopotamia. Thanks to the Syriac inscriptions in the neighbourhood of Edessa (see p. 8), the outlines of the Babylonian form of worship with its tinge of gnosticism are gradually assuming more definite shape. Of importance is the discovery in it of a Greco-Syrian syncretism. The interlarding of Greek terminology is highly interesting. Here are to be found loan-words like *bōlos*, the clod, *hūlā*, matter, and *nāmōsā*, the law, expressions which in the succeeding period grew in importance.

Certain Syrian cults, with followings in Assyria and Babylonia, need to be taken into account. Excavations at Dura have shown that Roman legionaries of Syrian origin, as of course Syrian auxiliaries, remained true to their inherited faiths wherever they might be stationed.

Southern Babylonia was the favoured refuge of a number of sects with a Babylonian-Syrian, Jewish, and Christian background. Typical are the Mandaeans, of whom more will be said later.

Finally, Christians were not slow in acquiring a foothold in northern Mesopotamia. Edessa was a missionary centre. From there the belief spread east and west, reaching purely Iranian territory (first the province of Adiabene, then those of Susiana and Persis) about AD 100. Incidentally, Christianity too manifested many assorted variations.

Probably Jewry, of all these religions and religious movements at the beginning of the third century AD, had lost most of its messianic momentum. Early on, Christianity had shown itself to be an overriding competitor in northern Mesopotamia with a strongly Jewish stamp and gaining the majority of its converts initially among Jews. The Syrian legend of the Apostle Addai's doings is an invaluable source of information about the environment in which Syrian Christianity developed. Very valuable too, testifying to the near connection

between Edessa and the home of Christendom, are the Syriac translations of the Old and New Testaments. The so-called Peshitta revision of the Old Testament is so closely related to the Jewish-Aramaic translations of the Old Testament, the Targums, that very close Jewish or Jewish-Christian affiliations may be assumed. The significance of both Judaism and the Old Testament for Mani and Manichaeism was considerable, though in an entirely negative sense – a point still to be discussed.

Right from the outset Christianity at Edessa was given a distinctly gnostic turn on the part of Bardesanes and his followers. That is why 'Christian' there was primarily taken to mean a Bardesanite. Flourishing communities of Marcionites, disciples of the great gnostic theologian Marcion, however also existed in northern Mesopotamia, and especially at Edessa. At the beginning of the fifth century the famous Bishop Rabbula had a none too easy task in repelling the Marcionite and Bardesanite forces. The difficulties of the Church with the two sects, which survived into the Islamic era, proved prolonged.

It is interesting and surely significant that these two outstanding gnostic leaders, Marcion and Bardesanes, grew up in a strongly Iranianized atmosphere. Marcion was born inside the boundaries of the old Iranian kingdom of Pontus at the Asia Minor port of Sinope. Bardesanes had not only close connections with the Edessene court, itself a derivative of Parthian culture, but also with Parthian-ruled and feudally dominated Armenia, whose history he wrote. Their Iranian links deserve remark because they may explain the Iranian bias that inspires the dualism of their systems. Both, in origin and outlook, may be regarded as precursors of Mani. Both exerted important influence upon him. His diatribes against both evince the need he felt to shed his indebtedness and to proclaim his independence of them.

We have some records of this early Syrian gnosticism. No more than a few fragments of Bardesanes, rescued by the

controversialists, have been preserved. An important item is the cosmogonical poem whose text is contained in the work of the Syriac writer Moses bar Kēphā. Bardesanes' well-known *Dialogue on Fate* has also survived, but is without a trace of gnostic thought.

A richer source of enlightenment on the early gnostic outlook of the Syriac speaking area is the apocryphal *Acts of the Apostles* given currency under the name of the Apostle Thomas and purporting to present a vivid picture of his missionary activity in north-western India, then conspicuous for Parthian ascendancy. The gnostic elements are so overpowering in this apostolic romance, which, like all similar works, follows the conventions and style of the novels of antiquity, that it was formerly thought possible to establish unalloyed Manichaean trends. Closer analysis has however shown that its prose passages as well as the inserted poems and liturgical portions are of a gnostic variety which has nothing to do with Manichaeism although in some degree it anticipates it.

From this standpoint the most momentous section is the celebrated *Song of the Pearl*. One of the greatest experts on Syriac literature, F. C. Burkitt, has said that the characteristic of this literature is a certain mediocrity. Nevertheless he admits that this poem (of which he has given a brilliant English translation) is an exception.

Its theme is that of a Parthian Prince who, at the behest of his parents, 'descends' into Egypt to obtain a pearl guarded by a fearful, poison-breathing dragon. For fear of the inhabitants of this foreign land he vainly tries to keep his identity secret. At the inn where he stays he is given so rich a meal that he forgets his task and falls into deep sleep. A report of the mishap does not take long to reach his father's ears and, much concerned, the King summons an assembly of the magnates and princes of his realm to draw up an admonitory memorial to his son signed and sealed by the feudatories, the Queen and himself. The letter, inscribed on finest of silks, assumes in marvellous manner the shape of an eagle whose cry arouses

the slumbering Prince. Startled, he quickly reads the letter and repledges himself to his home, his family, and his task. With an invocation he bewitches the frightful dragon, takes the pearl into his custody, and begins the return journey. When he arrives at the borders of his native land, he is met by two keepers of the royal treasure bearing the robe of splendour that is his. He had had to strip himself of it before departure, but his father and mother had promised to restore it to him when he had completed his task. Seeing it, the Prince sees not only himself reflected in it, but that it still fits him. Two in number, he and his robe are yet one. And his second self tells him how its growth has kept pace with his own great deeds. Wearing his royal robe, the Prince proceeds, after his reception with all due honours by the satrap, to the court of the King of Kings.

This curious and colourful Oriental fable has, as far as its details can be checked, a purely Parthian background. On that score alone it must be set prior to Mani's appearance and the suggestion, though previously entertained, of the Prince symbolizing Mani is therefore out of the question. The social, geographic, and linguistic environment of the poem is Parthian while a succession of features presuppose a feudal setting. The specific statement of a summons to the princes and magnates of Parthia by the King eliminates entirely any possibility that the action could take place in the days of Sassanian rule over Iran, which was the time of Mani's debut.

The Song of the Pearl is certainly pre-Manichaean and exhibits the intellectual world upon which Mani entered. During the course of this book we shall often refer to this poem which provides a valuable key to the understanding of gnosticism's intrinsic character.

The *Acts of Thomas*, as we have said, disclose unmistakably gnostic elements, for instance the votive prayers that precede the apostle's performance of baptism and the Eucharist. For Syriac Christians these represented two features of the same event. To begin with, by exorcism Man was freed from the

demons of sickness and suffering. Exorcism was thought to free Man for a while from these evil spirits, but not until baptism was he definitely purged and the might of the demons confounded. By baptism Man was freed from sin and thus of sickness, for according to Semitic views sickness resulted from the power demons had gained over sinful Man.

The Eucharist always followed baptism. Thereby the newly baptized ascended to paradise and partook of the fruit of the tree of life. This was Jesus Christ himself, his blood and body being deemed the fruit of life. 'The fruit that Adam did not taste in Paradise is today now joyfully laid in your mouths,' says the Syrian Church Father Ephraim in a hymn dedicated to the newly baptized (*Hymns of Epiphany* XIII, 17). This view tallies with the *Acts of Thomas* (Chapter 135) where the Eucharist is called the *pharmacum vitae*.

On occasions anointment with oil was considered to be of equal virtue, therefore it is typical that water does not seem to have been regarded in the *Acts* as an essential element of baptism. Oil too was bound up with the picture of paradise for the gnostics saw it as symbolizing the oil from the tree of life. 'I have been anointed with the shining oil of the tree of life,' runs a gnostic formula preserved in Origen (*Contra Celsum* VI, 27).

The connection between exorcism, baptism and the Eucharist was inherited. The link with ancient Mesopotamian religion is clearly visible through the elaboration among Syriac Christians of these sacramental transactions, especially in their gnostic versions. The spiritual affinity becomes visible at every turn of the relevant terminology.

Southern Babylonia is the classic land of gnostic baptismal sects and there is nothing accidental about the gnostic baptist movements having taken stable root here. The tradition may be said to have continued uninterruptedly from earliest Sumerian to contemporary times. During the Sumerian period a cult associated with the High God Ea and his divine constellation, his consort Damkina, and his son Asariludu

(later identified with Marduk) began in the city of Eridu on the Persian Gulf. Ablutions as a means of rescuing the sick from the power of demons and healing them played an important part. Oil too, 'the Oil of Life' as it was called, was a material factor in the ritual. The High God assumed the character of redeemer of Man tormented by the demons of sickness. To the participants in the cult he was above all *the Physician* apostrophized and lauded in text as such. In its positive aspect the worshippers hoped to attain life by eating the herb of life or the fruit of the tree of life or by being sprinkled with or drinking from the water of life. Various records tell how Gilgamesh set out in search of the herb of life and how Adapa rose to heaven, being served there with the food and water of life, anointed with oil and splendidly robed. In fact these were rites performed on the occasion of the Sumerian monarch's enthronement, in which the ordinary man evidently hoped eventually to share. The Gilgamesh epic ended in complete pessimism. The hero found the herb of life but lost it and so failed to bring it to his fellows to eat. We know however that Mesopotamia had what may be denoted as mystic communities whose hope of attaining 'life' never diminished.

Clearly the southern Babylonian baptist movements were offshoots of archaic Oriental groups who, after an initial exorcism of demons, put sacramental ablution and communion at the heart of their cult activity. But if Mesopotamia provided religious experience with its ritualistic framework, it was Iran which gave a deeper speculative meaning to the rites themselves. This is particularly the case with the Mandaeans, a small baptismal sect whose adherents are still to be encountered, chiefly in southern Iraq, though estimated to number less than five thousand. They live principally – now, as in the past – in the swampy tract of the Euphrates and Tigris delta.

The modern Mandaeans are descended from the gnostic baptist sect of Mani's days and they have faithfully preserved

its sacred writings, its outlook and its ways of pious proceeding. When their faith began is a matter of dispute. Because its literature was not set down until after the Arabic conquest of Mesopotamia, Mandaism was said to have developed much later than Manichaeism, and points of similarity between the two gnostic movements were taken to demonstrate Mandaean borrowings from Manichaeism.

This inference is too hasty. Mandaean invocatory texts are attributable on palaeographic grounds to AD 400. Written on leaden tablets, they list most of the names of the Mandaean pantheon and a sequence of the most pertinent Mandaean ideas. The evidence, allowing time for the belief to have developed fully, takes us back to AD 350. That still places it more than a century later than the advent of Mani's preaching. But this is not the only point for consideration. The Mandaeans were called *mandāyē* in accordance with the eastern Aramaic word for gnosis, *mandā* (<*mande'ā*). Their normal description of themselves was however *nāṣorāyē*, which strangely enough was a designation for Christians also. In the Gospels (Matthew 2, 23) Jesus is specified as *nazorayos* (Syriac translations use *nāṣrāyā*), it being explained that he was from Nazareth. Nevertheless, as has been observed, *nāṣorāyos* is not the natural adjectival form of Nazareth, and the assertion has lost as yet none of its validity. The Mandaeans never expressed less than glowing hate for Christians and labelled them *kristiyānē*, not *nāṣorāyē*, the appellation they claimed for themselves. To suppose that they could have adopted their cognomen from the Christians, undeniably called *nāṣorāyē* in the Middle East, is scarcely tenable. To this has to be added a highly important particular. The Kartēr inscription at Naqsh-i-Rustam mentioned earlier enumerates the non-Zoroastrian believers whom this prelate boasts of having persecuted. Both Christians, *kristiyānē* and *nāṣorāyē* are included. The inscription can be placed at about AD 275. From this it follows that at this date Christians and *nāṣorāyē* existed within the confines of the Sassanian empire as adherents of

two religious communities regarded by the Iranian state as differing creeds. This state of affairs conforms with other facts concerning the term *nāṣorāyē*. For example, there was a Jewish-Christian sect under the name of *naṣoraioi*. The Mandaeans certainly possessed many Jewish traditions and displayed many traits suggestive of Palestinian origin, though it is clear how unorthodox, wholly 'heretical' this strain must have been. Several details hint at a Samaritan-Jewish form of gnosticism, and the recently discovered Dead Sea scrolls have been instrumental in disclosing sundry important pieces of information.

Again, the Bardesanites regarded themselves as Christians. Subsequently the Great Church branded them heretics. This made no difference to their having from the very beginning at Edessa laid claim to the eponym 'Christians' and succeeded in being styled as such, whereas members of the Great Church were identified as 'Palutians' after their bishop Palut. No doubt the various Christian groups had a variety of titles similar to '*nāṣorāyē*', as did Jewish gnostic groups emergent from the gnostic-influenced baptist persuasion with which Christianity's origin can be correlated. To this degree the Mandaeans had to all appearances historic sanction for the designation *nāṣorāyē*, meaning something like 'observants'. Presumably 'observance' referred to compliance with the movement's characteristic baptismal usages.

Explaining Mandaism's genesis thus presents no difficulties. When its Jewish origin and Mesopotamian heritage of baptismal practices have been taken into account, there still remains (as indicated) a speculative gnostic attitude in the Mandaean outlook which is chiefly assignable to Iranian elements. Linguistically the piecing together of these Iranian factors is simple. Scholars have long been aware that the Mandaean scriptures contain numerous terms and proper nouns of Iranian derivation. Systematic examination of the loan-words is however a comparatively new development. The difference between Middle Parthian and Middle Persian forms is crucial. In many instances either the form of a word is Parthian or the

word itself has been met only in Parthian and hence is to be regarded as such. The disparity between the Middle Parthian and Middle Persian dialects is generally so distinct that etymological origin can be established with complete confidence. Middle Parthian was the official language of the Arsacid empire, an elevated status that withered away with the dynasty. Its successor was Middle Persian, the speech of the Sassanid Great Kings whose home had lain in the province of Persis (Fars). To encounter in Mandaean writings a notably large number of loan words from Parthian means that these were borrowed before Middle Persian had become the dominant literary Iranian language. For Parthian to have been able to exercise a comparable degree of influence upon Mesopotamia after the fall of the Arsacids is hardly conceivable. Moreover the frequency of Middle Persian loan-words in Mandaean records itself confirms the replacement of Parthian by Sassanian influence. Linguistic analysis therefore corroborates the existence of Mandaeism and its books in these earlier times as well as the considerable inspiration it obtained from Parthian sources. This provides an important chronological criterion.

The linguistic evidence harmonizes completely with the guidance given by the contents of the Mandaean scriptures. The Iranian concept most plainly developed is the ancient notion of the soul's 'heavenly journey'. The description of it in the Upanishads is broadly the same as that to be found in the Zoroastrian, Manichaean, and Mandaean texts. It is glorified by the Mandaeans with a baptismal sacrament, the so-called mass for the dead in which the dying participate, and its component texts lie at the heart of the Mandaean beliefs. Whether straightforward methods of literary criticism or those of historical research are applied, these songs belong demonstrably to the oldest portions of the Mandaean code. Other concepts derived from Iran are the tarrying of the demons around the corpse, the return to the 'treasure-house' of the souls, the *viaticum* of good deeds, the meeting with the image

of the soul, the delivery of robe and crown, the seating on the throne prepared in heaven, and the reception by the godhead. Iranian also is the gnostic notion, central to Mandaism, of the 'redeemed Redeemer'; the whole system turns on this dogma.

Eminently important to dating the beginnings of the Mandaean scriptures is the fact that many loan-words and linguistic adaptations indicate a feudalistic Parthian world. The theological language of Mandaean religion quite simply presupposes a feudal structure of society. The special tutor or foster-father relationship and certain indicative expressions like 'vassal', 'supporter', 'friend', 'brother', 'disciple', all part and parcel of the feudal Parthian aristocratic background, require singling out for mention. Its symbolism often portrays the Redeemer arming and girding himself before leaping into the depths to do battle with the forces of evil. This buckling of a girdle reflects exactly the situation of the vassal who always put on his belt himself before setting out to fulfil his charge. The description of fighting may likewise be taken usually to have a Parthian quality (cf. below, pp. 49, 93 *et seq.*).

Other factors pointing to Iranian influence are the concept of baptism by water and by fire and that of the 'bridge'; they correspond closely to Iranian rites and mythical ideas. This aspect has not as yet undergone sufficient analysis nor been properly probed in regard to its origin. But Mandaean baptismal ritual clearly reveals Iranian traces, and this is also the case in the mass for the dead.

All in all, it is remarkable what a strong Iranian blend there is in Mandaism. The latter must indeed be classed as part of the so-called Iranian type of gnosticism.

Thus, through the study of loan words and the origins of Mandaism we are led to a Parthian background, and this is confirmed by recently published Mandaean traditions concerning its earliest history. For a Parthian king Artabanus – unfortunately no further information about him is available – is said to have played a decisive part in the community's

establishment, and these same traditions go on to associate the Mandaean and the principal personality of their faith, John the Baptist, with the mountains of Media (*tūrā dMadai*) before their removal to Babylonia.

The chronological relationship between Mandaism and Manichaeism has, as was said earlier, been the subject of lively discussion. We have now seen that Mandaism must be set in the Parthian period because at all points it presupposes its contemporary conditions. That makes it older than Manichaeism. There is however another piece of irrefutable supporting evidence. It has been discovered that below the surface of certain Manichaean psalms in Coptic lies a distinctive type of gnostic outlook. Using ancient indigenous religious formulas and concepts, this existed in an intrinsically Mesopotamian form and had assumed settled literary shape at some time prior to the middle of the third century. The Manichees found it in the Mandaean writings and included it in their own. For unquestionably there were incorporated, unaltered, into a group of Coptic Manichaean psalms, the Thomas psalms, texts that are met in the Mandaean scriptures. Mistranslations and misunderstandings by the Manichees throughout show the Mandaean version to have been the model at every turn (Säve-Söderbergh).

No possible room for doubt about Mandaism's priority to Manichaeism remains. The employment of its scriptures by the Manichaean community vouches for Mandaism's existence about AD 250. The great number of Parthian borrowed words and purely Parthian traditions (that, for instance, of King Artabanus) pushes the date back to at least AD 226, but suggests that more probably AD 200 would be appropriate. To this may be added, without entering upon detail, that the latest researches into a link between Mandaism and the Qumrān community in the Dead Sea region are taking the former's antiquity back towards early, possibly even pre-Christian days. For our purposes it suffices that Mandaism was already in being about AD 200.

Various forms of Iranian 'national' religion, particularly veneration of the god Mithra, were of major importance in Mesopotamia and its neighbouring territories. This was above all true in relation to the Parthian upper classes. Mithra's exceptional hold was also reflected in the extent to which he was worshipped far beyond the Iranian borders. The manner of celebrating his cult became known as the 'Mithraic mysteries' and it is relevant to our theme that there is confirmation of these occurring during Parthian times both at Dura and at Uruk in Southern Babylonia.

The mysteries, in which were mingled Mesopotamian elements of an astrological kind, were not the sole sign of Mithraic pre-eminence. Veneration of the god was at that period especially marked in Armenia and north-western Iran. Indeed Media Atropatene and Great Media were the proper centres of his cult, where supreme authority in religious matters lay with the powerful priestly caste of the Magi. At Dura these self-same Magi officiated as priests of Mithra and, so it seems, associated themselves with the Mithraic cult in Mesopotamia as well as in Asia Minor. By such action they subscribed to speculations of a syncretic order.

Mithra worship has to be appreciated in a more far-reaching, purely Iranian and outstandingly Median, context. For Mithra enjoyed status of great importance in the Zervanist interpretation, accepted by the Median Magi, of the Iranian national religion. Its highest god, Zervan, was a god-head of time and destiny too exalted to intervene in the sphere of human affairs, a *deus otiosus*. It was his son Ōhrmazd (Ahura Mazda) who did battle with Ahriman (Ahra Main-yu), representing the powers of evil. Between them, in the decisive position of 'mediator', stood Mithra. On him, as the mighty mediator between good and evil, depended man's redemption. Thus it was with the personality of Mithra that the concept, so central to Iranian religion, of *redemption* was bound up. In Iran itself Mithra had always been the redeemer and had hence received the epithet *bōžaka*. The Zervanite

trend also included a female godhead, a mother figure, called Anāhīd in Iran and the subject of especially great veneration during Parthian times. These representatives of the Zervanite system will be encountered again in Manichaean Middle Iranian literary tradition, and it will then be seen how great was their importance to Mani's religion.

The presence of a Judaeo-Iranian gnosis in northern Mesopotamia and in north-western Iran, serving as a point of departure for the so-called Sethian gnosticism, has become more clearly apparent, due, chiefly, to the freshly discovered Coptic texts from Nag Hamadi in Egypt. In regard to cosmological ideas this Judaeo-Iranian gnosticism took its stand wholly on Iranian ground with distinct leanings towards the Zervanite outlook. In addition it indulged in all kinds of Light speculations. Certain of the concepts of this movement have been preserved in the Syrian-Christian *Chronicle of Zuqnin*. The Israelite patriarchs, especially Seth and Enoch, played a prominent part therein as heavenly prophets. Adam, the father of men, was also of great significance and in a late scripture, but one resting on old traditions of Sethian origin, the *Cave of Treasures*, assumes a central role. There will be occasion (cf. p. 73 below) to mention this form of gnosticism again.

The foregoing sketch, though by no means exhausting the manifold richness of the historical background, has tried at least to indicate the broad outlines of prevailing religious conditions, as they were of decisive consequence for Mani and his spiritual creation, Manichaeism.

CHAPTER TWO

MANI'S LIFE

Youth and First Public Ministry – Missionary Activity – Last Days

Youth and First Public Ministry

ABOUT THE YEAR AD 200 there lived in the Median capital of Hamadan a Parthian prince of Arsacid descent. His name was Pātik. He was married to a woman who bore the Jewish-Christian name of Mariam but belonged in fact to the Parthian princely Kamsarakan family. The latter was a branch of the Arsacid dynasty destined later to play a prominent part in the history of Armenia. Thus royal Arsacid blood contributed by both parents ran in the veins of the son whom Mariam was destined to bear her husband.

Pātik left Hamadan and took up his residence in the imperial capital, Seleucia-Ctesiphon. The great feudatories often alternated between their country-seats and magnificent palaces in the capital. Pātik's removal from his Median home seems however to have been permanent. His entire interest was evidently concentrated on religion. He was, like so many of his day, a seeker after God.

One day – so an Arab source tells us – when he was in the 'House of the Idols', where he went often, he heard a voice from the sanctuary's recess: 'Pātik, eat no meat, drink no wine, and abstain from women!' On three successive days he heard the same voice uttering the same command. Sunk in contemplation, Pātik brooded over the revelation and formed the resolve to attach himself to a sect in Mesene whose members were called 'Those who practise ablutions' (*Fihrist*, ed. Flügel, p. 328). We do not know what sort of temple it

was which the Arab text describes as *bait al-aṣṇām*. The term probably corresponds both to the Syriac *bēt petakrē*, applied in the Julianos tale to heathen cult centres in Syria, and to the New Persian *butxānah*, properly signifying 'House of Buddha'. Nor is it out of the question for a Buddhist shrine to have been meant, for it is quite probable that there was a Buddhist mission in Mesopotamia since the days of Emperor Asoka. Shortly after the occurrence in the 'House of the Idols' Mariam, wife of Pātik, bore a son whom she named Mani. His birth can be established as having taken place on 14 April 216.

Manichaean legend has of course embellished the event with all kinds of wondrous detail. Mani's mother is supposed, for instance, to have learnt in sleep prophecies of her son's vocation and coming greatness. Furthermore, to have seen him raised up into heaven and again descending. This last is a point that anticipates the curious traditions relating to Mani's heavenly ascension (cf. below, p. 109 *et seq.*).

The assertions about Mani's birth-place vary so much that it is impossible to reach a conclusion. His own testimony, preserved for us by the Arab scholar Al-Bīrūnī, is that he was born in the village of Mardīnū in the region of Nahr Kūtā in northern Baylonia (Al-Bīrūnī, *Chronology*, p. 208, 7-8 original text; p. 190, 11-14 transl.). That his birth actually took place in Babylonia was confirmed by Mani in a famous poem where he provides a self-description:

A thankful disciple, I am,
Risen from Babel's land.

M 4—HR II, p. 51

And *Fihrist*, the Arabian source, reports: 'Later his father sent for him and had him fetched and led him to a place where he abode himself. Hereafter he grew up at his side and in his religion.' Pātik, in other words, kept his son by him and taught him his religion.

What can this religion have been? Judging by circumstances, it can have been none other than that of 'Those who

practise ablutions'. The Arabic phrase for 'those who practise ablutions', *al-muḡtasilah*, is matched by two designations on the part of the Syrian writer Theodor bar Kōnai: *menaqqedē* and *hellē hewwārē*, respectively 'those who purify themselves' and 'white garments'. Whilst the first of these coincides with the Arabic *al-muḡtasilah*, the second corresponds exactly to the title of a later Iranian sect, *sapīd jāmāgān*. White drapings were however used by so many priestly groups (Brahmins, Magi, Mandaeans, Syrian priests at Dura-Europos) that this designation by itself hardly takes us further. It is obvious nevertheless that the sense of 'those who practise ablutions' and 'those who purify themselves' is identical. A baptist community was involved. The Coptic Manichaean writings recount how Mani was questioned by a disciple about the divine beings venerated by 'the chaste'. Mani replied by reference to the First Life, the Second Life, and doubtless the Third Life too (the text, *Kephalaia* XII, p. 44, 14-45, 15, is unfortunately fragmentary at this place). But precisely these designations for the three primordial Highest Beings are encountered in the oldest Mandaean literature. Mani's declaration therefore leads us directly to the Mandaeans. Thanks to the conformity which characterizes Mandaean and Manichaean myths, their gnostic outlook as a whole, their rites, and many of their specialized expressions, we may confidently assume that Pātik joined a Mandaean group in southern Babylonia and that Mani was brought up in this baptist community.

An apparent difficulty arises. Certain ascetic precepts were imposed on Pātik: to eat no meat, to drink no wine, and to abstain from women. Mandaism is however, in principle, *not* an ascetic faith. True, the Mandaean scriptures at various points utter exhortations against gluttony, drunkenness, and lust. Particular warning is issued against the consumption of wine which results in fornication (*Ginzā*, pp. 22, 26, 28, 38, 47, 52). So Mandaism evidently had a trend which very forcibly enjoined an ascetic, continent life, and those were the circumstances in which Mani was bred. Our conclusion is

therefore the same as that of modern research : Mani grew up in a southern Babylonian, gnostic, more explicitly Mandaean, baptist community and there received impressions crucial to his future.

When Mani was twelve years old – we are reminded of the twelve-year-old Jesus in the Temple – he received his first revelation. It was in the year 228–229. The *Fihrist* narrates that ‘the King of the Paradise of Light’ inspired this revelation. That, in Arabic Manichaean terminology, is the name for the Highest Good. A celestial being transmitted the revelation, an angel whom the Arabic text calls *al-Taum*, itself clearly a rendering of the Syriac word *taumā*, ‘twin’, and in turn corresponding with the Coptic *saiš* in the Egyptian Manichaean records. The celestial being’s message ran : ‘For-sake this congregation ! Thou art not of its followers. The guidance of morals, the restraint of appetites, these are thy tasks. Yet because of thy youth the time is not come to stand forth openly.’ (*Fihrist*, ed. Flügel, p. 328, 12 *et seq.*).

So Mani renounced the baptist community to which, in accordance with his father’s will, he had until then adhered. Theodor bar Kōnai actually reports that the said community was not able to tolerate him, but removed him.

The designation ‘twin’ is that given to the celestial double of the delegated prophet. Through the descent of his heavenly self he is appointed to his apostleship. This line of thought, originating in Iran, was common to gnosticism generally and was later to play a considerable part in Islamic ideas.

The Coptic texts maintain that complete knowledge was imparted to Mani at the time of his appointment. They credit him with saying : ‘In this same year when King Ardashir [was about to assume] the crown, the Living Paraclete came down and spoke to me [for the first time]. He revealed to me the hidden mystery, hidden from the ages and the generations of Man : the mystery of the Deep and the High : the mystery of Light and of Darkness, the mystery of the Contest, the War, and the Great War, these he revealed unto me.’

Hereupon follow in the same manner all the principal points of the Manichæan doctrine which Mani is therefore supposed to have received on the occasion of this revelation. He ends his account as follows: 'Thus did the Paraclete disclose to me all that has been and all that will be' (*Kephalaia*, p. 14, 31 *et seq.*).

So here the celestial Messenger is called the 'Living Paraclete'. Western sources say that Mani described himself as the Paraclete predicted by Jesus in the Fourth Gospel. On the basis of the foregoing, this assertion cannot be impugned. But how can it be then that it is the so-called 'twin' who comes to Mani as his higher self? Precisely because the Living Paraclete, who is the Holy Ghost, is the same as the 'twin'. Euodius says in *De Fide*, Chapter 24: *Manichæus . . . qui se mira superbia adsumptum a gemino suo, hoc est spiritu sancto, esse gloriatur*. Which means that Mani claims to be one with his twin, the Holy Ghost.

However, even if Mani at the age of twelve did experience his consubstantiality with the heavenly bearer of revelation, the time was not yet come for him to stand forth openly in public.

Obedient to the command of the celestial Messenger, he remained in seclusion. Judging from later developments, it may be conjectured that he spent this period of preparation in study of the sacred literatures current in the contemporary Mesopotamian civilization and in meditation upon that which he had studied. This reading and this meditation must have ripened his convictions. In any case *the first stage of his religious evolution*, what may be called the *Mandaean* phase, was now concluded.

At last the passionately desired mandate to step forward into the world with his message reached Mani. In the year 240-41 the angel said, 'Peace unto thee, Mani, from me and from the Lord who sent me to thee and who has selected thee for his apostleship. He bids thee now to call the peoples to the truth and to proclaim from him the good message of the truth

and to dedicate thyself to this task. The time is now come for thee to stand forth openly and to preach thy teaching' (*Fihrist*, ed. Flügel, p. 328 *et seq.*).

Thus it is the angel's message which appoints Mani an apostle. The expression 'a sent one,' in Greek *apóstolos*, alternates with the designation 'messenger'. Both indicate the prophet who at the behest of God receives either in heaven or from heaven the divine revelation – always in the Middle East in a written form – in order then to preach it as doctrine to the people.

Mani, conforming with the angel's exhortation, proclaimed his revelation to his father and other senior members of his family and converted them (M 49, II V). Through this statement we learn that Mani's father had retained connection with his kith and kin; it was important because Mani was thereby able from the start to count on influential support.

Nevertheless Mani's proper public activity did not have its beginning, as might be expected, in Mesopotamia but in India. He himself tells of it in a Coptic text: 'At the close of King Ardashīr's years I set out to preach. I sailed to the land of the Indians. I preached to them the hope of life and I chose there a good selection.' (*Kephalaia*, p. 15, 24–27).

Probably knowing the legend and perhaps inspired by his example, Mani went to India by ship as did once the Apostle Thomas. But the voyage is likely to have taken him no farther than the Iranian provinces of Turan and Makran as well as north-western India, Gandhāra (i.e., to those regions now comprising Pakistan). The north-western regions had since about 130 BC been under strong Iranian, more particularly Parthian influence. In these parts Mani was probably able, at least in higher circles, to make himself understood in his Parthian mother-tongue. Although superseded in the first Christian century by the so-called Scythian dynasty, Parthian princes who included the King Gundofarr mentioned in the *Acts of Thomas* had long ruled there. The most famous member

of the Indo-Scythian dynasty, Kanishka, is well-known to history as the great patron of Buddhism, and it is a fact that Buddhism from early times was particularly strong in north-western India and eastern Iran. Consequently Mani in these areas came into closest contact with this world-religion which was then still full of proselytizing vigour. Buddhism made a deep impression on him which can apparently be primarily seen in the organization of his church and the methods adopted to preach his doctrine to the common folk.

It may have been that the viceroy, the so-called Kushān-Shāh, was at that date none other than brother to the crown prince Shāpur, seeing that his name was Pērōz.

Mani's activity in India was not destined to be of long duration; he was to stay little more than a year. His own remark is: 'In the year that King Ardashīr died and his son Shāpur became King [and succeeded him(?)], I sailed from the land of the Indians to the land of the Persians, and from the land of Persia I came to the land of Babylon, Maišān, and the land of Khūzistān.' (*Kephalaia*, p. 15, 27-31.)

So Mani returned to the province of Persis by ship in order to pass on – probably by ship too – to the province of Mesene, Maišān. Probably the strange conversion related in a Manichaean legend should be fitted into this journey: 'Shāpur, King of Kings, had moreover a brother, lord over Maišān, and his name was Mihršāh. And he was extraordinarily hostile to the wonderful religion of the Apostle of light. He had planted a garden which was very lovely and exceptionally large, so that there was none like it. Then the Apostle knew that the time of redemption had come close. Whereupon he rose and appeared before Mihršāh, who was seated with great merriment at a feast in his garden. Then . . . the Apostle . . . pronounced. Then spoke Mihršāh to the Apostle: 'Can there be such a garden in the paradise you extol as this my garden?' The Apostle heard this utterance of disbelief, then showed him by his miraculous power the paradise of light with all the gods, godheads, and the exhalation of the immortal breath

of life, and a garden with every kind of plant and other things worthy of mention that could be seen there. Then did he fall to the ground unconscious for three hours. And there remained in his heart a memory of what he had seen. Then did the Apostle lay a hand upon his head ; and he came to himself again. So that when he was risen, he fell at the Apostle's feet and seized his right hand. And the Apostle said as follows . . .' (M 47).

Missionary Activity

After this conversion, to which we shall return later, Mani passed on to the province of Āsoristān, Babylonia proper, and thence to the provinces of Media and Parthia. During his stay at Ctesiphon he succeeded in establishing relations with the Great King Shāpur and being received in three successive audiences with the new monarch. They were obtained for him by the ruler's brother Pērōz, whom Mani had also converted. According to Mani's biography as told in the *Fihrist*, the first audience took place on a Sunday, the initial day of the month of Nisān, when the sun stood in the sign of the Ram. The biography states that this was during the days of Shāpur's coronation. Some modern scholars dispute the point while others support it. The question is, Was Mani sufficiently well-known to obtain such audience? The answer is doubtless in the affirmative. For if Mani had a powerful patron in the King's brother, there seems no reason to suspect his assertion.

At his first audience Mani was accompanied by his father and by two disciples, Simeon and Zakkō (both Syrian names). On this occasion he presented the Great King with his first book, *Šāhbuhragān* or 'writing dedicated to Shāpur', which incidentally was his only work written in Middle Iranian.

Manichaean sources maintain that Shāpur was deeply impressed by Mani's message and agreed to allow him to proclaim his teaching freely throughout the empire. Mani himself says that the Great King even sent directions to the

local authorities everywhere to extend their protection to the new religion. In his autobiographical notes he narrates: 'I came before King Shāpur. He received me with great honour and granted that I should wander through his lands and preach the Word of Life. I spent yet...?... years with him in his retinue' (*Kephalaia* I, p. 15, 31-34).

And at his fateful audience with a later Great King he recounts: 'King Shāpur was solicitous on my behalf and wrote letters for me to all magnates in the following terms: "Befriend and defend him, that none shall transgress or trespass against him"' (*Kephalaia* I, p. 16 *et seq.*).

This is confirmed by the neoplatonist philosopher Alexander of Lycopolis. He mentions that Mani lived in the days of the Emperor Valerian and accompanied the Persian Shāpur on his campaigns - 'fought at his side' are his words (*Contra Manichaeum* 4, 20).

Thus we learn that the religious founder spent a number of years in the ruler's following. The sense of the word used by Alexander, *komitaton*, signifies that Mani belonged to the king's household and was a royal vassal. As such and corresponding with the feudal ideology there existed a special bond of obedience and loyalty between Shāpur and Mani. It was in this capacity of royal retainer that Mani went with his liege-lord on his western wars.

The latter brought Shāpur great military and political successes. In 260 it looked as though he would re-establish Achaemenid rule in Asia Minor. That explains how his Zoroastrian court chaplain Kartēr got from the Great King, as he recorded it in his inscriptions, plenary powers to organize afresh in the occupied provinces of Asia Minor the Iranian cult with its fire-temples. An Iranian feudal aristocracy had been settled there for centuries and the Magi too, as disclosed by the geographer Strabo (XV 3, 15), enjoyed a powerful position.

These politico-religious measures cannot be interpreted other than as an intent on the part of Shāpur permanently to

incorporate certain provinces of Asia Minor into his empire, especially such as had already since 550 BC belonged to the Iranian sphere of influence (cf. p. 4 *et seq*).

There is on the other hand no conclusive evidence that it was the introduction of a specific Iranian religion, the Zoroastrian, he had in mind. The fire cult restored by Kartēr was the immemorial way of worshipping the godhead indicative of every form of Iranian religious exercise.

Since Kartēr by his own account personally supervised the renovation of the fire-temples, it is clear that he was also with the Persian troops during their advance. Consequently, both Mani and Kartēr – later enemies – were in the train of the Great King. Shāpur, it is fair to assume, had not taken any decision as to giving official recognition to any particular religion and which in such circumstances he should choose. Manichaeism had much to recommend it, if this difficult question had to be resolved. But the presence of Kartēr as well as Mani among his retinue suggests that Shāpur wished to keep both alternatives available. Mani's religion, as we shall see, is a consciously syncretic mixture of Christianity and Iranian belief with a substratum of the old Mesopotamian creed in the shape it had acquired from the gnostic baptist faith. Christianity and Iranian belief had become accustomed to the Mesopotamian kind of piety because local tradition exerted, though often insensibly, a strong influence. Hence Manichaeism more than any other religion would have been in a position to enable the two great spiritual rivals, the Christian and the Iranian theologies, to merge into a higher synthesis which would have been equally available to the indigenous population of the Land of the Two Rivers with their gnostic outgrowths of the former Assyrian-Babylonian orthodoxy. This opened up important perspectives.

Mani possessed two very powerful patrons, the brothers of Shāpur, Miršāh and Pērōz, both of whom he had converted, at the court of the Great King. His opponent Kartēr, as we shall learn later, had very potent friends under a successor of

Shāpur although we do not know who supported him during Shāpur's reign. But from what we do know of partisan groupings that flourished at court we can assume that the Zoroastrian Magi and their leader Kartēr were themselves not lacking in powerful well-wishers.

But, whatever the case, during the thirty years of Shāpur's reign the *status quo* was upheld. Manichaeism seems to have been the Sassanian empire's most encouraged doctrine, but it did not, as was certainly Mani's ambition, become a state religion. We do not know what considerations restrained Shāpur from such a step, but we can assuredly place reasonably high in the list the strength of the conservative tradition he had taken over from his predecessors, the Zoroastrian fire-priests at Istaxr. In his great inscription Shāpur emerges from the precepts laid down for the spiritual cult of his family as a traditionalist Zoroastrian prince, that is, 'Zoroastrian' in the passably syncretic meaning of the word in his day. That was his official attitude. But it is justifiable to assume that his personal sympathies lay with Mani, otherwise his benevolent bearing would hardly be explicable.

Nevertheless this was the time which saw the introduction of the process that was gradually to lead to amalgamation between the two competing priesthoods of the empire, and this fusion was the decisive factor in the establishment of a Zoroastrian state church. The priestly castes were the Magi with their principal seat at Šīz in Media Atropatene and the Herbads in the Persis (Fars) region. The Magi gained the leading place and in the Sassanian period they worked havoc as members of the inquisitorial tribunals against Christians, Manichees, Buddhist, and other religious minorities. The creation of an effective church brought with it the establishment of a collection of scriptures, a canon, the *Apastāk* or *Avesta*. There can be no doubt that the representatives of the old Iranian belief intended, by the erection of a state church and the production of a canon, to impose a halt upon the new teachings, Christianity and Manichaeism. The drawing up

of the sacred traditions signified indeed a prodigious revolution in the cultural and religious life of Iran. The assembly of the *Avesta* presents itself as a deliberate counterpart to the doctrinal books of Mani. Zoroastrianism was therefore about the middle of the third century AD on the point of consolidating and defending its position.

Mani for his part now developed a carefully thought out, admirably organized project. His missionary functions, following a detailed plan, extended eastwards and westwards. He himself, as he tells us, undertook fresh journeys to various parts of the empire: 'I spent . . . many years in Persia, in the land of the Parthians as far north as Adiabene, and in the frontier territories of the empire of the Romans' (*Kephalaia*, I, p. 16).

The frontier territories he mentions were the province Bēt 'Arbāyē, the principal place in which was Nisibis. So Mani, founding fresh communities wherever he went, travelled the empire in every direction. But he was not alone in his proselytizing, for he sent his disciples east and west too. A Middle Persian text describes two such undertakings. From text M 216 we know that Mani was in Vēh-Ardaxšēr, a part of Ctesiphon, when he organized these missionary voyages.

'Hereupon the Lord sent three scribes, the gospel and two other works to Addā(i). He commanded: "Take it no farther, but remain there like a merchant who opens up a store!" Addā(i) worked very hard in those areas, founded many monasteries, elected many Elect and Hearers, wrote books and made of wisdom a weapon, confronted the "dogmas" with these (books), found salvation in every way. He subdued and enchained the "dogmas". He came as far as Alexandria . . . Numerous conversions and wonders did he perform in those lands. The faith of the Envoy was advanced in the empire of the Romans.' (M2 R I, 9-33.)

Thus Mani was able to achieve acceptance of his religion in Egypt even in his own lifetime. No less important, however, seem to have been the successes of his eastern undertakings.

They were organized from the province of Holwān whose capital of the same name lay on the main road from Ctesiphon to Hamadan. The text already cited reads: 'When then the Envoy of Light was in the provincial city of Holwān, he called himself Mār 'Ammō, the teacher, who knew the Parthian language and script and also was familiar with . . . He sent him, together with Prince Artabanus, Brothers who were scribes and a book illuminator, to Abaršahr. He spoke: "Blessed be this faith, may it be mightily advanced there by teacher, hearers, and ministration."' (M 2 R I 34-R II, 12.)

A legend about what befell Mār 'Ammo when the border deity of Khorāsān resisted him testifies that he really did reach the great eastern province of Khorāsān and there pursued missionary activities. As Parthian was the vernacular, it is natural that Mār 'Ammō had to have mastery of this language and its script. Abaršahr, where he was sent, was later known as Nēv-Šāhpur (>Nišābūr). Russian archaeologists have excavated Parthian records in this place, evidence for the dominating position held by the language and its script in this great province.

The inclusion in the mission of a Parthian prince by the name of Artabanus has led to far-reaching speculations and the suspicion of 'direct political activity by Mani against the Sassanid regime' in Khorāsān, 'the Parthian homeland'. However, since we are now aware how benevolently the Sassanid king Shāpur behaved towards Mani, all hypotheses of that sort have become untenable. On the other hand it is obvious that Mani's Parthian origin secured for him a particularly suitable scope in the old Parthian ancestral territory of Khorāsān. The latter now became a key-province of the Manichaean church and the point of departure for missionary disposition farther east.

A third undertaking, again led by Addā(i) – but this time together with Abzākhyā – sets out in the year 261–262 for the city of Karkā de Bēt Selōk in the province of Bēt Garmai, east of the Tigris. This mission too, judging by

Christian martyr records, was highly successful for nearly a century later remembrance of the Manichaean activity was still very much alive.

The Christian *Acta Archelai* furnish a graphic, even though hate-filled and somewhat distorted, picture of Mani's own activity. He is seen dressed in public in wide and flapping trousers of yellow-green and green and sky-blue cloak, a long ebony cane in his hand. Under his left arm he carries a Babylonian book (*Acta Archelai*, XIV 3). It is precisely the dress and accoutrement shown by two figures in the paintings on either side of the apse in the Mithraeum at Dura. They are the mythical originators of the Mithraic mysteries and therefore we have here the traditional appearance of priests of Mithras. Seeing that this was the garb Mani wore, the *Acta* justifiably called him a priest of Mithras (*Acta Archelai*, XL 7). An enigmatic coin inscription from Characene in southern Babylonia is in Mandaean script and probably reads, 'Mani, the Appointed of Mithra'. Again the link between Mani and Mithras! But are we really to suppose that Mani obtained from the Great King the privilege of striking coins, normally reserved for his satraps? If such was the case he would have been invested with magisterial position at Mesene, headquarters of the Mandaean movement. The puzzle of this Characene coin probably still awaits solution and the whole problem seems baffling. It is at any rate clear that Mani's connection with Mithraism was close. The *Acta Archelai* recall his controversies with the priests of Mithras (LXIII) and make it clear that he could rely on strong support in the Armenian border regions of north-western Iran (the frontier fortress of Arabion, the contemporary Arewan, is named). These were parts where veneration of Mithras was especially strong. Since Mani at this stage of his career evidently indulged in close association with Mithraism and wished to be regarded as the god's representative, this may be called his *Mithraic period*.

On the other hand what we know from Mani's letters

reflects a totally different aspect. For at every point he introduces himself in the correspondence as 'Mani, Apostle of Jesus Christ'. Clearly Mani from a certain time onwards felt himself primarily to be *Christ's representative*. It is a problem to which we shall return later. (Pp. 67, 72, 82 *et seq.*, 125, 143, 158.)

Last Days

We know little more of Mani's life during this most active portion of his career. Only towards the end of his days does the information become a little more detailed.

Shāpur died in the middle of April 273 and was followed upon the throne by his son, Hormizd I. Mani at once paid his respects to him. The new Great King adopted an attitude towards Mani and his religion as well-disposed as that of his father and renewed the safe-conduct issued by his predecessor. Mani was also given specific permission to proceed to Babylonia. (Manichaean *Homilies*, pp. 42, 15-30, 48, 9-13.)

But Hormizd was to reign a single year. Whilst Mani was in Babylon, the Great King died and was succeeded by his brother, Bahrām I, whose rule was to last from 274 to 277.

Mani's journeying had taken him down the lower Tigris and, visiting the communities that lay either side of his path, he arrived at Hormizd-Ardashīr in the province of Susiana. His intention was to push on into the Kushān realm with its centres at Kabul and Gandhara. He seems to have sensed the threat to his life and to have sought to reach those territories where he had been able to count on protection and support since the time of his first ministration. It was at this very juncture that a royal veto upon his visit to the Kushān areas reached him. The circumstance demonstrates in the first place how well informed royal officials were about the movements and travelling plans of important personalities and secondly that Mani had attained a position sufficiently outstanding for a close watch to be kept – on the old Achaemenid pattern – on his activities by the highest authority. 'Thereupon he

turned back in anger and distress,' according to the Coptic description of Mani's last weeks. 'He left Hormizd-Ardashir and came to Mesene, and from Mesene to the river Tigris. Thence he sailed up to Ctesiphon. And when he was on shore and proceeding on his way he warned them of his approaching martyrdom by saying, "Look on me and take your fill, my children. For bodily I shall depart from you." ' (Manichaean *Homilies*, p. 44, 12-20.)

So Mani returned to Mesopotamia and went north up the Tigris by ship to Ctesiphon. He was shortly joined by a minor prince named Bāt, whom he had himself converted. The name is met in later days (about 350) as belonging to an Armenian feudatory, chief of the Saharuni clan. Perhaps Mani's companion was an ancestor, a Parthian petty monarch (the text T II D 163 talks of 'King Bāt') from Armenia. If this princely disciple really was from Armenia, it would furnish fresh confirmation of Mani's north-western Iranian connections.

The new Great King Bahrām I issued instructions for Bāt to present himself together with Mani. But his courage evidently failed him and Mani had to make this last fateful journey alone. The road he took described a wide arc before he reached the royal residential city of Bēlapat on a Sunday. His arrival seems to have caused great excitement.

A fragmentary document in Parthian says that 'Kardēr, the Mōbad, took counsel with the "helpers" who did service for the King and envy and wiles were in their hearts (?)' (T II D 163). This account believes Kartēr to have allied himself with royal vassals, who were also described as 'helpers', and it suggests that a combination of religious and politico-military interests at court may have been responsible for Mani's downfall.

The Coptic texts maintain that the Magi took the first step by their leader probably composing a 'libellus', a bill of impeachment, and submitting it to the King. The impeachment, whether oral or written, had to pass through various channels in accordance with strictly settled precedent. 'The

Magi . . . went and brought their plaint against him to Kardēl. In turn Kardēl told the Συγκάεδρος. Then Kardēl and the Συγκάεδρος went and informed the Μαγίστωρ of the accusation. The Μαγίστωρ for his part told the King. When he had heard this . . . he sent for and had my Lord called.' (Manichaean *Homilies*, p. 45, 14-19.)

This testifies to the fact that Kartēr was not yet in so high a position as to be able to betake himself directly to the King in the matter. There were two officials over him, the Μαγίστωρ and the Συγκάεδρος, of whose functions we know but little. The Μαγίστωρ, close to the King, transmits the accusation to him. It runs: 'Mani has taught against our law.' The recognized Zoroastrian faith, administered by the Magi, was always designated as 'law'. Such offences against the religious creed were regarded in later Sassanian justice as 'Offences against God' and punishable by death. Probably this was the case in the earlier Sassanid period also.

If the circumstances in which Mani was ordered to present himself to the King were unpropitious, the hearing – a more appropriate term than 'audience' – took a positively stormy course. Our knowledge of the proceedings is fairly complete from a Middle Iranian text and the Coptic Manichaean documents, though both are unfortunately only fragmentary. '[Mani . . .] came [to the audience with King Bahrām], after he [had summoned] me, Nūhzādāg, the interpreter, Kuštāi, the [scribe (?)], Abzākhyā, the Persian. The King was at table and had not yet washed his hands. Members of his court entered and said, "Mani is come and stands at the door." The King sent the Lord the message, "Tarry a while until I can come to thee." And the Lord sat down again on a side of the guard (?) until the King, because (!) he was going on the chase, had washed his hands. And he stood up from his meal and, laying a hand upon the Sakān queen and the other upon Kardēr, son of Artabanus, he came to the Lord. And his first words were, "Thou are *not* welcome!" But the Lord answered, "Why? Have I done aught evil?" The King said,

“I have sworn an oath not to leave thee in this land.” And in an outburst of rage he thus addressed the Lord: “Ah, what need of thee, since thou neither goest to war nor followest the chase? But perhaps thou art of use for thy skill in drugs or thy succour with physic? Nay, not even *that* dost thou!” And the Lord answered: “I have done thee no evil. Ever have I rendered thee and thy family benefactions. And many and numerous are thy servants whom I have freed from demons and lying spirits. And many are they whom I have caused to rise from their bed of sickness. And many are they from whom I have turned the fever away. And many are they who have come unto death and I have called them back unto life.” ’ (M 3.)

The personalities besides the Great King and Mani who were involved in this scene were in the first place Mani’s companions, the interpreter Nūhzādāg, Kuštāi the scribe, and Abzākhyā the Persian. The last two are familiar to us as trusted disciples of Mani. Abzākhyā had been together with Addā head of the mission to Karkā de Bēt Selōk; Kuštāi was co-signatory with Mani of a letter to Sisinnios, Mani’s first successor as head of the Manichæan church. That Mani should have been accompanied by an interpreter is surprising, but it does not necessarily mean that Mani could not speak Iranian. First of all, we do not know whether Nūhzādāg was present as an interpreter or as a friend. If as an interpreter, then it must be remembered that although Mani dedicated his work *Šāhbuhragān* to Shāpur I in Middle Persian, there is a difference between writing and talking a language. It is possible that Mani, a Parthian, could speak Middle Parthian but not Middle Persian quite correctly. On the other hand it seems hardly probable that the Great King would not have understood so closely related a dialect as Middle Parthian. That Mani should have needed the services of an interpreter at this fateful audience does not seem plausible.

In the second place there is mention of the King’s following, fulfilling its normal courtly duties as chamberlains and pages.

The Sakān queen and a certain Kartēr, son of Artabanus, appear on this occasion as his particular intimates. This Kartēr, whose name is also recorded in Shāpur's great inscription at Ka'ba i Zardušt, was not identical, as was once assumed, with the Mōbad Kartēr. The Sakān queen was the wife of the so-called Sakānšāh, the satrap of Sakastān, a territory which in early Sassanian times was administered by near relatives of the King. The special favour this princess enjoyed from Bahrām is notable. She was the wife of the later Bahrām III, a grandson of his.

The Coptic texts amplify the description of this scene by letting Bahrām finally demand why revelation should have come to Mani and not the Great King. Mani is at a loss for any other answer than that this happened to be God's will.

The highly agitated hearing ended with Mani recalling the benefactions Shāpur and Hormizd had shown him and closing, 'Do with me what thou wilt!'

Hereupon the King ordered Mani to be fettered. Three chains were laid upon his hands, three upon his ankles, and one around his neck. The fetters were locked and he was taken to prison. This harsh kind of shackling is well-known from the records of Christian martyrs. In that state Mani spent the days from 19 January to 14 February 276 or, according to another reckoning, from 31 January to 26 February 277. Following ancient Oriental custom, Mani was able during these twenty-six days to see and talk to his disciples. He felt his end to be near and therefore gave his closest followers appropriate directions. These were transmitted to the church later by Mār 'Ammō, who was present. Then the strength of the sixty-year-old Mani was exhausted. His body, weakened by fasting and mortification, could no longer bear the heavy fetters and on the fourth day of the month of Šahrēvar he collapsed and died. 'At eleven o'clock he ascended out of his body to the dwellings of his greatness on high.' A senior Manichaean priest by the name of Uzzai and two Elect were present.

The news of Mani's death spread rapidly through the whole city of Bēt-Lapat. People gathered in great crowds. The Great King ordered a burning torch to be thrust through Mani's body to make sure whether the hated religious chief was really dead. Then the corpse was cut up and the severed head stuck over the gate of Bēt-Lapat. Later the earthly remains were buried by faithful followers at Ctesiphon (*Homilies*, pp. 46-67; *Psalm Book*, II, p. 17, 5-18).

CHAPTER THREE

MANI'S TEACHING (I)

Dispatch and Defeat of Primaeval Man – The Return of Primaeval Man – Recovery of the Particles of Light – The Myth of the 'Seduction of the Archons'

Dispatch and Defeat of Primaeval Man

IN a dispute with the Manichees Augustine puts the following words into the mouth of Faustus: 'I teach that there are two primary elements, God and Matter. To Matter we ascribe all maleficent, to God all beneficent potency, as is proper.' (*Contra Faustum*, XI 1.)

Here Faustus conducts himself as a true pupil of Mani, for the doctrine of the two primary elements, God and Matter, stood at the centre of Mani's system. These two eternal substances, that never passed through any process of creation, could also go by the names of Light and Darkness or Truth and Lie. Thus the impersonal concepts of Truth and Light could be regarded as a personal being, God, whilst correspondingly Lie and Darkness received not only the impersonal appellation Matter but could also be personified as 'the Prince of Darkness'. This does not, however, mean that the Manichees recognized the existence of two gods. Respecting that, Faustus says: 'Never has the name of two gods found a place in our interpretations. We acknowledge two primary elements, but one of these we call "God", the other "Matter", or as I say usually and customarily "the demon" (devil).' (*Contra Faustum*, XX 1.)

This refusal to grant the evil element, Matter, the designation 'God' amounts, of course, as Ferdinand Christian Baur remarked a hundred and fifty years ago, to a qualification

of strict dualism, an admission that the good element is superior to the evil, and is responsible for an obscuration of the logic. It is perfectly clear, as Baur emphasized, that Mani took for his starting-point the ancient Iranian dualism. This was based on the notion of incessant strife between two primary principles, Ōhrmazd (or Ahura Mazdā) the Good and Ahriman (or Ahra Mainyu) the Evil. These primary principles were twins and had at the first beginnings of time to choose between Good and Evil. Ahriman had chosen Evil, Ōhrmazd Good (The Twin Gatha, *Yasna* 30).

The idea of such divine twins seems certainly to suggest an original equality of status. Nor is such an equality lacking. For behind Zoroaster's *Gatha* are to be discerned the outlines of a different, pantheistic, cosmic interpretation according to which Ōhrmazd and Ahriman were begotten by a divine primordial being, Zervan, who was an hermaphrodite space-time godhead.

This Zervanite faith was in Mani's day especially strongly supported by the Median Magi, among whom it had already been in ascendancy in Achaemenid times (cf. above p. 21). It was also this line of Iranian religion with which Christianity came into conflict in Armenia and northern Mesopotamia. When the Church Fathers attacked 'the teachings of the Magi', it was Zervanism that they were criticizing.

The principal Zervanite myth dealt precisely with the birth of the heavenly twins. Zervan, it said, wanted a son and for this purpose made sacrifices for a great length of time. But then he was seized with doubts whether he would really have offspring. Thereby he conceived the evil Ahriman, whom he begot first and who was black and evil-smelling. Then Ōhrmazd the second twin was born, and he was fair and sweet of smell. Since Ahriman had been spawned first, he could claim the rights of primogeniture. He received too from his father Zervan power over half of this world's course and became King there, *šāh*. Ōhrmazd, however, became a sovereign ruler, *pātixšāh*, and was for his part given

power over the latter half of the world's course. Therefore at the end victory over his twin will be his.

To this degree the dualistic outlook, present in the development of pantheistic Zervanism, itself mitigates the strict dualism by making Ahriman only *šāh* and Ōhrmazd *pātixšāh* on the one hand and decreeing final victory for Ōhrmazd on the other. Thereby Ōhrmazd as predestined victor in the fight between the two world rulers had the advantage from the start.

There is no doubt that in this religious system Ahriman was regarded as a real god and not merely as a demon. Greek writers often stated that Ahriman was not a god (*theos*) but a demon (*daimon*). Nevertheless Christian controversies confirm that he was revered as a god 'mighty in wrath'. Mithraism too, whose connection with Zervanism has long been established, consecrated altars to him with the inscription *Deo Arimanio* or 'To the God Ahriman'; sacrifices were to him as a god.

Consequently Mani can be said to have extended and intensified a tendency already present in Iranian religion, for Manichaeism abhorred the contention that the good and evil powers were brothers. In the Manichaean confessional formula, of which more will be said later (cf. p. 83), there stands: 'Should we have said that Ōhrmazd and Ahriman were younger and elder brothers . . . , then I repent . . . now and beg for forgiveness of sins' (*Xvāstvānēft* I C 3-4; cf. HR II, p. 94 M 28).

The element significant of the highest being, and over which it ruled, was light. It was thought of as the substance of the divine being. Properly speaking, an apprehensible substance entirely different from intellect or matter, it possessed at the same time a quality of manifestation. God was the 'Father of the blessed light'. As God-Father he held sway over the realm of light whilst simultaneously this realm, consisting of the light of the earth and the light of the spheres, was intrinsically coincident with the highest godhead. They were identical because the entire realm of light is at once the body of the godhead. It was furthermore maintained that this realm

of light was no divine creation but had since eternity, as a true expression of God's being, been absolute and co-existent with him. Had but a particle in the realm of light resulted from emanation or creation, then the property of absoluteness could not have been conceded to it.

The apprehensible body of God was designated by Mani as the five 'dwellings': sense, reason, thought, deliberation, and intention. These activities of the intellect were considered to constitute both its essence and its products. The term 'dwellings' is found in early Jewish speculative treatises and in Mandaean texts.

In the realm of light God was seated upon his throne, surrounded by his light, his force, and his wisdom. These three characteristics represented three different aspects of him and, together with him, formed a tetrad frequently met in Manichaean hymns as well as being found in the Arabic source *Fihrist*.

The three aspects of God's nature composed the abundance of his being, an abundance which was enunciated in the concept 'God'. This latter totality was set beside the three aspects as an individual entity – an idiosyncratic method of calculation but a special principle often encountered in the Indo-Iranian religious system, whereby the sum of the parts could be added as a part of its own to the rest or even confront them as a completely independent quantity, and one which had an Indo-Aryan origin. It will be seen later that this principle played a fundamental role in Manichaeism. Thus God possessed four sides, as it were, in Mani's teaching and a Greek abjuration formula called him τὸν τετραπρόσωπον πατέρα τοῦ μεγέθους: 'the four-faced Father of greatness' (*Migne SG I*, col. 1401).

This conception of the highest being as a four-faced God was related in the closest possible way to the Zervanite image of God. For Zervan was indeed such a four-faced God and here the historical connection between Manichaeism and Zervanism is an established fact. Superficially the link is of course most evident in the Middle Iranian texts where in the

Middle Persian and Sogdian tongues God simply goes by the name of Zervan and the tetrad assumes the following appearance:

MIDDLE PERSIAN		SOGDIAN	ZERVANISM
Zarvān	God	Zrw'	Zurvān (Zamān)
rōšn	light	rwxsny'k	light
zōr	force	zwr	force
vahēh	wisdom	γrβ'ky'	wisdom (xrat)

The realm of light was unbounded on three sides – to the north, to the east, and to the west. But to the south it came up against darkness. At this point then the sphere of power of the 'Father of greatness', as Mani called him, was finite.

In the realm of light there prevailed utter peace and harmony. The beauty of the Father, wreathed with flowers, was described in rapturous words. Twelve aeons, sheathed in flowers too, stood before and heaped him with further blossoms. These his twelve sons, as they were also called, were so distributed that three gods stood in each celestial region, a scheme of four times three which again conforms to the tetragonal pattern. A health-giving breeze was wafted across the heavenly regions through which nectar perpetually flowed (*Contra Faustum* XV; M 692, M 730).

A sharp contrast was provided to the harmony of the realm of light by the state of the realm of darkness. The inhabitants of the world of matter jostled and drove one another hither and thither, chasing about frenziedly. This swirling agitation had once resulted in eddying the race of darkness to the upper rim of the realm where darkness abutted upon light. As the Prince and his cohorts caught sight of it, they were seized by a violent longing for this beautiful and magnificent realm. They ceased their strife and took counsel together how they might partake of the light, how they could mingle with it. They armed themselves for attack and broke from below into the realm of light which was thus beset by a dangerous convulsion.

To defend himself and his realm the King and Father of light had now to step forth from his majestic 'repose in himself' and out of the abundance of his being. From an existence of contemplation he had to pass to one of action.

Baur has drawn attention to the Iranian origin of the mythical strife theme which, more particularly, is to be found in the Pahlavi writings *Bundahishn* and *Žātspram*. The relevant passages there are of purely Zervanite character. Their highest God was derived from the bi-sexual Zervan who during the process of creation had fulfilled the part of father and of mother, *pitarīh ut mātarīh*, as the phrase was. The writings continued that Ahriman, who roamed the world of darkness, once reached out towards light and glimpsed it. Hereupon, in company with the armed cohorts of the demons of darkness summoned by him, he breached the world of light from below. The strife theme itself was, however, far older than the very late setting down of it in these two sources. Plutarch, quoting from the collected memoranda of the writer Theopompos, had already narrated how Ahriman and his demons had attacked the upper world and how thereby Good had become 'mingled' with evil. In the Zervanite view, testified by the Middle Iranian book of wisdom *Mēnōk ī Xrat*, the world was shaped like an egg and this was mentioned by Plutarch too (*De Iside et Osiride*, Chap. 46-47).

God, the highest being, was, however, pure and therefore unsuited to struggle and strife. What was he to do to thwart the power of evil? He 'called' the 'Mother of life'. Mani never used terms like 'create', but always the verb 'to call', *qerā* in Syriac and the same as the Mandaean employed in this special sense. The name 'Mother of life' is a reminder of the fact that the first life, the second life and – probably – the third life are appellations already encountered in connection with 'the Chaste', that gnostic movement out of which Manichaeism itself arose. Analogy would properly demand that there should be a 'Father of life', but instead there is the 'Father of greatness' as the highest being is designated in the

surviving Syriac textual tradition. In the background links may be surmised not only with Mesopotamian concepts, in which 'the life' played a central part, but also with Iranian tradition where in the 'metrical sermons' of Zoroaster there are some obscure references to 'the first life' (*Yasna* 30, 4; 33, 1; 43, 5; 48, 6). At a purely theological level the Mother of life in the Zervanite system corresponds to the female godhead standing next to Zervan, probably called Xvašrag, behind whom the great goddess Anāhid seems likely to be concealed.

After the Mother of life had been 'called' into existence, she in turn 'called' Primaeval Man, in Syriac *nāšā qadmāyā*, a phrase meaning literally 'the first man'. In Iranian tradition, however, he was Ōhrmazd, the son of the four-faced God (Zervan).

A look at this triad, the Father of greatness, the Mother of life, and Primaeval Man, shows it at once to be a representation of father, mother and son. The combination is met not only in Middle Eastern religion in general, but is specifically encountered in the Syriac *Song of the Pearl* where the Son-Redeemer is portrayed as the youth, the young prince. This was the model for the Manichaean Redeemer in his symbolic aspect of 'stripling' or youth. Middle Iranian texts also spoke of the 'tender son', *nāzūg zādag*, or, using a Parthian loan-word from Sanskrit, the 'stripling', *kumār*. In the Hindu religion, *kumārā* means 'the youth', the youthful god of war called Skanda.

A poem among the Coptic psalms put special emphasis on the task of the Redeemer as a valiant warrior and saw him principally in the light of the victor who triumphed over the powers of darkness by reason of his intrepid mettle. There was nevertheless another trait involved, that of suffering. For Primaeval Man-Redeemer achieved his victory only after a seeming defeat.

Primaeval Man clad himself in his armour and set forth to do battle with the cohorts of matter, of darkness, of evil. The

armour consisted of his five light elements and in sum they constituted not merely his armour but his own being, his proper 'self', his 'soul'. They could therefore be symbolically qualified as his five 'sons' and through the selection of a variety of symbols the effort was made to express a relationship that was difficult, indeed impossible, to define within the framework of a rational formula. The light elements, in Syriac *zīwānē*, were air, wind, light, water, and fire.

Primaeval Man was defeated by the Prince of darkness and his host and robbed of his armour. Or, according to another symbolic account, his five sons were devoured by the demons.

This defeat was nevertheless the prelude to victory since it was regarded as, so to speak, voluntary. It had been of his own free will that Primaeval Man had descended into the world of darkness and matter and allowed his light elements to be devoured. His intention had been to become thereby a deadly poison for matter: darkness had devoured the light elements, but in doing so introduced into itself a substance of essential difference which was insupportable. Nor were other similes lacking. As a commander will sacrifice a vanguard to an oncoming enemy to save the main body of his troops, so it happened here. Or, adopting a pastoral metaphor, a shepherd will abandon a sheep to the wolf so as not to lose his whole flock. In the same way Primaeval Man sacrificed his soul to the demons of darkness and allowed his five sons to be devoured by it.

Nonetheless, this was a terrible blow. Manichaean psalms and hymns ever again took for their theme the frightful situation in which Primaeval Man found himself after his defeat. He lay in a deep ditch, far down in the abyss of matter, divested of his armour of light, stunned by the blow. He was fettered and surrounded by wild beasts and dreadful demons, ready to devour him.

Primaeval Man awoke out of his stupor and sent up a prayer that was then repeated sevenfold.

The Father of greatness 'called' a second creation
into being :

The Friend of light, who
'called' the great builder (*Bān rabbā*), who
'called' the Living Spirit.

Together with his five sons, whom he had convoked, the Living Spirit proceeded to the boundary of darkness. Thence he uttered a rousing cry to Primaeval Man imprisoned below who in turn uttered a resounding hail. This summons and this response were regarded as two divine personalities, 'Summons' and 'Response' or, more precisely, What was Summoned and What was Responded, known in Middle Iranian as *Xrōštag* and *Padvāxtag* and Syriac as *qaryā* and '*anyā*. They unite and rise to the Mother of life and to the Living Spirit.

Of considerable significance was the dialogue which developed between Summons and Response because it established the situation that recurs every time a soul here on earth utters a cry for redemption and receives the hail of deliverance. The Syrian writer Theodor bar Konai has preserved for posterity Mani's own words on this. In a small poetic fragment the tones of his voice can still be caught :

'Then did the Living Spirit cry with a loud voice, and
the voice of the Living Spirit was as a sharp sword and
laid bare the form of Primaeval Man.

And it said unto him :

Peace upon thee, excellent one amidst evil ones,
Lustrous one amidst darkness,
God who dwelleth amidst the beasts of wrath
That know nought of their glory.

Thereupon Primaeval Man answered him and spake :

Come with peace, bringing
"Wares" of rest and peace.

And he spake to him :

How goes it with our Fathers,
The sons of light, in their abode?’

The greeting of the Living Spirit underlined the contrast between the current situation of Primaeval Man and his real origin and destiny. And Primaeval Man’s first, anxious question was devoted to his kin, the sons of light: Had his sacrifice been in vain or were they saved?

The Return of Primaeval Man

The Living Spirit, who was accompanied by the Mother of life, extended his right hand to Primaeval Man. The latter seized it and thus was drawn up out of the depths of the world of darkness. Together with the Mother of life and the Living Spirit he rose up and up, soared like victorious light out of darkness, till he was returned to the paradise of light, his celestial home, where his kin awaited him.

There is another description in Manichaean tradition regarding this return. In a hymn in Parthian the report runs:

He was the son of Primordial Father and a Prince, a King’s son.

He gave his self to the foes, into fetters his whole dominion.
For his sake afflicted were all the aeons and domains.

He prayed to the Living Mother and She entreated the Father of Greatness:

‘The fair son, the innocent, wherefore do the demons rend him?’

Unfortunately at this point, where there was presumably an account of the rescue of Primaeval Man, there is a large gap in the text. It continues with the exhortation to him to gather his dispersed light elements:

....., gather thy limbs!

The eternally fair, with shining visage did he mount to his march.

The Mother caught and kissed him : 'Thou art come again,
exiled son.

Hurry and pass into the light, for thy kind for thee greatly
are longing.'

(M 33, 69-98)

Clearly the situation is identical with that in the *Song of the Pearl*, but here the joy of the return, when the young son is reunited with his mother, is experienced. The extraordinarily lofty, richly emotional strain of this portrayal is striking: the youth who dauntlessly sets out into the strife, a radiant young hero in shining armour, the unexpected defeat and its bitterness, the numbing blow, the frightful awakening when he realizes his dreadful predicament, the despairing cry for help, the terror in his homeland at his threatened hideous fate, the arrival of the rescuer, the brief but moving dialogue between rescuer and rescued, the vivid scene of the return when the mother embraces and kisses him, the only son, whom she thought lost for ever. All the colourful chain of feelings set in motion by these dramatically changing scenes and the latter's indescribably stirring impact upon the hymn's audience must be visualized if the manner in which these Manichaean songs appealed to the hearts of the believers is to be understood.

The theme of the passion and redemption of Primaeval Man is the principal one in Manichaean myth. Primaeval Man is the Redeemer, but is himself in need of redemption. That is the gnostic dogma of the 'redeemed Redeemer'. For the positive and redemptive aspect of the Redeemer Middle Iranian Manichaean texts employ the terms *Vahman vazurg* (Middle Persian) and *Manvahnēd vazurg* (Middle Parthian), both denoting 'the great *Nous*'. It is a concept that has its roots in the old Iranian religion and an outlook identical with that of Mani is partly to be found in the Zoroastrian *Gathas*. The evidence is indeed that the theory goes back to Indo-Iranian times, for it recurs in the Indian *Upanishad* writings as an element in the Atman-Brahman line of mystic thought.

In the Coptic *Kephalaia* too the term 'the great *Nous*' crops up.

As a result of the powers of darkness having overcome the particles of light, there existed after the fight with darkness a state of mixture. This again is a matter of old Iranian terminology. 'Mixture' is *gumēčīšn* in Zoroastrian Middle Iranian texts, meaning a state of affairs when good and evil are interfused, just as Manichaean Middle Iranian texts call it *gumēčīšn* or *āmēčīšn*. The conception of mingling between light and darkness, between the spheres of apprehensibility and of matter, forms of course also a portion of Manichaeism's ancient Iranian heritage.

The idea of a god who underwent suffering is sure to have been an element in Iranian popular religion, using that designation for those developments that cannot be traced to Zoroaster. But characteristically there are faint traces of this notion to be found in Armenia on the fringe of Iranian civilization. There, popular faith was pinned on a certain Artavazd – a purely Iranian name – a manacled figure of suffering. To this must be added the fact that popular faith is not identical with religion, however probably it may be in this particular case that the old Armenian folk-tales really do echo mythical beliefs.

On the contrary, the strongly emotional shape that the theme of the suffering god took in Manichaeism can apparently be ascribed to the influence of the Mesopotamian Tammuz creed, to which reference will be made again later. But this is not to deny that certain notions of a similar sort were present in Iranian religion.

Recovery of the Particles of Light

The course of cosmic progress had now reached the stage where Primaeval Man was rescued, but the light elements still remained in the throes of darkness. Thus his 'self', his 'soul', continued fettered and defiled and needed to be liberated and brought back to the world of light. This task

was performed by the Living Spirit. The latter was in Iranian tradition sometimes called Mihryazd, 'the god Mithra', but certain Greek sources gave him the appellation of 'the demiurge', a thoroughly suitable designation in view of the fact that properly speaking he was creator of the visible universe. For he chastised the demons of darkness, who were called 'Archons', flayed them and made the Sky from their skins, made mountains of their bones, and of their excrement the earth.

The universe consisted of ten firmaments and eight orbs. One of the Living Spirit's sons, 'the Holder of Brilliance' (Syriac, *šāfet zīwā*; Latin, *Splenditenens*), held high the firmaments whilst another, 'the Supporter' (Syriac, *sakkālā*; Latin, *Atlas*), sustained on his shoulder the eight orbs.

The Living Spirit began the task of liberation. Those particles of light that had not been befouled he purified and made of them sun and moon, the two vessels of light, as they were called. Those particles which had been sullied, but very partially, he transformed into stars.

These ideas derived from an Iranian mythical cosmology that has long been familiar. Because the planets were harsh, five days of the week were harsh and only two, Sunday and Monday, kindly.

There remained those particles which had suffered most from the encounter with darkness, and their recovery involved a complicated procedure. The Father of greatness set about creating a fresh emanation whose most important personality was the Third Messenger (Syriac, *'izgaddā*, the 'Messenger'; Latin, *tertius legatus*; in Iranian tradition occasionally called Mithra). The Third Messenger was father to the twelve virgins of light who took their place as the twelve signs of the zodiac. (For a purely astrological interpretation of the zodiac, cf. below, p. 69 *et seq.*)

An ingenious piece of machinery was contrived. A gigantic cosmic wheel, the sphere and resembling a water-wheel, drew up the particles of light to the moon and to the sun. During

the first half of the month the rescued particles of light rose in a pillar of light, known as the 'column of glory', towards the moon which, filled and swollen with particles of light, became full. During the second half of the month the particles of light were conducted from the moon to the sun and thence to the paradise of light. Behind these – in modern scientific terms – extremely naïve concepts, are the old Indo-Iranian ideas concerning the purgation of the human soul by way of this ascent to the lunar and solar spheres. The notion of the column of light stretching from earth to heaven and consisting of mounting particles of light is simply the ancient idea of the Milky Way which is made up of the souls of the dead rising unceasingly to the firmament of fixed stars. In late antiquity this mythical interpretation dominated eschatology generally. Mani in this instance adopted a train of thought that was common property during antiquity and originated in Iran and the Middle East.

The Myth of the 'Seduction of the Archons'

The so-called 'Seduction of the Archons' was a further mythical element which could not fail to appear particularly repulsive to the Christian fathers of the Church. For it narrated how the Third Messenger sailed in his vessel of light, the moon, across the vault of heaven and showed himself to the fettered demonic powers. To the male Archons he displayed the radiant, naked beauty of his femininity in the shape of the virgin of light (Middle Iranian, *kanīgrōšn*), whilst to the female Archons he came in the sun's form as a naked, shining youth. This godhead is therefore introduced as herma-phroditic.

The Messenger's activity achieved the desired end. In their violent sexual excitement the male Archons discharged the particles of light as sperms which fell upon the Earth. The latter let plants sprout therefrom with the result that these (a point to be noted) continued to contain a large percentage of

light. The female demons, already pregnant, bore their offspring prematurely at the sight of the Messenger's loveliness. Thrown to earth, these monsters devoured tree-buds and thus assimilated the particles of light present therein.

Consequently the idea was that the particles of light still in matter were distributed partly among the vegetable world and partly among the posterity of the demonic powers.

Before examining Mani's system further, a look at the world of myth lying behind the 'Seduction of the Archons' will help understanding of this theme.

In the Middle Iranian texts the Third Messenger is called *Narēsāfyazd* in Parthian and *Narēsahyazd* in Middle Persian. Those are the genuine Middle Iranian, western, forms of the *Avestan Naryasaha* which occurs in Book Pahlavi as *Nēryōsang*.

In the surviving records of Theodor bar Kōnai there is a fragment that deals with the god Narses. When Ōhrmazd had given the women to the righteous, they fled and betook themselves to Satan (i.e., Ahriman). When Ōhrmazd procured the righteous peace and happiness, Satan (Ahriman) gave the women happiness too. When however Satan (Ahriman) allowed the women to covet what they would, Ōhrmazd feared that intercourse with the righteous would be what they coveted. Therefore he created the god Narsē, a youth of fifteen (the ideal age, according to Iranian concepts) and placed him totally naked at the back of Satan (Ahriman), so that the women should see and covet and demand him of Satan. The women raised their hands to Satan (Ahriman) and said, 'Satan, our Father, make us a gift of the god Narsē!'

The ethical aspect of this myth will be considered when Mani's outlook on sex matters is discussed. At this point it is only relevant to establish possible conformities with Manichaean mythology. Narsē – conceived here to be male, not androgynous – is exhibited by the godhead in the sight of the female beings who are regarded as evil (they stand in contrast to the righteous). Ōhrmazd is protector of the righteous, Ahriman of the women. Narsē is shown naked to the women

to arouse their lust. They are overcome by desire for him and wish to enter into union with him.

Points of difference are as obvious as those of agreement and there is no need to emphasize them. By comparison with an appropriate passage in the *Bundahishn* it has proved possible to reconstruct the original Iranian myth and to decide that it was Zervanite. What is not as yet known is whether Mani himself altered details of the Zervanite myth and adapted others or whether there already existed in Zervanism a version identical with the Manichaean model. In any case the theme of 'the Seduction of the Archons' is traceable to that self-same source, the Zervanite creed, which has so frequently before been encountered.

The fact that Manichaean mythology presumed a strange link to exist between particles of light and sperms need cause no surprise. Here again Mani based himself on contemporary views. The ancient Greek schools of medicine were of the opinion that sperms, issuing from the spinal cord, consisted of a fiery flow, the *pneuma*. Behind such medical speculation lay a mythical notion also met in Indo-Iranian culture. The postulate of all such theories was that the highest element in the human body is fire. Man, being a microcosm of the entire universe, was assumed to be composed of fire, air, water, and earth. The soul was a fiery exhalation or, in Cicero's words, an *anima inflammata* (*Disput. Tuscul.* I, 42). Sperm was regarded as a fiery sort of substance. The sun, the moon, and the stars were also believed to be a fiery kind of substance. Hence came man's higher self and thence it would return.

It is not easy to say whether Mani took over these views from Iranian or Hellenist sources. Such theories were probably very familiar to gnostics at Harran, who gave a good deal of time to medical theory and practice. It may be taken for granted that they were current in Mesopotamia generally and gained credence at the hands of Iranian and Indian doctors. In matters like these Mani was, as always, a child of his age.

CHAPTER FOUR

MANI'S TEACHING (2)

Matter's Counter-Measures – The Soul as Focus of Redemption – The Eschatology – The Astrology

Matter's Counter-Measures

To retain that portion of light which still remained to it, matter in the person of 'Concupiscence' (Iranian, *Āz*) evolved a plot: a major part of light was to be concentrated in the creation of an individual as a counterweight to the heavenly creation. A male demon, *Aṣqalūn*, and a female one, *Namrāel*, were chosen to put the plan into effect. To assimilate those particles of light which had fallen upon earth and were present in the Archons' abortions, *Aṣqalūn* engulfed all those monsters which were male whilst *Namrāel* was correspondingly served with the female ones. Then *Aṣqalūn* had intercourse with her and begot Adam, then Eve, the first two human beings. Thus mankind, as has been properly stressed, originated from a revolting mixture of cannibalistic and sexual performances. His body, as the purely animal manifestation of the Archons, and his lust, the libido driving him in accordance with matter's plot to procreation and parturition, these are man's heritage from his demonic provenance. But the world of light neither could nor was willing to leave man at the mercy of the world of evil. In Adam was gathered the greatest portion of the remaining imprisoned light and that was why he became the first subject of effort at redemption on the part of the world of light.

The effort was on the same pattern as that of the rescue of *Primaeval Man*. Adam at matter's instigation had been born blind, deaf and totally unaware of the gleam of light within

him. A victim of the demons surrounding him, he was sunk in a deep sleep until approached by the Redeemer. The latter, a manifestation of the Third Messenger, is variously described. He is called the Son of God or Ōhrmazd (i.e., Primaeval Man) or 'Jesus the brilliant light' or 'brilliant Jesus' (Syriac, *Īšō' zīwā*). The names Ōhrmazd and Jesus belong of course to the Syrian and Iranian traditions respectively. It is certain that within the framework of the system he is the Son of God and the incarnation of redemptive intellect. He is *Nous* or *Vahman* (*Manvahnēd*).

His aim was to redeem in Adam his own *Nous* or, in common parlance, his own soul. With his summons he roused Adam from the sleep of death, shook him, opened his eyes, raised him up, freed him by exorcism from the demons of which he was possessed, showed him the soul of light imprisoned and suffering in all of matter and revealed to him his twofold origin, how his body was derived from the powers of evil but his spirit or soul (i.e., his spiritual ego) from the celestial world of light. He instructed him in the redemptive knowledge, the gnosis, the comprehension of what was, what is and what will be. The latter phrase is an Indo-Iranian formula which is met in ancient Indian literature and recurs in Zoroastrian catechisms (cf. as below). For the rest the foregoing description bears, even down to details, the same stamp as is displayed by the account of the awakening of Adam (the soul) in Mandaean literature (cf. *Ginzā*, p. 34 *et seq.*, 112, 14 *et seq.*, 550, 1 *et seq.*).

'Then did Adam turn in upon himself and recognize who he was,' runs Theodor bar Kōnai's version.

Adam said,

'Woe, woe upon the moulder of my body
And the shackler of my soul
And upon the rebels who enslaved me!'

The term 'the rebels' is encountered also in Mandaean literature as an expression for the powers of evil hostile to the

world of light and was even adopted into the phraseology of the Koran (cf. also below, p. 94).

There is a series of parallel scenes: the summons of the living spirit which awakened Primaeval Man, the awakening of Adam by the Son of God (Öhrmazd-Jesus), the brilliant light, the admonition directed by the Redeemer to every human soul trussed in the shackles of matter. The awakening of Primaeval Man took place at the macrocosmic, that of the individual at microcosmic level. Between the two was that of Adam in whom all microcosmic human souls were united in a potential sense.

The battle, defeat, deathly slumber, awakening, dialogue and return of Primaeval Man and of the human soul together constitute a series of transactions that succeed one another like scenes in a ritual drama. It was one that was enacted for thousands of years in Mesopotamia. It was the depiction of the loss and recovery of the dying and resurrected god Tammuz. Like a warrior setting out for enemy country, he went down into the realm of death and fell into its power. Sunk in deathly slumber and surrounded by wild beasts and demons, he lay there in the underworld. Ištar, his love, went into the field to his rescue. She awakened him with a call and a dialogue ensued between the two. She raised him, liberated him from the power of the realm of death, and he returned in triumph to the world of life.

This ancient ritual exercised influence on the portrayal of the redemptive process not only in the case of Manichaeism but that of Syrian Christianity too. Religions which established themselves in Mesopotamia could not entirely escape the impact of the long indigenous civilization. As far as Mani was concerned, the Tammuz drama provided the starting-point for his symbolic mythology of redemption, but no more; his interpretation of the redemptive process was taken from Indo-Iranian theological speculation which infused this old Oriental vision of events culminating in redemption with deeper philosophic significance.

In matters of detail it is often enough difficult to tell which of the mythical images and symbols issued from Mesopotamia and which in the final analysis originated in the Indo-Iranian sphere of beliefs. A few examples will suffice to illustrate the point.

In the *Maitrāyana Upanishad* IV 2 it states that man, when robbed of his freedom, is as though in prison. He is hemmed in by great fear. He is drunk with the frenzy of delusion as with a drug. He is dazzled by suffering as in deepest darkness. As though stung by a snake he is overcome by the smart of sensuality.

All these figures of speech are found again in Manichaeism. But they crop up already in Mesopotamian creeds, especially that of Tammuz, and could the more easily carry the day for it. Mani was not their inventor. They existed long before him and probably attained their gnostic symbolism some centuries earlier.

‘Darkness’, ‘prison’, ‘drunkenness’, ‘awakening’ and other such familiar terms fall under the heading of ‘gnostic terminology’. For the antiquity and origin of gnostic piety it is not without significance that many of these expressions, in the last resort of purely technical application, are encountered in an Indo-Iranian context. Even more important, however, is that Indo-Iranian religion displays an outlook upon the material world that postulates employment of this gnostic language. Indo-Iranian religion really does rather tend – admittedly only as one of many strands – towards a pessimistic world concept, to contempt for and horror of material existence, a longing for the hereafter and the asceticism ensuing therefrom, and a deep urge to flee the world. This typical Indian propensity becomes the way of redemption called *jnāna-mārga*, the way of knowledge, because it rests upon the redemptive discernment that the individual soul, *ātman*, is identical with the Great Atman or Brahman.

The Soul as Focus of Redemption

Typical too, indeed entirely characteristic of Indo-Iranian religion, is that this piety should make the soul the focus of the redemptive process.

The one hundred and forty-first chapter of the Coptic *Kephalaia*, dealing with the ascent of the soul after death, says: 'As soon as the soul has left the body, it beholds its Redeemer and Saviour. It rises, with the image, *μορφή*, of its master and the three angels who are with him, betakes itself before the judge of truth, and receives the victory.'

The foregoing, properly speaking, is a 'blend of two concurrent and mutually exclusive versions' (Polotsky). The soul, according to one, at the time of its ascent achieves victory at the hands of a figure of eight accompanied by three angels. Nevertheless another passage of the *Kephalaia* (VII, p. 36, 12-21) maintains that 'The fifth father is the figure of light which shows itself in the selfsame shape of the apostle to each and every soul leaving a body and has with it the three great and glorious angels. Of these the first has the prize of victory in his hand, the second has the robe of light, and the third is he who bears the diadem, the wreath, and the crown of light. These are they, the three angels of light, who come with this figure of light and show themselves to the elect and the novitiates.'

This figure of light, called in the latter instance 'the fifth father', is a manifestation of *Nous* as made apparent in 'the Apostle'. This is therefore how it is envisaged that the Redeemer, made flesh in the person of Jesus as well as Mani and all other prophets of God, acts. The three attendant angels are met again in other accounts and their proffered gifts, the prize of victory, the robe of light, and the diadem, the wreath, and the crown of light, merit attention.

The prize of victory means that the redemption of the soul from the body is regarded as a victory of the new being over the old. The struggle against the old can be understood either

in the sense of a physical contest or that of a trial. In the second case a decision is left to the judge, a plea of 'justification' being entered before the tribunal on the deceased soul's behalf, symbolic terminology which derived from legal procedure prevailing in the Middle East.

On the other hand, the robe of light and the remaining symbols plainly indicate Indo-Iranian cultural origin. Manichaean hymns in Middle Iranian describe how the hall, *talvār*, the throne, *gāh*, as well as the wreath, *pusag*, the diadem, *dēdēm*, and the robe, *yāmag* or *padmōžan*, are prepared for the soul of the righteous after death (M 77, T II, D 79, etc.). This illustrates old Aryan eschatological conceptions. Exactly the same notions of the heavenly hall, the robe, the diadem and the throne are encountered in the Indian *Upanishads*, especially in the *Kauṣītakī Upanishad*. Modern research has established the existence in ancient Iranian literature, in the *Vendidad* 19, 31–32, of a wholly corresponding account.

The Eschatology

Indian eschatology would not have been truly Indian had it not made allowance for the beautiful female beings whom the righteous encounters in heaven or *brahmaloka*. Nor did Manichaean hymnology overlook the virgins of paradise. It should be recalled that in Manichaeism too the righteous after death met with his higher self in the shape of a wonderful divine virgin who accompanied him on his way to paradise. The same Sogdian fragment goes on to elucidate that no less than eighty angels of the opposite sex, decked in flowers, will after death have approached the righteous and exhorted him to stride forward into the paradise of light and there to taste of joy (*BSOAS* XI, p. 476 *et seq.*).

One of the most deeply impressive moments in the whole of Iranian eschatology is when in the *Hadōxt Nask* the dead righteous comes upon his higher self in the form of a beautiful

The heavenly maiden, who personifies man's deeds on earth and whose character and appearance is influenced by those deeds, is designated in Zoroastrian texts *kunišn* or 'behaviour' of the dead. In the Manichaean fragment the higher self is presented as 'his own behaviour' (Sogdian, 𐭪𐭫 𐭪𐭫𐭥𐭫𐭲𐭥𐭥𐭥). The detail is indicative.

Man's own good deeds have since *Rigveda* X 14, 8 been called in Indo-Iranian theology a treasure in heaven, which in turn allows for the higher self, the *daēnā* (*dēn*), to be termed a treasurer. Seeing that the magnificent robe is simply another symbol for those deeds, the *Song of the Pearl* at times uses the description 'treasurers' when speaking of its guardians. In Manichaeism certain '*electi*' are known as the 'treasurers of the glorious mother' (M 11) because their function is to supervise good deeds.

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fire that it would be fit to undergo the process of regeneration in the burning furnace. The Ossetic tales of Batradz, god of lightning, deal with the same theme.

In Manichaeism eschatology as it affected the individual was not identical with the future propounded for the world at large. The explanation to be sought therein is that the sparks of eternal light were not confined to human souls but, as has already been related, that the amount of light gone astray and not recovered was distributed throughout nature, in plants, in trees, and in fruits as well as in animals and human beings. This living soul was inseparably associated by the Manichees with the suffering Jesus, Jesus *Patibilis*, the lower element of the 'brilliant Jesus', who was crucified in the realm of matter and is mingled with the corporeal world. Trees, which in the Manichaean view contained an outstandingly large portion of light, were regarded as a cross for Christ. Faustus says that 'Jesus, man's life and redeemer, is hanged upon every tree.' The passion and the crucifixion of the historical Jesus was simply a special case, an individual moment in the cosmic drama of passion and redemption whose focus is Jesus *Patibilis*. He expressed this in the following manner: 'We behold everywhere the mystery of Jesus bound to his cross, whereby are revealed the wounds of suffering from which our soul suffers' (*Contra Faustum* XX 2; XXXII 7)

Thus the course of the world was interpreted as corresponding to the various stages of suffering of a God who was his own redeemer. The story of mankind's salvation was at the same time the tale of this God's redemption, for God is one with the souls of all men.

The process of liberation is slow and never properly reaches its end, which would be the harmonious reassembly of all the particles of light and their reunion in the world of light. Before this has been achieved, the end of the world will have come. That event will be heralded by a series of heavy afflictions of a kind precisely similar to those characterizing the apocalyptic speculations of Iran and the Middle East,

late Judaism and Christianity. A wealth of such material Mani took straight from the so-called Synoptic Apocalypse (*Mark* 13, *Matthew* 24, and *Luke* 21). A part can clearly be deduced from Iranian apocalypses. For example, a Turkish Manichaean fragment talks of the last days when the False Mithra, whose mount is a bull and whose token is war, will appear. Sundry traditions confirm that Mithra did have a bull for his mount and this passage indicates that the redeemer-god Mithra had a False Mithra as his eschatological counterpart (cf. T.M. 180).

The episode concerning the False Mithra is likely to have been part of the so-called 'great war', the final apocalyptic drama which came especially to the fore in the Coptic '*Homilies*'. The appellation 'great war' was one that Mani adopted from Iranian terminology; the phrase is exactly that employed in Zervanite apocalyptic descriptions (*artūk ī vazurg, Zātspram XXXIV* 52).

The upshot of this decisive encounter was prophesied as the triumph of the church of righteousness, i.e., the sum of the righteous. The scattered congregation would come together again, the church would be restored, the endangered scriptures saved, and Manichaeism's victory be complete. 'The new generation will come and take firm possession of its estate' (*Homilies*, p. 28, 7-8). The Great King will come and assume dominion, for the new generation will do him homage. The last judgment will follow, when the souls will assemble in front of the throne, his *bēma*. The Good will be separated from the Evil, the sheep from the goats, as the Manichaean texts making use of New Testament metaphors maintained. Both the surviving fragments of the *Šāhbuhragān* and the Coptic *Homilies* reflect Mani's outlook on this subject. They show that Mani was to a large degree at one with original Christian conceptions. The title 'Great King' is, however, taken from the Iranian apocalyptic '*Oracles of Hystapes*', a series of prophecies circulating in the Middle East in the centuries before Christ's birth.

Jesus, the doctrine continued, would reign on earth a short time. Then Christ and the elect together with the cosmic tutelary gods will leave the world and return to the realm of light. A last process of purification takes place. Those particles of light that it is still possible to rescue will be collected to form an 'ultimate statue' (an *andrias* is the word in the Coptic texts) which will be raised to heaven like a cosmic pillar of light. Hereupon the terrestrial globe itself will be annihilated. The damned and the demons, the world of matter and darkness, will be thrown together in a shapeless clod, *bolos*, which will be sunk in the deeps of a moat of cosmic extent that will then be covered with a gigantic rock.

With these grandiose cosmic visions Mani ended his account of the world's course and thus came to the close of the 'Third Epoch'. The First Epoch embraced the state of the universe prior to the blending of light and darkness; the Second Epoch was concerned with the period of that blending; the Third Epoch signified the sundering of the blended elements. This doctrine of the Three Epochs is together with the Two Principles Manichaeism's main dogma.

The tripartite division of time is met in the Zoroastrian Pahlavi texts. They have the formula 'that which is, was, and will be', *kē hast, būt ut bavēt*. But the pattern is much older and, already to be found in the Indian *Upanishad* records, is of Indo-Iranian origin (cf. above, p. 60).

Following upon the end of the universe as perceived, the assumption might be that the course of the world would have reverted to the state of things prior to the blending of light and darkness; as though indeed this were a genuine reinstatement. But, despite talk in this connection of a 'reinstatement of the two natures', an *apokatástasis tôn dyo physeôn*, a difference remains, for hereafter the power of matter and darkness will not be capable of renewing the attack upon the world of light. The two principles, light and darkness, will continue separate existence. Nevertheless opinions on the integrity of the world of light differ. The one school declared that the father of light

was able to recover all the missing particles of light. The other, more pessimistic, countered that a part of light was lost for ever. That portion had subsequent to the last judgment to share the eternal imprisonment of darkness with matter. The doctrine of twofold termination, enunciated by the latter school, undoubtedly comes closer to the similes and symbols that Mani used. It is, however, possible that on this particular point he did not speak with sufficient clarity.

The Astrology

Mani, like his contemporaries and all the more for having grown up in Mesopotamia, land of veneration for the stars, subscribed to astrological doctrines. His views were manifested in various ways and were law for his followers.

Whilst the sun and moon were for Mani good beings, indeed the principal instruments for the recovery of the particles of light, he regarded the rest of the planets and the zodiacal signs as evil, pernicious powers. The Mandaeans repeatedly took the same line except that they counted the sun and moon as part of the rest of the planets and hence referred to 'the seven and the twelve' as the ruinous powers of existence. More fluctuating on this point was the attitude of Zervanism in which astrological ideas and speculations played an important part. Astrology and veneration for the stars was also an enduring factor in late Hellenistic culture. For these reasons the main source of influence on Mani is not easy to distinguish. There can, however, be little doubt that those gnostics at Harran where the old Babylonian astral faith had found refuge (cf. above, p. 10) made some contribution.

Mani's teaching, as set down in the *Kephalaia*, has a number of instances dealing with the signs of the zodiac. The first of these concerns itself with the distribution of the twelve signs among the five worlds of darkness. The zodiacal creatures are not, however, to be found within these worlds, but are 'withdrawn' and tied to the sphere or wheel (cf. above, p. 55):

‘Thus we must recognize that they are withdrawn from the five Worlds of Darkness, are bound to the sphere, and that two creatures are allotted to each world.

Mani himself says that each of the worlds has two zodiacal creatures allotted to it. Nevertheless since there are twelve signs and only five worlds the co-ordination must follow this pattern :

Gemini + Sagittarius	belongs to the World of Smoke
Aries + Leo	belongs to the World of Fire
Taurus + Aquarius + Libra	belongs to the World of Wind
Cancer + Virgo + Pisces	belongs to the World of Water
Capricorn + Scorpio	belongs to the World of Dark- ness

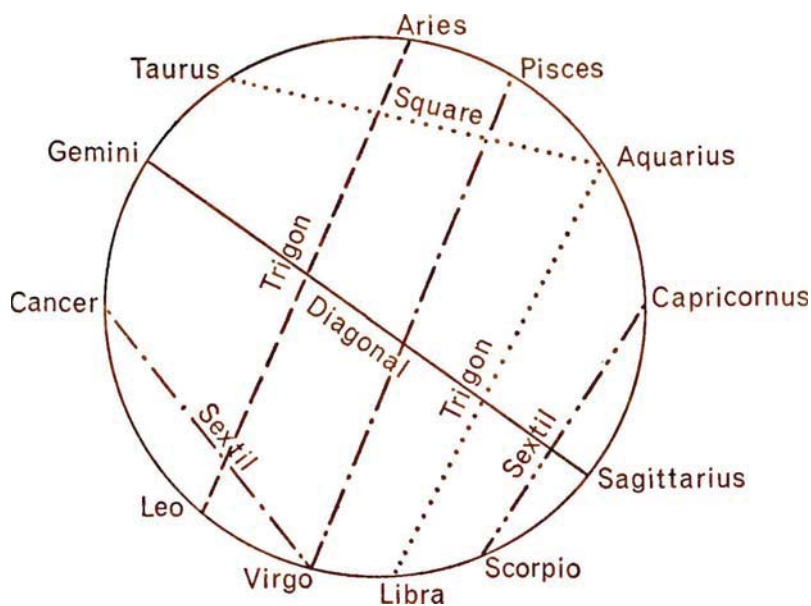
These are the twelve ‘Archons of Wickedness’ (*Kephalaia*, Chapter LXIX, p. 167, 22–31).

W. Stegemann, a specialist in the astrology of late antiquity, drew the signs in the foregoing order in circular form. He hoped to elucidate the meaning thereby and would appear to have succeeded when he says that ‘evidently this is a game with the aspects – diagonal, trigon, square, and sextil’. The grouping, as Stegemann showed in the figure reproduced on p. 71, is symmetrical.

The following sequence results for the aspects in question :

1. Smoke	Gemini + Sagittarius	Diagonal
2. Fire	Aries + Leo	Trigon
3. Wind	Taurus + Aquarius + Libra	Square + Trigon
4. Water	Cancer + Virgo + Pisces	Sextil + Diagonal
5. Darkness	Capricorn + Scorpio	Sextil

Of these aspects contemporary astrology regarded diagonal and square as unfavourable, trigon and sextil as favourable. Thus the favourable trigon is after the unfavourable diagonal, then there comes the unfavourable square, which is in turn followed by the favourable trigon and the *favourable* sextil. The inconsistency is brought about by the disproportion between



Aspects of the Signs which belong to the World
of Smoke of Fire of Wind of Water of Darkness
— - - - -

the figures twelve and five. It is succeeded in appropriate order by the unfavourable diagonal and the favourable sextil, the latter being then faced by the initial unfavourable diagonal. This oppositional tendency of the different aspects confirms Mani's assertion respecting the signs: 'They are all enemies and adversaries of one another' (*Kephalaia*, p. 167, 14-15).

In the second passage of the *Kephalaia* (Chapter LXVIII, p. 168, 17 to p. 169, 8) Mani employed a system by which the world was divided into four parts, each of which was split into two adjacent triangles. By means of this trigonal partition the zodiacal signs were distributed as follows:

First Triangle	Aries, Leo, Sagittarius	north-west
Second Triangle	Taurus, Virgo, Capricornus	south-west

Third Triangle	Gemini, Libra, Aquarius	north-east
Fourth Triangle	Cancer, Scorpio, Pisces	south-east

Hereupon followed a piece in which Mani gave notice of various ominous prognostications (p. 168, 26 *et seq.*), but strangely enough at this point the spatial system was transformed into a temporal one. 'The trigons, with reference to their ill-omened dispensation, come into effect at intervals of time' (Stegemann). This probably holds good for the whole world.

Astrological literature has lists which combine the zodiacal signs with forecasts of disaster. It would seem that Mani may have adapted such a list to the trigons and added a temporal system to the spatial one – which is 'not exactly very logical' (Stegemann).

The imprecision encountered in Mani's astrology is also revealed in his chronology, where he somewhat perverted the scheme. Henning, who put matters right, nevertheless stated very properly, 'There is no call to criticize Mani for this minor falsification; he was a stranger to the science of his age and to scientific thought in general . . . nor had he any desire to be a man of learning, but simply an ἀπόστολος.'

Mani tried to establish a link between his own religion and Christianity as he also did in the case of Buddhism and Zoroastrianism. But it has to be emphasized that in each instance he had a particular specimen of these creeds in mind. For him Buddhism was *Mahāyāna* Buddhism, Zoroastrianism the religion of the Median Magi, which meant Zervanism, and Christianity was Gnosticism, especially in the form supported by Bardesanes and Marcion. The Christian exposition of his message was meant for the West, the Buddhist one for the East. Between these two missionary territories lay the Iranian empire; for that the Zoroastrian cast of his system was determinant (cf. also Foucher). Attention must nevertheless be drawn to a difference between these three forms. Whilst the Christian and Buddhist elements of the

CHAPTER FIVE

THE MANICHAEAN SCRIPT AND LITERATURE

The Manichaean Script and Mani's Language – The Canon – Non-Canonical Literature – The Confessional Formularies – The Hymnic Literature – The Homiletic Literature – The Thomas Psalms

The Manichaean Script and Mani's Language

THE *Acta Archelai*, that Christian tissue of lies about Mani which nevertheless contains so much authentic material (cf. above, p. 36), has a personal description of him and mentions his carrying a Babylonian book (*Babylonicum librum*) under his left arm (*sub sinistra ala*), XIV 3.

It is a characteristic glimpse because *Manichaeism was essentially a book religion*. Of the revelations he received which he then evolved into a comprehensive doctrinal system its founder gave an account in a series of written works. Subsequently his church regarded it as its charge to preserve and safeguard the traditions handed down from the days of the 'Lord Mani'.

The *Acta Archelai* refers to a Babylonian book and this designation 'Babylonian' suggests lower Mesopotamia, where Mani had grown up and of which he himself said that it had seen his beginnings: 'A thankful disciple, I am, risen from Babel's land' (M 4-HR II, p. 51).

If Mani spoke of being a Babylonian and was portrayed carrying a Babylonian book, that means its script and language were Aramaic (or, more precisely, eastern Aramaic) and closely related to Edessene Syriac, the literary language developed at Edessa. The script invented and employed by Mani, which was practised in the eastern church provinces as

far away as Turkestan, consisted of a type of lettering approximate in line to that cultivated at Edessa. But it drew still nearer to the older form of Mandaean line and this provides further proof of the intimate historical connection between Manichaeism and the Mandaean baptist creed. A conspicuous fact is that Mani did *not* avail himself of the two types of Aramaic alphabet used on the coins and in the chancelleries of the Parthian and Sassanid kings (or princes in Persis).

Since, however, Mani took up a certain design of script and developed it for his own purposes, it may be assumed that its lettering was one generally familiar in his native southern Babylonia and apparently the most suitable for the spreading of his gospel. His language can be called eastern Aramaic, a branch identical with or at least almost indistinguishable from Edessene Syriac. We can well understand his seizing upon the speech that Bardesanes, whom clearly he desired to supersede, had rendered so well-known through his writings. The fragments of Manichaean poetry preserved by Theodor bar Kōnai, very probably from Mani's own hand, are composed in the Edessene dialect. The same holds good for the tiny remains of Manichaean literature discovered in Egypt, although in this case there is no clue as to when or by whom they were written. Script and matter are, however, indubitably Manichaean and some minor departures from established Edessene Syriac do not affect the issue. Our knowledge of early Edessene is imperfect and it is permissible to adhere to the view that the speech encountered in these fragments is practically identical with the classical Syriac of Edessa.

The point therefore that attracts attention is that the Aramaic language used by Mani and his disciples was *not* the dialect of the Babylonian region, i.e., it was not identical either with the northern Babylonian speech found in the Babylonian *Talmud* nor with the southern Babylonian in Mandaean writings, and this gives food for thought. Here,

evidently, is a deliberate breach with Mani's background. There is hardly room for any doubt that the choice of Edessene Syriac by this new religious founder was dictated by his need for a language enjoying the greatest possible dissemination. For Mani, as an Oriental, the possibility of Greek did not arise (according to the *Acta Archelai* XL 5, it was entirely unknown to him). Hence for his purposes there could be no more suitable tongue than the Edessene Syriac which, both in literary and ecclesiastical matters, was already variously employed in the Sassanian empire and the eastern parts of the Roman empire as well (cf. above, p. 8 *et seq.*). Mani's skill as missionary and propagandist is reflected not least in his choice of language for his works.

The Canon

Thus Mani wrote in Syriac and used the script employed in southern Babylonia in the third century. There was only *one* work written in another tongue and there the special circumstances of its composition and purpose make the exception easily intelligible.

(a) It was the volume entitled *Šāhbuhragān* which Mani, according to Al-Bīrūnī (ed. Sachau, p. 207, 14) dedicated to the Great King Shāpur I. This first publication in which he exposed his doctrine had, as the rediscovered Middle Iranian fragments testify, *inter alia* a cosmological, especially eschatological content. In addition, as we also know from Al-Bīrūnī (ed. Sachau, p. 208, 8), the chapter on 'The Coming of the Apostle' related how the heavenly Messenger had descended to earth in various incarnations and cited Buddha, Zoroaster, and Jesus as Mani's forerunners. The book also contains an autobiographical note about the time and place of his birth (ed. Sachau, p. 208, 7f, cf. p. 24 above).

The reason for *Šāhbuhragān* being written in Middle Persian was presumably that this shrewd ecclesiastical statesman wished, in the interest of his doctrines, to pay his respects to

the new ruler in the new imperial language, the speech of the Sassanid dynasty.

(b) Of Syriac works the first that must be listed among Mani's canonical writings is *The Living Gospel* or *The Great Gospel*. The various fragments contained in the Turfan finds do not, however, suffice to provide a clear picture of its components. Efforts have been made – quite erroneously – to identify this book with the *Ārdahang* which is often mentioned in connection with Iranian matters. Mani's work was divided in accordance with the number of letters in the Syriac alphabet into twenty-two chapters, a fact confirmed by a tiny Turfan fragment (M 17). He proclaimed himself here as the paraclete foretold by Christ and as 'the seal of the prophets'. It has been assumed that he intended his doctrine in this gospel to be a counterpart to that of Jesus in order to outdo the canonical gospels of the Christians. But he probably had only a single Christian gospel in mind, the gospel harmony edited by Tatian which in his lifetime played an outstanding part among Syriac-speaking Christians.

(c) Another work was called *The Treasure of Life*, a title reminiscent of the Mandaean book *Ginzā* or 'The Treasure', and this perhaps hints at a link in matter. A fragment was transmitted by Al-Bīrūnī in his volume on India and dealt with the condition of the dwellers in the realm of light (Al-Bīrūnī, *India*, ed. Sachau, p. 19, 2–9). Other, fairly full extracts are to be read in Augustine, *De Natura Boni*, 44, and Euodius, *De Fide Contra Manich.*, 14 to 16. These passages describe the 'Seduction of the Archons'. The work consisted of at least seven books and dealt with the Manichaean views on anthropology and psychology, including Mani's more detailed interpretation of Man as microcosm.

(d) The fourth canonical composition finds mention as *Pragmateia* and the assumption has been that this title was adopted as a loan-word from Greek into Syriac. The contents were probably of a practical ethical kind, but in the absence unfortunately of fragments, quotations or statements about its

contents nothing definite can be said by way of comment on this work except that it had in any case nothing to do with the *Kephalaia*.

(e) *The Book of Mysteries* had eighteen chapters and contained an attack on the successors of Bardesanes. Here again no portions have been discovered and the chapter headings in the *Fihrist* (ed. Flügel, p. 336 *et seq.*) tell us little except that Chapters 1, 12 and 13 dealt with Bardesanite teachings. It may be hazarded that this work was intended to be an anti-thesis of that circulating among the Bardesanites under the same title.

(f) We are, on the other hand, thanks to the many Turfan fragments, fairly well-informed about the work which goes under the name of *The Book of the Giants*. The fragments have now been combined into a whole, though not altogether lacking in gaps. In this instance Mani took up an old Middle Eastern myth, the tale of the fall of the angels which prior to Mani already had been linked to a tradition regarding a giant Ogia who had lived after the flood and been involved in a fight with a dragon. In Middle Iranian fragments there are two dragon-killers, Sām and Narīmān, familiar figures of ancient Iranian mythology. It is probable that Mani used a plot of purely Iranian origin and combined it with the story of the fall of the angels as is found in the *First Book of Enoch*. Mani's use of the *Enoch* writings is established, not least because Enoch is mentioned in his *Book of the Giants*. His dependence on the Iranian dragon-killer myths appears in a different light when we learn that in certain Iranian fragments there occur the names Ohia and that of his brother Ahia, precisely in that form except for the supplementary Sogdian variations of Sāhm, the *kavi*, and Pāt-Sāhm. In regard to the term *kavi* we know now that in Middle Iranian times it corresponded to the Syriac word *gabbārā* (= Hebrew *gibbōr*) and the Greek γίγας. Since the Sogdian-Manichaean transmission like the Parthian reproduces the so-called 'western' or Syriac terminology, the conclusion has naturally been

drawn that Mani himself used the names Ohia and Ahia whereas the Iranian versions of Sām and Narīmān or Pāt-Sāhm did not appear in the original Syriac text but were simply the substitutes regarded as appropriate by his disciples who adhered to his practice of transliterating every word, every expression and every name.

Nevertheless, certain circumstances speak against this in itself acceptable view. For one thing Sām is encountered in Mandaean literature prior to Mani's time. For another Sām i Narīmān occurs in the eighteenth book of the great *R.G. Apocalypse* as the name of one of the legendary Iranian kings. The version there is Pāšm Narīmān, the explanation for which would seem to be the Sogdian form of Pāt-Sāhm, for it is noticeable that the Iranian names in this Mandaean apocalypse generally display wide deviations from the Middle Persian forms in use in Sassanian Iran. The occurrence of Sām i Narīmān together with other remarkable details in this apocalypse demonstrates that the Iranian epic mythical tradition was incorporated into the Semitic historical tradition. That Mani – by reason of his Parthian ancestry and Mandaean education – took a further step along this path seems evident. Syriac literature has historical narrations of a markedly syncretic sort. It would be very odd, in view of his 'conscious' syncretism, if this syncretic, Iranian-Semitic outlook on history were not met in Mani's work. In fact nothing can be more natural than that he should have tried to blend the Iranian mythical-historical tradition with the Syriac-Christian historical outlook. If our supposition is correct, the *Book of the Giants* would dovetail without difficulty into a broader play of historical ideas. In such case Sām Narīmān and the rest of the Iranian legendary heroes would already have had their place in the original version – but together with the figures of Ohia and Ahia. It is possible that Mani himself at the beginning of the book declared these personalities to be identical with the corresponding Iranian ones and that the Sogdian version is one which seeks to underline this

relationship. As a parallel it is merely necessary to cite Ps. *Clement. Recogn.* IV, 27 *et seq.*, where Nimrod is identified with Zoroaster and is sometimes called Zoroaster, sometimes Nimrod, and sometimes Ninus.

(g) In the Manichaean canon there remain only the *Letters* collection, which has come down to us in Coptic. Since they have still – after nearly thirty years – not been edited, and are indeed reported to have been for the most part lost, nothing is really known of these *Letters* except their headings and introductions. One such, for instance, runs: ‘Manichaios, apostle of Jesus Christ, and Kustaios, the [apostle (?)], and all other brothers who are with me, to Sisinnios.’ We see here that Mani – quite like Paul – is well aware of his inherent authority. From other sources (cf. above, p. 40, and below, p. 82) we are familiar with Sisinnios as Mani’s direct successor.

The two letters in Coptic whose contents we know do not bear signs of being a doctrinal tract but rather those of a proper letter in which personal affairs are discussed. Mani is reflected in the character of head of the large-scale spiritual missionary undertaking and its propaganda which he had so excellently organized. But, as far as can be judged from such material as has up to now become available, Mani also used his *Letters* to deal with certain doctrinal points, organizational problems and such general questions as similarly preoccupied Paul in his writings. Just like Paul, Mani is here the head of his church and the pastor of his flock. It may therefore be assumed that these *Letters* represented a deliberate counterpart to Paul’s *Epistles*. Like these, they are at once doctrinal tracts, practical directions, and personal communications. Thus they do fall into the literary category which is classified as ‘epistle’, proceedings in written form, even though they are real letters in the sense that they have the appearance of fortuitousness. Even though it may not from the very start have been intended to disseminate them in book-form, Mani did in his own lifetime have them distributed as part of his

literary production. A detailed inventory of his epistles has been preserved in the *Fihrist*.

Non-Canonical Literature

Here we leave the Manichaean canon and pass over to the remaining writings. One that should certainly not be overlooked is a biographical work that must once have had wide dissemination in many languages. A number of fragments are found scattered in various places and, although these partial transmissions do not enable us to reconstruct the course of Mani's life at all points, they give a particularly excellent picture of the beginnings and end of his public activity together with the organizational role he played. For such reconstructional purposes there are principally available certain portions of the *Fihrist*, three Turfan fragments, and various Coptic Manichaean texts. The 'Life' appears to have had a strongly legendary element and to have belonged to the hagiographic category first encountered in Hellenistic days, then adopted by Christians and Manichees alike, and finally seen in Islamic compositions. The Old Testament tales of the prophets provided to some degree the pattern whilst Buddhist literature displays magnificent counterparts. There is but little doubt that Hellenistic-Christian hagiography was generically linked to these two. A closer look at the material on hand for a life of Mani shows at once that, as a matter of literature, it coincides to a large degree with the kind employed in Hellenistic and Christian biographies for corresponding personalities. There is the same mixture of autobiography and eye-witness stories, the same emphasis on the wonderful circumstances of birth and edifying, positively miraculous death, the same descriptions of missionary journeys to far lands, the same meetings with mighty rulers, the same marvellous reports, the same pious speeches, the same loose agglomeration of various episodes, the so-called *praxeis*.

In close association with Mani stands the important work

which has been transmitted to us in Coptic and in its Greek translation bears the title *Kephalaia*. Unfortunately, to date the first part only has been published (though the second part is now in preparation). Formerly it must have been a stout volume consisting of probably more than five hundred and twenty pages and divided into a large number of 'chapters' or *kephalaia*. It claimed to be a record of Mani's doctrines, interpretations, and revelations and he was often introduced conversing with his disciples. Either the latter put questions to him which he answered or he enlightened them of his own initiative upon certain points of his meaning. Not that these tutorial discussions, which have their counterpart in Coptic gnostic literature, follow any set plan. On the contrary, they reveal very little system and are inordinately diffuse and verbose, but they do adhere to certain mnemonic technical rules so as to stamp the lessons more easily on the memory. The work undoubtedly rendered the Master's disquisitions authentically, but how far the text quotes *ipsissima verba* is uncertain.

It is noteworthy that Mani's disciples are depicted here as a definite group similar to those of Jesus and the comparison of Mani instructing them with the Apostles listening to the Sermon on the Mount (*Matthew* 5, 1-2) is inevitable. The background as narrated lacks in both instances any historic significance and was simply added by the 'author'. The editor of the *Kephalaia* obviously had Jesus in mind.

Among the mass of Manichaean writings dating from the time after Mani's death a report on the life and activities of the disciples closest to him deserves especial mention. Mār 'Ammō, Addāi, Thomas, Innaios, and Sisinnios, Mani's most intimate associates, get most attention. Unfortunately only a small proportion of the Coptic texts and Turfan fragments dealing with these historical events has so far been edited. Nevertheless, amplified by information from Arabic sources, these disconnected accounts do throw some extremely valuable light on the history of the Manichaean church in areas stretching from Egypt to Central Asia. That the contents

lacked sober historical character and gave plenty of play to legend and a tendency to edification is evident enough from the samples examined. The tales about Mār 'Ammō are a case in point (M 2 and T II D 177). The overall stress in the report was on a detailed description of the missionary activity of Mani's chief apostles.

The Confessional Formularies

Especially important for an understanding of the spiritual life of Manichaean communities is knowledge of the literature prescribed for liturgical purposes. Consisting partly of confessional formularies, partly of psalms, examples thereof have fortunately been preserved in considerable number.

Of major confessional formularies we have in the first place the famous *Xvāstvānēft*, translated from Sogdian into Turkish, secondly a Chinese confessional prayer, and thirdly a Sogdian confessional handbook.

The *Xvāstvānēft*, a confessional formulary for lay worshippers, is divided into fifteen sections; the introduction has been lost. Anti-doctrinal conduct and moral lapses are alike enumerated, the formulary repeating after each item of iniquity the ever-recurring turn of phrase '*man āstār hirzā*': Absolve my sin!

This is a Parthian confessional formula, adopted unaltered from the Sogdian version into the Turkish translation, a circumstance that in itself indicates a purely liturgical use. In the *Xvāstvānēft* the name of the speaker of the confessional formulary is mentioned as being a certain Rāymastfrazend whom, on account of his name ('the drunk with Discernment') as well as of his occurrence in another text under the appellation of 'the divine Rāymastfrazend, the Master', we may consider to have been a high ecclesiastic (M 481 Colophon). The Sogdian title *xvēštar* applied to him here signifies that he was set above 'the chosen' and is likely to have been an elder. From this there is no difficulty in drawing the conclusion that the confessional formulary was read to the lay

congregation by the priest rather than that they recited it.

A Chinese confessional prayer, that the chosen had to say at sunset together with the hearers, demonstrates that nevertheless confession could also be performed communally.

A striking fact is that the *Xvāstvānēft*, when there is talk of dogmatic irregularity, takes such an outspoken line against Zervanism. Should someone, for instance, have said that Ōhrmazd and Ahriman are brothers, that God is the source of all good and evil, or that he alone confers life or death, forgiveness was sought for 'these greatly blasphemous things', as the formulary has it (I C 4). All such ideas formed part of the Zervanite outlook and were entirely rejected.

A confessional formulary in its Sogdian version and solely for the Chosen, the so-called 'Manichaean prayer- and confessional-book', has survived. Though not entirely certain, it is most probable that this confessional handbook was intended for reading out at the annual 'Bema Feast'. Quotations from Mani's writings in Middle Persian are interpolated into the Sogdian text in conjunction with the phrase 'As he says (teaches, orders)' or 'As he says in the scripture', and it may be called to mind that in the Pahlavi Zoroastrian works there often occurs the formula *čīgōn gōwēt* or 'As it (the Avesta) says'.

The Hymnic Literature

Manichaean piety shows itself in the large collections of psalms that have been preserved. They indicate the sentiments that inspired Mani's followers and render it easier to understand Manichaeism's triumphs. These poems were incontrovertibly animated by the spirit of gnosticism. At the same time they confirm that the division between eastern and western Manichaeism held good for religious composition too. Leaving aside the part played by Jesus in the dogma itself, Christian influence is barely noticeable in the Iranian and Turkish (not to mention Chinese) texts. On the other hand, in the case of Coptic Manichaean psalms a distinguished

expert in ancient Christian religious poetry (Baumstark) has gone so far as to say that perusal of them frequently gives the impression of reading matter belonging to the Catholic Church until an accidental emergence of Mani's name puts an end to the illusion.

Taking a closer look at the literary categories displayed by Manichaean religious poetry at once shows hymnology as playing a dominant part. These hymns have, however, a highly diversified character. Some are hymns to the various divinities in the Manichaean pantheon, such as those to the highest God, named Zervan in the eastern tradition, to Bām, Goddess of Dawn, to the Sun God Mihryazd, to the Third Messenger, who in the East went by the name of Narēsafyazd, to 'the Living Soul', *grīv žīvandag*, to Jesus and to Mani. The last two enjoyed divine status and dignity because they represented incarnations of the Third Messenger, the heavenly great *Nous* (*Vahman* or *Manvahnēd vazurg*).

But there have also survived hymns celebrating the various stages of the universe's creation or such as glorify the process of redemption, e.g., the birth and sending forth of Primal Man. Finally there are those addressed to the apostles, to Mani or to the community's teachers, for example, the well-known *Mār Zakkō*.

The literary shape was highly differentiated between all these classes of hymn. To obtain a clear idea of the separate forms necessitates a closer look at the available material. First there are psalms which are clearly recognizable as translations from Syriac. Others have survived in an Oriental language – Iranian, Turkish, or Chinese – and were indeed composed in one of them. Thirdly, there are samples of poetry in their original Occidental tongues, whether Greek, Latin, or Coptic.

Both Iranian and Coptic texts contain hymns that are translations from Syriac, a fact that can be established by the application of certain criteria. The presentation of a hymn can be significant; if it is not laid out alphabetically or acrostically, that is already suspicious in Iranian cases. Then there

may be Syriac characteristics including so-called 'co-translations' when, for instance, a psalm dates Mani's death as taking place on 14th Mihr in correspondence to 14th Nisan. What happened was that the Syrian month of Nisan was simply transposed into the Iranian one of Mihr, a calendar mistake of the first order. Especially to be noted, however, is when a hymn – like the phonetical Chinese one to Jesus – has twenty-two invocations, coinciding with the number of letters in the Syriac alphabet, but does not follow the order of the Manichaean alphabet. It is sure then in this case to have been transmitted from Syriac into Middle Parthian and to have been grouped alphabetically in the original. To the foregoing must be added sheer translation errors, as when the Syriac for 'life', *ḥayyē*, a collective plural, is rendered by the plural of 'living'. Thus there is encountered instead of 'Mother of life' (*'emmā de ḥayyē* in Syriac) the version 'Mother of the living' (*mādar ē zīndagān* or *zīndagān mādar*) or else instead of the Syriac *'ar'ā de ḥayyē*, 'the realm of life', the expression 'the realm of the living' (*šahr ē zīndagān*). These two particular mistranslations were, however, adopted and so are no longer reliable criteria. Various Middle Iranian hymns give the impression of being – if not precisely translations from Syriac – conceived in accordance with a pattern common to Aramaic-speaking Mesopotamia. This is especially true of hymns addressed to Jesus. Here is a specimen :

I. We stand (?) all in one mind.

And we will reach out our hands in invocation,

And rest our eyes upon this thy form.

And our mouths will we open to invoke Thee,

And our tongues prepare for laudation.

Thee we invoke, Who art Life entire,

Thee we praise, Jesus the Brilliant! New Aeon!

Thou art, Thou art the [God] Who performs Truth,

A [noble] healer, the most beloved Son, the most loved

Ego.

II. Come with Grace, liberated Lord!

Come with aid, good Spirit, Apostle with peace!

Helper of the frail and Conqueror of the aggressors!

Come with Grace, new Lord!

Come with Grace, Redeemer of the subjected, Healer
of the wounded!

Come with Grace, Awakener of the sleeping and
Arouser of the sleepy,

Thou who causest the dead to arise!

Come with Grace, mighty God and hallowing Voice!

Come with Grace, true Word, great Luminary, and
flooding Light.

Come with Grace, new Lord and new Day!

Come with Grace, Gift of the good, Blessing of the
frail, and Revered of the holy!

Come with Grace, loving Father and just Judge of
those who have sought their refuge with Thee!

Come with Grace, Father, Thou Who art our stout
protection and firm faith!

Come with Grace, [Conqueror (?)] of the aggressors
[.....?.....]

III. Now, [.....?.....] Just Dealer, [peace (?)] be
upon us!

And have mercy upon us and love us, Benefactor, Who
art all love!

And reckon us not together with the trouble-
makers (!)!

Save those who have sought refuge and have mercy
upon us!

O Most Beloved and Loving!

IV. We have beheld Thee, new Aeon, and we have fallen
at thy feet, Thou Who art all love.

Drunk with joy have we seen Thee, loving Lord.

And we avow Thy name, 'M' and 'S' (Messiah).

Sunder us from amid the sinful,

And free us from amid the aggressors!

O Lord, we are Thine own, have mercy upon us!
 Hasten hither and subdue the sinners!
 For they are become insolent and have spoken thus:
 'We are the ones! And there is none like us!'
 Therefore exercise Thy power and cast the aggressors
 [.] and [the enemies (?)] down!
 The ungrateful (?), the [.]

- V. [We praise Thy] name, that is all Light,
 And Thy noble greatness, that is all Freedom.
 Praise be to Thy name, Father!
 And devotion to Thy greatness!
 So be it now and ever more!
 (M 28 II, Mir M II, pp. 21 [312]–25 [316])

If structure and content of this hymn are examined with an eye to possible analysis, it can be resolved into something like the following portions:

- I. Introduction and exhortation by the community to engage itself in laudation and invocation. The form employed is that of the first person plural. To an accompaniment of attributes, relative clauses attached to the divine name, and participial constructions, the introduction leads over into the main body of the hymn.
- II. The main body consists of a prayer built around the epiphany: Come with Grace!
 The subject of the invocation, Jesus, receives in the normal hymnal manner a series of attributes and appositions.
 These appositions must be regarded as a number of traditional epithets whose purpose is to render Jesus in his redemptive activity 'actual' to the consciousness of the believers. Many of these epithets belong to the gnostic line of thought as a whole: healer, emissary, awakener, word, luminary, beginning of aeons, and so on.
- III. This prayer built around epiphany is followed by in-

vocation of redemption and mercy. This section is quite brief and with an apostrophe of the godhead leads over into the next portion.

- IV. This part begins with the affirmation that the prayer-community has gazed upon the godhead. Consequently the epiphany has at this stage already taken place. The affirmation is followed by fresh invocations for aid against the aggressors and for sunderance from among the sinners. The prayer for the godhead's intervention is accompanied in Old Testament fashion by direct quotation of the arrogant foes' own words.
- V. The psalm closes with a glorification of the godhead's name; and the wish that laudation and worship may continue for ever more finds expression.

The structure as analysed here shows this psalm, like many others, to be in keeping with the ancient Mesopotamian psalms, such as the *Tammuz* songs, to a great degree; and this conformity has already been remarked by an expert on Oriental religious poetry.

For a sample of genuine Iranian acrostic psalms there may in the first instance be cited the famous so-called *Zoroaster Fragment*. Forty years ago this was a key-point of Manichaean research, but its importance is now much diminished. Nevertheless for understanding of the central gnostic dogma of the 'redeemed Redeemer' this piece still remains fundamental. 'Zoroaster as representative of the Apostle sent into the world by *Nous* for the redemption of the soul converses with his soul as representing the *viva anima* or, put differently, *Nous* speaks by way of Zoroaster's mouth to the soul' (Mir M III, p 27. 827, Note 1).

If it is your wish, I shall instruct you from the testimony of the former Fathers.

The Redeemer, the just Zoroaster, spake thus with his soul :
'Deep is the drunkenness in which thou slumberest, awake
and gaze upon me !

Grace upon thee from the world of peace whence for thy
sake I am sent.'

And it answered, 'I, I am the tender innocent son of Srōāv,
I am commingled and see suffering, lead me out from
death's embrace!'

With 'Grace' Zoroaster asked of it, 'O primordial voice, art
thou my member?'

The grace of the Living Power and the highest worlds come
upon thee, from thy native land!

Follow me, Son of Gentleness, set the crown of light upon
thy head!

Thou son of mighty ones that art become thus poor that
hast indeed to beg at every place.

(M7, 82-118, Mir M III, p. 27 [872])

Manichaean verse offers specimens of lively nature descriptions like those of the cheerful depictions of the arrival of spring encountered in neo-Persian poetry. From the Coptic hymns an extract from a so-called Bēma psalm deserves to be quoted:

Lo, all trees and plants have become new again.
Lo, roses have spread their beauty abroad,
for the bond has been severed that does harm to their leaves.
Do thou sever the chains and the bonds of our sins.
The whole air is luminous, the sphere of heaven is resplendent today,
the earth too puts forth blossom also, the waves of the sea
are still,
for the gloomy winter has passed that is full of trouble.
Let us escape from the iniquity of evil.

(Psalm-Book, II, p. 8, 14-21)

Here is encountered the same affectionate observation of nature as is to be met in a Middle Iranian fragment. Instinctively the question how this vivid appreciation of nature could harmonize with the Manichaean outlook on the world thrusts itself forward. Possibly the solution to the problem lies in

Manichaean poets having incorporated portions of lost Middle Iranian verse into their own compositions or that they imitated that fashion of verse. They are hardly likely of their own accord to have been so warmly enthusiastic over the beauty of the world, the work of the satanic powers. The Middle Iranian fragment, to which reference has just been made runs :

The shining sun and the glittering full moon,
 They shine and glitter from the trunk of this tree.
 Radiant birds strut there joyously,
 Doves and all sorts of wondrous birds strut there.
 (M 554 Reverse ; HR II, p. 69)

This fragment entirely anticipates neo-Persian poems with their descriptions of gardens, *bostān*, with flowers and magnificent singing-birds, especially *bulbul*, the nightingale.

The Homiletic Literature

The Manichees were good homilists and thoroughly homespun preachers. The Turfan finds included fragments of the description of the life of Buddha which under the title *Barlaam and Joasaph* was one of the most popular Christian mediaeval tales. Uigurian texts display the nominal forms Bodhisaf or Bodhasaf, derivations from the original Bodhisattva. Iudasaf, a variation that forms the transition to the Christian Ioasaph, is encountered in Arabic authors of the ninth century. The Manichees are therefore seen to have made use in their sermons of the Buddha biography in its early legendary shape as a source of edifying examples and moralizing contemplations directed at secular audiences. Nor did they hesitate, following the tradition of Mani, to employ coarse or abhorrent themes.

Manichaean texts in Turkish and Iranian contain many stories developed from matter of non-Manichaean origin. Some of them reflect the subjects of ancient folk-lore, like the one which goes by the name of *The Mother's Tears*. A mother

there says, 'Until now I did not know I was killing the soul (of my son) when I wept over the body of my son. Therefore I shall henceforward weep no more, so as not to kill him' (M 45).

A Russian composition on the same theme tells how a mother, whose daughter had died, wept for three days and three nights. In a dream during the third night she saw her daughter approaching, a pitcher in her hand. In answer to her mother's question what was in the pitcher, the daughter replied that she had collected her mother's tears and that it was full to the brim. 'So weep no more,' said the daughter, 'else your tears, of which there will be too many, will overflow upon the ground and it will go ill with me in the other world. But now things are well with me.'

Clearly there is a connection between this theme and the Zoroastrian aversion to lamenting death, a custom prevalent in eastern Iran.

But purely anecdotal and fable-like subjects are encountered too, such as the famous story of the merchant dealing in pearls. The best-known version is that of the Arabic author Ibn Muqaffa', who was of Iranian descent. It goes as follows :

A merchant was possessed of many costly gems. To have them set, he hired a man for a hundred pieces of gold and took him to his dwelling. When he had sat himself down, it happened there was a lute in the room and the workman's eye fell on it. To the merchant's question, whether he knew how to strike the lute's strings, he answered, 'Yes, well, indeed', for he was really skilled in the art. 'Then take it,' said the other. So he seized it and the whole day long finely played the merchant beautiful melodies, so that he left the casket with its gems standing open there and full of gladness swayed head and hand to the music's time. And in the evening the craftsman said, 'Now let me have my wage,' and when the other spoke, 'Hast done anything to earn thy wage?', replied, 'Thou didst hire me and I have done that which thou commandest.' And thus he pressed him until all hundred pieces were paid whilst the gems remained unset.

The Manichaean Sogdian text, BSOAS XI, p. 466 *et seq.*, makes an allegory of what obviously was once a very popular tale, for to turn parables into long-winded allegories was a favourite practice of the Manichees.

The Thomas Psalms

In the Coptic Thomas Psalms, which contain many adaptations from Mandaean texts, we find a passage narrating how the Powers of Darkness prepared their attack on the World of Light. The latter's attention was drawn to the leader of the evil hosts :

One of the Sons of Light

looked from on high and saw him.

He said to his brethren, 'the Riches':

'O my brethren, the Sons of Light,
in whom there is no waning or diminution.

I looked down to the abyss,

I saw the Evil one, the Son of Evil.

I saw the Evil one, the Son of Evil,
desiring to wage war.

I saw his Seven companions
and his Twelve ministers.

I saw the tent fixed,
the fire kindled in its midst . . .

I saw their cruel armour
which is ready to make the war . . .

He that is small among them that are on high stepped
forth,
he armed himself and girt his loins

The Son of the Brightnesses and "the Riches"
armed himself and girt his loins.

He leapt and sped down into the abyss,
he leapt, he came into their midst that he might make war
with them.

He humbled the Son of Evil

and his Seven companions and his Twelve ministers.

(Psalm-Book, II, p. 204, 7-19, 23-29)

The Mandaean background to this description is revealed not merely on the score of formal literary factors – for instance, the expression ‘riches’ which corresponds to the Mandaean term *uthra* as designation for the heavenly brilliant beings, and furthermore the so-called ‘concatenation’ so typical of Mandaean poetry and brought out especially strongly here in verses 11-13, 24-26 – but also by the examination of internal evidence. Thus the Mandaean tone of the description becomes distinctly noticeable when compared with a piece from the *Ginzā*:

As I stood there in the House of Life
 I beheld the Rebels,
 Beheld the Gates of Darkness,
 Beheld the Abyss, altogether Darkness,
 Beheld the Rebels,
 And the Lord of the dark Dwelling,
 Beheld the Warriors
 Who in the Darkness are interred,
 Beheld the Gates of Fire
 As they burn and blaze . . .
 I beheld the evil Rebels,
 How they are clad with the arms of the Evil Ones,
 Are clad with the arms of the Evil Ones
 And brood upon evil against the Land of Light.
 (*Ginzā*, p. 70, 32-71, 32)

‘The Rebels’ is an appellation for the Evil Ones frequently met in Manichee literature. On the other hand expressions like comrades, helpers, and attendants and references to preparing for battle are often encountered in Mandaean texts. That the Redeemer arms and girds himself before plunging into the depths to take up the fight with the leader of the evil powers is a trait repeated both in Manichaean and Mandaean writings (cf., for example, *Ginzā*, p. 295, 17).

CHAPTER SIX

THE ECCLESIASTICAL ORGANIZATION AND THE CULT

The Ecclesiastical Organization – A Manichaean Baptism? – Bēma Feast and Communion

The Ecclesiastical Organization

BUDDHISM has been characterized as a monkish religion. The core of Buddhist communities is formed by the assembly of monks. Buddha, the doctrine, and the assembly are the triad on which everything is built up. The lay members are only a supporting element who in the first place are present to offer the monks protection and sustenance. The demands made upon the monks differ fundamentally from the precepts the laymen have to obey. It is to some degree a matter of two types of religion, and that is why the effort has been made in the study of religious development to classify Buddhism as a 'twofold religion'. The same definition has been applied to Manichaeism (Ström); it must at any rate be conceded that the organization is identical.

It is quite possible that Mani consciously copied Buddhism in its organizational aspect. Perhaps, also, it would be better to speak of 'twofold organization' rather than 'twofold religion'. For the religion remains the same though its adherents are divided into two groups and are in the result subjected to quite separate disciplines. As Buddha separated his adherents into monks and laymen, so Mani also distributed his followers into elect and hearers or, perhaps preferably, into righteous and hearers, for in the two languages used by the founder both these appellations are

employed : in Syriac, *zaddīqīn* and *šāmō'in* ; in Middle Persian, *ardāvān* and *niyōšagān*. In the Christian West the names *electi* and *auditores* or, with reference to Christian terminology, *fideles* and *catechumeni* were applied.

The two groups of believers observed entirely different ways of life and the demands made upon them were also dissimilar.

All that Manichaean ethics prescribed for Mani's initiates can be summarized in the three famous *signacula* that Augustine mentions in Chapter 10 of his publication *De moribus Manichaeorum* : *signaculum oris*, *signaculum manuum*, and *signaculum sinus*. These three 'signets' denoted a comprehensive range, for *os* implied all the five senses, *manus* all behaviour, and *sinus* every expression of sexual urge (*omnis libido seminalis*).

The first 'signet' included cleanliness of thought and word, above all restraint from utterance of any kind that could seem in Manichaean teaching to breathe of blasphemy. At the same time this precept held good without restriction for whatever could be enjoyed by way of mouth. The wish was to abstain from whatever could strengthen the body's sensual lusts. Because meat derives from the prince of darkness, this precept was particularly binding as regards the partaking of it. Hence Manichees were meant to live on the fruits of the field and the garden, especially melons ; the latter by their colour and odour were witness to their origin in the world of light. Oil too was highly approved. For drink fruit juices were the first choice. Larger quantities of water too had to be avoided, for water is a material substance.

The second 'signet' meant above all the prohibition of any action that could harm plant and animal life. Manichees were not allowed to uproot any plant nor kill any animal. There fell moreover under this signet any behaviour, insofar as it did not already form part of the other two, that could serve to impede the victory of light. A notable fact is that according to Manichaean outlook those who sinned against this precept sustained a punishment corresponding to their criminal

transaction. He who mowed the sown field would himself be born again as an ear of corn, whilst he who killed a mouse would in future life be a mouse, and so on.

Finally the third 'signet' prescribed for Manichees complete sexual abstinence, including renunciation of marriage. The sexual urge as such was something evil as being a sensual lust, but procreation was accounted far worse since by means of it the reassembly of the light particles was retarded.

Because of their strictness these precepts could be observed only by the 'elect'. As already noted, the *electi* too were alone in being called 'the righteous'. They dedicated themselves solely to a life directed towards the redemption of their souls, they worked for the reunification of the light particles with the world of light. The hearers on the other hand had to undertake all those acts forbidden to the elect but in fact unavoidable for the maintenance of life. Thus it fell to the lot of the hearers to furnish the elect with all essential nourishment.

The partaking of these foods was accompanied by an express declaration of guiltlessness by the *electi*. The *Acta Archelai*, Chapter 10, repeats the formula applied to the consumption of bread:

I did not mow thee, did not grind thee, nor knead,
Nor lay thee in the oven,
But another did do this and bring thee to me.
I eat thee without sin.

Thereafter he said to the catechumen who had brought him the bread, 'I have prayed for thee,' whereupon the other went.

This last remark, qualifying the elect more or less as a liar, is presumably attributable to Christian criticism. But, on the other hand, it is conceivable that the elect's declaration of guiltlessness was combined with a petition on the readily serving hearer's behalf, a point deliberately suppressed by the author of the *Acta Archelai*.

Clearly, and the sources confirm it, the Manichee hearers led a normal domestic life. Not even the partaking of meat

appears to have been prohibited. One special fast-day in the week was, however, observed : Sunday. On that occasion they were to abstain wholly from sexual intercourse. That they were not only permitted to marry but – should this be more agreeable to them – to keep a mistress is evident from the example of their former adherent and subsequent opponent, Augustine. During his association with the Manichees he kept a mistress whom, tempted by the prospects of marriage with a rich young heiress, he left in the lurch shortly before his conversion to Christianity (*Confessions* VI 23, 25).

The elect had to fast on two days, Sunday as well as Monday, these being the two sacred week-days. In addition there were more extensive periods of fasting, particularly during an entire month prior to the greatest religious festivity of the year, the Feast of Bēma. Presumably this month of fasting provided the model for the Koranic fast-month of Ramadān.

Naturally the rigorous ethical requirements brought with them many transgressions and rendered the practice of confession and repentance an essential institution. That is fully attested by the texts and it has been seen (above, p. 83 *et seq.*) that we are possessed of certain confessional formularies. This institution of confession and repentance was of the greatest significance in the Manichees' religious life and served to maintain a strict ecclesiastical discipline.

The elect were divided into four categories, being (in Middle Iranian terminology) *hamōžag* or magistrate, *espasag* or bishop, *mahistag* or priest, *ardāvān* or *electi*. Together with the hearers, *niyōšāgān*, they constitute the five degrees of believers. Of that of magistrate there were twelve in the Manichaean church, there were seventy-two bishops, and three hundred and sixty priests. The first two figures are, of course, taken from the New Testament. All members of the Manichaean church were under the direction of Mani's successor, known as the 'archegós', in Parthian *sardār*, and in Middle Persian *sārāt*.

The elect together with the representatives of the senior

degrees wore white robes and head-coverings, whereas the hearers kept to their ordinary dress.

A Manichaean Baptism?

Few characteristics of Manichaeism have passed under more thorough review than the possible existence of sacramental ceremonies, especially those of baptism and communion. Baur has already pointed out the difficulty of coming to any certain conclusions regarding this problem and has carefully examined the evidence available at the time.

At the beginning of his studies he emphasizes that the disparity between *electi* and *auditores* was so great that some particular observance denoting entry into the circle of the *electi* could be assumed and should then *a priori* be surmised to have taken the form of a baptismal rite. A certain passage in Augustine, '*De mor. eccles. cathol.*', Chapter 35, has long attracted notice: *Quid calumniamini quod fideles ac iam baptisate renovati procreare filios?* Nevertheless Baur regards this question, addressed to the Manichees, as no more than assimilation to the Christian manner of expression. What the Manichees meant was that for the believers, those re-born by baptism, it was unseemly to beget children, even though it was not customary among them to consummate entry among the re-born by means of a baptismal rite. More appropriate, says Baur, would be to call to mind another passage of Augustine, *Contra Fortunatum*, I, where he discussed how far Manichaean manners and practices coincided with those of Christians and remarked: *Nam et eucharistiam, audiui a vobis saepe, quod accipiatis, tempus autem accipiendi cum ne lateret, quid accipiatis, unde nosse potui?* If Augustine quoted the Eucharist as a Christian ceremony current among the Manichees, there is no reason to suppose that he was familiar in respect of baptism with any deviation from Christian usage. The Manichee Felix likewise speaks in his disputation with Augustine (*De actis cum Fel.*, I 19) of baptism and communion as

rituals common to Christians and Manichees. *Si adversarius nullus contra Deum est, ut quid baptizati sumus? Ut quid eucharistia, ut quid christianitas si contra Deum nihil est?* On the other hand, another passage in Augustine (*Contra lib. Petil.*, III 17) seems to suggest that in fact no baptism existed, for there it is maintained that the catechumeni, i.e. the *auditores*, were not accepted into the community through baptism. This comment might lead to the conclusion that baptism was simply not a part of Manichaean ritual at all. But more probably Baur is right in believing its meaning to be that it was not baptism that determined the concept of *auditores*, but the substantial difference of non-observance and observance of the precepts by them and the *electi* respectively. Hence baptism *may* also have existed though its significance was less outstanding than among Christians and did not count as a transaction that at some fixed point of time had to be undertaken with each and every one of the *auditores*.

There is another special circumstance too. Baptism among the Manichees cannot possibly have been with water. Augustine stated this explicitly in '*De haeresibus*', Chapter 46: *Baptismum in aqua nihil cuiquam perhibent salutis afferre: nec quemquam eorum, quos decipiunt, baptizandum putant*, whereby, as Baur remarks, the latter can have application only to the *auditores*. In the same way Augustine laid down in '*Contra duas epistulas Pelag.*' II 2: *Manichaei lavacrum regenerationis, id est, aquam ipsam, dicunt, esse superfluum, nec prodesse aliquid, profano corde contendunt*, just as he said in IV 4: *baptismum . . . quod Manichaei dicunt in omni aetate superfluum*.

Precisely these passages, as Baur notes, which talk of Manichaean repudiation of baptism as a water purification, leave open the possibility that the rite had meaning for Manichaeism in a different form and manner. Before Baur, attention had already been drawn to a note by Bishop Turibius according to which the Manichees, in conformity with the *Acts of Thomas* so highly regarded by them, baptized with oil. This note appears to be confirmed by the mention

in these *Acts* of anointment in connection with baptism without, however, speaking of water purification (cf. *Acta Thomae*, Chap. 26–27 in the Greek version).

Baur comes to the following conclusion: The Manichees were never reproached from the Christian side with lacking baptism. On the contrary, this is presupposed. Nevertheless it cannot have been a water purification, but must have consisted of anointment and laying on of hands. The baptismal sacrament can consequently have signified only a rite of initiation by which those admitted to the *electi* were assured of freedom from sin, the prerequisite to membership of this group of paragons, 'the righteous'.

Thus Baur. The Coptic texts published since 1930 on the whole confirm his view insofar as they amplify and at the same time to some degree correct it.

Baptism by water is specifically rejected (*Kephalaia* VI, pp. 33, 29–32). Puech is highly sceptical respecting acceptance of the existence of sacramental ceremonies among the Manichees and adopts a distinctly negative attitude towards the passages already cited. Yet he also fails to express an opinion on a series of material pronouncements in the Coptic psalms where there are allusions to certain purification rites akin to baptism. The worshipper, for instance, utters his wish on the occasion of the Bēma Feast to be washed in the dew-drop of Mani's gladness (*Psalm-Book*, II, CCXL, p. 41, 20–23). Jesus is implored to wash the worshipper in his holy waters and to make him pure. 'See,' he cries, 'the time is near unto hand, may I return unto my dwellings' (*Psalm-Book*, II, CCL, p. 59, 24–28). Again and again the wish is expressed that the worshipper may become worthy to be admitted into the 'bridal-chamber of light' (CCLXIII, p. 79, 17 *et seq.*; cf. also p. 117, 29–30 and p. 197, 3–5). 'Purify me, my heavenly betrothed, my redeemer, with thy waters,' runs Psalm V, 29. At the moment of death the judge will reveal himself to the soul with a face full of gladness and he will wash it and he will purify it with beneficent dew (*Psalm-Book*, II,

CCCLXXIX, p. 100, 27–28). Elsewhere too it is said that the soul will be cleansed in the dew of the column of glory (CCLXXXII, p. 103, 35) so that it may be accepted by the Redeemer.

These passages give the impression that the soul after death, rising to the 'bridal-chamber of light', will be purified in the sacred waters of the Redeemer – the word *mû* or 'water' is employed – which are also described as 'a beneficent dew'. This rite of purification takes place in connection with the ascent to the Redeemer. Hence the ascent of the soul, the purification in holy water and the entry into the bridal-chamber of light constitute a system of complex inter-relations. This means that such a ceremony of purification, insofar as the mythical conception was matched by ritual, took place on the death of an *electus*. This calls to mind the so-called death mass of the Mandaeans, a baptism administered in the Mandaean congregation to a dying person and corresponding to the last sacraments. It is a fact that this convolution of ideas, where there is an organic link between the ascent of the soul, the purification immersion and the entry into the bridal-chamber, is found in Christianity, gnosticism, Mandaeism and Manichaeism and clearly shows a confluence of pre-Christian concepts which within Christianity itself is most distinctly revealed in the Syrian, especially Nestorian, Church. The fact that these concepts are found in Manichaean texts surely indicates the existence of corresponding baptismal ceremonies, although the indecisive character of the allusions makes it difficult to piece together a precise picture of the respective ceremonies. It should be recalled that the mediaeval Catharians practised only a death baptism or purification, the so-called *consolamentum* (laying on of hands). Baur, as has already been seen, presents a convincing case for believing baptism to have been a consecration act for the *electi*. Therefore either the indications have been wrongly interpreted or there were two kinds of baptism, one on admission to the *electi* and the equivalent of Christian

baptism, the other a death baptism or purification and the equivalent of receiving extreme unction which – ritually speaking – was but a stunted baptismal ceremony at death's door. In a translated though hitherto unpublished chapter (CXLIV) of the *Kephalaia* reference is made to a sort of *viaticum*. It is a circumstance well suited to the death baptism or purification for the notion is that of the soul being given supply for its journey into the beyond, an idea generally familiar but always forcibly brought to the fore in gnostic symbolism (for example, in the *Song of the Pearl* and the Mandaean *Massiqta Songs*).

From a purely ritual point of view it is likewise possible to regard the Manichaean ritual of laying on of hands, by which a novice became 'a son of the Church' (*Kephalaia*, p. 40, 34), as a substitute for baptism. Hence it is wholly conceivable that the Manichees represented and consummated the consecration of an *electus* solely by the laying on of hands and knew therefore only a single form of baptism or purification, that before death.

Finally, it should be pointed out that until fresh texts are available a more detailed assessment cannot be made, although the existing material does seem to indicate the existence of some kind of baptismal ceremony.

Bēma Feast and Communion

If fresh doubts have arisen about baptism among the Manichees, none whatever can exist respecting a cult meal. Nevertheless whether this communal meal really had any sacramental significance remains a point of considerable uncertainty.

Something needs to be said first about the festival at which this meal took place. It was the so-called Bēma Feast which was celebrated at the end of the twelfth or Manichaean fasting month. The focus of it was the remembrance of Mani's death, and the founder was invisibly present, for on the occasion of

the festival there was erected a rostrum or throne, a sort of 'judge's seat' – that is what the word $\beta\eta\mu\alpha$ means – ascended by five steps. The rostrum was covered with carpets and became the centre of attraction for all those present. The empty seat, symbolizing the presence of the dead master, finds its proper place in Buddhism where the empty dais manifested Buddha's ascent to the Heaven of the Thirty-Three Gods; without doubt the Manichees adopted the elaboration of the festival from the Buddhists (Foucher).

In *Contra Epist. Fund.* 8 Augustine said that the Manichaean community celebrated the feast as its principal festival in place of Easter – *quod pro pascha frequentabatur*. The passages in '*Contra Fortunatum*' I and '*De Actis cum Fel.*' I 19, where communion among the Manichees is discussed, have been cited above (p. 99). The calumnies against the Manichees, of which Augustine in '*De Haeresibus*' 46, 2 made use, were also quite firm about there being a Eucharist. Finally in the *Acta Archelai* 10 it is maintained that, following the affirmation of guiltlessness quoted above (p. 97), the *electus* after the *auditor's* departure ate the bread given him, prayed after his meal and sprinkled his head with olive oil whilst reciting with intent of exorcism 'many names' which remained unknown to the *auditores*. Seeing therefore that the latter were excluded from the Eucharist ceremony, it is not surprising that Augustine, as an *auditor*, was not able to supply any details regarding the communion.

In all these instances it can be supposed that they probably concerned themselves only with the daily meal of the *electi*, which therefore approximated to the Christian Eucharist. Since this meal served the purification of the particles of light held captive in the plants (and hence in the bread) 'it may properly be said that precisely this ceremony included all elements appropriate to a sacrament and that consequently there occurred by this very manner of light-release the Manichaean communion' (Allberry).

For a ritual meal demonstrably to have taken place during

the Bēma Feast means that a certain sacramental character must have attached to it. Manichaean miniatures are proof of such an event. A picture published by Le Coq together with an interpretation evidently reflects a scene from the occasion:

In the centre is to be seen the rostrum already mentioned. It is surrounded left and right by *electi* seated in a number of rows. Melons are easily recognizable among the fruit on the tripod in front of the rostrum, itself covered with carpets. In the foreground, with wheaten bread on it, is a table before which a priest kneels with a book in his hands. It has been suggested that he fills the role of leader in prayer or song. The principal personality is the *archegós*, who sits left of the tripod with fruit and has his left hand raised in blessing. Thus there is here really in one and the same scene a portrayal of Bēma and of communion (Allberry).

The communion is presumably to be understood as the ritual counterpart to the mythical theme of Adam after his awakening being fed with the fruit from the tree of life by Jesus: 'He raised him up and let him eat of the tree of life' (Theodor bar Kōnai, ed. Pognon, p. 130, 3-4).

It has been explained earlier (p. 14 *et seq.*) that in Syrian Christianity also communion elements were regarded as fruit from the tree of life. There seems therefore reason enough to regard this mythical feature as an allusion to the Eucharist. Incidentally both Christ and Mani are lauded in Manichaeism as 'tree of life' (cf. *Psalm-Book*, II, pp. 80, 24: 116, 7-9). In Mandaëism too the redeemer is regarded as the tree of life.

If it is said of Jesus that he raised Adam, *aqīm*, and then gave him to eat of the fruit of the tree of life, or in other words let him partake of the communion, then it must not be overlooked that the causative declension *aqīm* (from *qūm*, the verb 'to stand') probably contained a ritual allusion. For in the cult language of the Mandaëans and Christian gnostics (Marcionites: the corresponding Greek word here is στήριζεν)

‘to raise’ or ‘to secure’ meant as much as to baptize (in Aramaic the Pa’el of *qūm*). It is moreover significant that according to Mandaean tradition (ML, p. 54–61; Drower, *Canonical Prayerbook*, p. 29 f.) Hibil-Ziwa baptized or purified ‘Adam, the first man’, anointed him, and administered to him *Pihtā* and *Mambūhā*, the sacraments (cf. also *Ginzā*, p. 242 *et seq.* and above pp. 14 *et seq.* and 60 *et seq.*). Hibil-Zīwā, the brilliant Hibil, is in this instance an exact counterpart to Iṣō’-Zīwā, the brilliant Jesus. His behaviour corresponds completely with that of the brilliant Jesus towards Adam in the Manichaean tradition. It may be assumed therefore that Theodor bar Kōnai provides an indication not only of the Manichaean celebration of communion but also of a baptism current among the Manichees.

CHAPTER SEVEN

MANICHAEAN ART

Mani and Manichaean Art – The Manichaean Book – The Paintings – Subsequent Influence of Manichaean Art

Mani and Manichaean Art

MANI had an aesthetic turn of nature. He loved music and painting, the former to such a degree that his followers, according to Augustine (*De Moribus Manichaeorum* II, V 16), ascribed music to divine origin. Nevertheless for posterity Mani's achievement in painting played the outstanding part. As has already been noted, Mani dispatched scribes and illuminators together with his missionaries. According to his own testimony, the pictures illustrating his writings were to complete educated people's instruction whilst rendering the message easier to understand for others (Ephraim's *Prose Refutations*, XCIII). It has been correctly emphasized that in the matter of illustration of his instructional treatises Mani followed a tradition evolved in gnostic circles. Mandaean manuscripts are occasionally, as in the case of the *Diwan Abatur*, furnished with drawings serving to make clear scenes in the text. To this we owe the Mandaean illustrated *dīwān*. Coptic writings of a gnostic sort, like the books of Jehu, are also illustrated in certain instances. The same usage was practised among the Simonians (Irenaeus, *Adv. Haeret.* I 23, 4 and Epiphanius, *Haer.* XIII 3) and the Carpocratians (Irenaeus, I 25, 5 and Epiphanius XXVII 6).

Unfortunately our acquaintance with religious miniature painting in Syria and Armenia in ancient times is very exiguous. Where illustrated scriptures do occur, they adhere to an artistic tradition different from that represented by the

Manichaean pattern. Mani and his art must be seen against the background of the Parthian-Syrian civilization dominant in Mesopotamia in the third century AD. The wall-paintings at Dura-Europos and from the mountain-palace Kūh i Kwāja in eastern Iran give some impression of the state of contemporary Parthian fresco-painting. Of miniature painting, the tradition in which Mani must be placed, there is no direct evidence and only by inference can some conclusions be drawn. It is at least certain that the artistic school to which Mani belonged is identical with that to which modern research generally gives the name of 'Parthian Koine'.

Hellenistic, and in due course Hellenistic-Judaic, literature was published in part as illustrated manuscripts, often of great luxury. Fresco-paintings of that age modelled themselves on this miniature painting. Since the Jews of Mesopotamia were numerous and usually prosperously situated, it may be assumed that costly illustrated manuscripts were no rarity among them. Thus Mani will have taken over to some degree the custom of duplicating particularly important writings in the form of magnificently mounted book-rolls and books from them as well as from the Hellenized population of Mesopotamia itself. Whether the Christians had at this date, the beginning of the third century, adopted the custom is uncertain. In the light of Mani's gnostic tradition it is of course also possible that he was influenced by the above-mentioned gnostic usage. That he was himself a practising artist is unanimously attested by all Oriental sources and an utterance of his has survived to the effect that he regarded his having recorded his teaching in the easily intelligible form of pictures to be a mark of superiority of his religion over earlier ones. He says:

'For the Apostles all, my Brothers, who before me came,
 [Did not write down] their wisdom, as I wrote mine,
 [Nor did] they paint their wisdom in pictures,
 As [I did paint] mine.'
 (*Kephalaia*, Chap. CLIV: 2)

Indeed, it is as 'Mani, the painter' that this religious founder lives in New Persian tradition and the historian Mirxond has a story of how Mani accomplished his great illustrated work *Ārdahang*. In those days he travelled continually in regions of the Orient. One day he arrived at a mountain with a cave which had not only a requisite current of fresh air but its own spring as well. It had too but a single entrance. So, unnoticed by anyone, he brought a year's supply of victuals into the cave and then spoke persuasively to his followers in these terms: 'I shall betake myself to heaven and my stay in the celestial mansions will endure a year. When a twelvemonth is gone, I shall return from heaven to earth and I shall bring you tidings of God.' He said to the people, 'At the beginning of the second year, at such and such a place near the cave, pay close heed to me.' With this admonition he disappeared from their midst, went up into the cave, and a year long kept busy with painting. He made wonderful drawings on a tablet and named this 'Mani's *Ārdahang*'. With the passing of a year he showed himself again to the people in the neighbourhood of the cave. In his hand he held the tablet, coloured with wonderful paintings and illustrated with manifold drawings. And all who saw it said, 'Thousandfold are the drawings seen in the world, but painting like this has not yet come among us.' They abode in dumbfounded amazement before the tablet and Mani declared to them, 'This have I brought back with me from heaven that it may serve as my prophetic miracle.' Thereupon they adhered to his faith. (Mirxond, *Histoire des Sassanides*, p. 189 *et seq.* — Kessler, *Mani*, p. 337 *et seq.*)

There is no difficulty in placing this tradition in the framework of a greater context: the apostle descending from heaven brings the written revelation given to him by God himself. What is of interest here is the claim that this heavenly message was illustrated by pictures, which is surely unique!

Fresco-painting too is attributed by an Oriental source, a Turkish text, to Mani. Therein is narrated that there was a

sanctuary at Cigil whose walls were furnished with pictures by him. Other oriental authors too vied with each other in singing his praises as draughtsman and painter. Thus Abū'l Ma'ālī said about him in his famous history of religions: 'This man was a master in the art of painting . . . The tale goes that he painted a character upon a piece of white silk in such a way that when its threads were singly extracted not a trace of the character was visible thereon.' (Abū'l Ma'ālī, p. 189. Kessler, *Mani*, p. 371.) And Mīrxond reported: 'Mani was a painter without equal, so that, it is reported, he could draw with his finger a circle five ells in diameter and, upon its being examined, there was not to be found a trace of irregularity in the individual parts of the circumference.' (Mīrxond, *Histoire des Sassanides*, p. 189. Kessler, *Mani*, p. 380.)

The Manichaean Book

Typical of the careful presentation which the Manichees gave to their books is the close connection between script and illustration. For punctuation they used partly black dots encircled by crimson or scarlet ovals, partly beautiful multi-coloured flowers. A Manichaean manuscript can be detected at a glance by virtue of these punctuation-marks. Initial letters were written larger and were given particularly artistic form, which included their enclosure within a pattern of leaves, flowers, and foliage.

In this way the Manichees continued the calligraphic tradition for which the Orient became so famous. They did not, however, like the Islamic calligraphers, permit the script to acquire so decorative a character as to intermingle with the ornamental elements. The writing, including titles, always remained legible. Comparison of a page of a Manichaean manuscript with a piece of 'flourishing' Cufic writing demonstrates this point immediately. Nevertheless there were times when a chapter-heading did seem to anticipate later developments.

It must be added that the Coptic manuscripts were very carefully and beautifully written, but as far as I am aware no illustrated manuscripts nor decorated books have been found.

Manichaean books were not only carefully written and finely illustrated, but splendidly prepared in every other way. The learned and intelligent author al-Ġāhiz (died 859) tells how 'Ibrāhīm al-Sindī once said to him, "I wish the Zinqīds were not so bent on spending good money on clean white paper and the employment of shining black ink as well as setting such high store by calligraphy and spurring the scribes to such effort. For truly no paper I have ever seen can compare with the paper of their books and no calligraphy with that to be found therein." ' (Kessler, *Mani*, p. 366.)

Augustine too spoke (*Contra Faustum* XIII 6 and 18) of the large and excellent codices to be seen among the Manichees. The value of these manuscripts and books was moreover enhanced by the thick gold-leaf that was applied in the miniatures which framed the text.

The excavations and archaeological discoveries in Central Asia at the beginning of this century brought a quantity of manuscripts and books to light, but unfortunately even these are no more than the tiny and harshly treated remains of the mighty libraries that once existed in these regions.

What has survived is principally material dating from the Turkish Uigure tribe. Preservation is owing to two circumstances – the status of Manichaeism as a state religion among the Uigurians (cf. below p. 134) and the dry climate of Central Asia. Manichaeism's status there also explains in some measure the extraordinarily magnificent mounting, even by Manichaean standards, of these volumes. The costly materials and the high fees that must have been paid to the painters and calligraphers makes it seem likely that Manichaean book-production and miniature painting must have been arts practised chiefly at the royal court. This fits the fact that

Manichaeism everywhere sought as far as possible to establish connection with the higher classes of society.

The Ugurians were familiar with various sorts of book-production. There were, as the excavations have shown, books which were rolled up around a handle. Then there was a sort of folding book, a long paper strip being folded like a concertina with only one side written upon. Another specimen was the specifically Indian *pothī* book, a packet of leaves composed of a variety of materials like birch rind, palm leaves, or paper. Such leaves were cut up into equal size and laid between two somewhat larger wooden boards. These had at the left-hand side one or two holes through which was drawn a cord which then was wound around the whole. Finally there was the Western type of book, stitched and bound. Of these various types the Manichees appear to have made no use of the folding book, rare use of the *pothī*, more frequent use of the book-roll, and normal use of the familiar European book-form. In this instance the Manichees gave preference to Western rather than Eastern tradition.

Writing materials consisted of silk, leather and paper. Leather was employed partly as vellum, partly as pliant leather. Silk, it seems, was utilized during the Parthian and Sassanian periods of Iranian history only among the upper classes. Consequently royal official documents were drawn up on silk. In the West Augustine appears to have encountered chiefly vellum manuscripts, since he spoke of '*omnes illas membranas elegantes*' (*Contra Faustum* XIII 18).

The paper was manufactured from *broussonetia*, 'China grass' or (more rarely) hemp, but apparently not yet of cotton. Mass production of paper is assumed to have been requisite for Buddhist propaganda in eastern Iran and Central Asia and it is furthermore believed that 'the Sogdians both in Sogdiana and eastern Turkestan were the first to produce paper in *greater quantities*' (Le Coq).

Some remains of Manichaean books can be dated back to the sixth or seventh centuries, but most of the finds must be

classified as belonging to the eighth and ninth centuries. Hence no autograph copies of Mani have become available, but the Master's words appear to have been handed down with the utmost care.

The writing was generally done with black or Indian ink which must have been of first-rate quality to withstand the damp and water of centuries. Reeds and brushes, the latter particularly among the Sogdians and Uigurians, were used as writing instruments.

The arrangement of the texts was also undertaken with the greatest care. A book-page was either entirely filled with script or the latter was split up into two or more columns.

The title was probably put in bold colours on each side of the treatise with which it dealt. The flowers and flourishes surrounding it were kept in the same colour, but were punctuated by dashes and dots of contrasting hue.

The possibility of avoiding monotony in the script surface was kept open by allowing the introduction of some differently coloured, generally scarlet, lines between the normal black ones. There were too entirely polychrome manuscript sheets on which twelve lines of writing were distributed between two columns of six lines each with regularly corresponding colours.

The binding of the book on the European pattern was often a costly affair. The edges might even be inlaid with ivory or be covered with embellished leather or vellum. The cover consisted of cardboard encased with thick gold-leaf and inlaid with tortoise-shell.

Even though the so-called *Rabbūla Gospel Lectionary* of the year 586 is outstanding for its rich ornamentation, Manichaean books generally far surpassed contemporary Christian and Islamic publications in that respect.

The Paintings

Of great importance too are the paintings rediscovered in the caverns. Among them belongs a cave-painting from

Bäzäklik which shows a tree with three trunks whose roots go down into a small, apparently circular basin. The painting shows barely discernible Uigurian characters. Each of the trunks is divided up so as to allow two forked branches to sprout up. The tree has large, inartistically drawn leaves. The whole composition, with its sparing use of grey and brown colouring, is enlivened only by the enormously large orange-tinted flowers in the shape of round plates. Three large clusters of grapes hang either side of the tree.

The characteristic appearance of this tree, with its large leaves, huge flowers, and heavy grapes, is reminiscent, as has been correctly emphasized, of the sacred tree depicted in Manichaean miniatures. These are alone in displaying strange flowers and gigantic grapes as part of the sacred tree, although its peculiar form is also met in Buddhist art from which Manichaean artists perhaps took their theme.

Other paintings, more interesting in their subject matter, depict *electi* as they were met in Central Asia. In this connection, mention must primarily be made of a large fresco from Chotscho, that shows a high priest with a distinctive headgear which was evidently appropriate to the Elect. The head is encompassed by an aureole formed by the solar disc and the crescent moon laid around it. Since Mani was venerated among the Uigurians as *kün ai tängri*, 'sun-moon-god', it is certain that it is he who is portrayed, though in accordance with a naïve convention he is shown as an eastern Asiatic and not as an Iranian. The remaining figures are much smaller in proportion, signifying, within the framework of this artistic convention, that they are less important than the bigger figure. That they are placed in successive rows is meant as a substitute for perspective and indicates that the lowest row is nearest to the observer, then the second, then the third.

Two portrait-heads of *electi*, likewise from Chotscho, contrast with the East Asian racial type of features given to Mani; theirs are distinctly Western Asian.

The style and representational manner of the miniatures are in accord with the frescoes, so that Le Coq could assert: 'The frescoes are quite simply enlarged miniatures or the miniatures reduced frescoes.' As it has already been noted that in both the Hellenistic and Judaic fields fresco-work took miniature painting for its model, this may apply equally to Manichaean art.

Subsequent Influence of Manichaean Art

Islamic miniature painting can show examples which would appear to depict purely Christian themes. There is one which – as one would suppose – represents Adam and Eve in the garden of paradise and, so it would seem, God the father in converse with them there. Nevertheless the manuscript illustrated by the miniature contains no story taken from the Jewish or Christian religions; the miniature is simply throwing light on the Zoroastrian myth about the first human pair, Mašyak and Mašyānak, who lived happily for fifty years without food or drink. Then Ahriman appeared to them in the form of a venerable old man and persuaded them to eat of the fruit on the trees. He even set them an example and, as soon as he had eaten, was transformed into a beautiful youth. Such a legend never existed in Christianity and, taking a closer look at the miniature, it can be seen that Ahriman holds a pomegranate whilst Eve has an ordinary apple. The purely Chinese style of the natural background also suggests an eastern origin for the iconographic theme. Just as it is out of the question for this miniature to have arisen out of Christian art, so it is equally out of the question for it to be based on an Islamic tradition, for this is absent there too.

Another picture which has a Christian theme but lacks Christian treatment is a miniature dealing with Christ's baptism. The people shown are Central Asians, the enormous footwear is such as is found in Turkestan. The dove which hovers over the scene looks as though it is of brass. Neither

Christian nor Islamic art has a prototype for this representation. Notable too is that Jesus does not, as in Christian art, undergo baptism naked. But because, as has been seen, Jesus has a special place in the Manichaean system, its artists must also have evolved their own tradition when they had to deal with the reproduction of individual episodes of his life as related in the Gospels. That is what renders it likely that this is a portrayal with the stamp of Manichaean art upon it. Sir Thomas Arnold, whose theories have been repeated here, also holds this view. He offers other instances of iconographic themes and figures receiving artistic attention as well as certain ornaments having been transposed from Manichaean to Islamic miniature painting. In stating his case, he is at particular pains to underline that in regard to technical treatment Islamic art had no tradition of its own upon which to rely. Islamic painters had to seek support either in Byzantine-Syrian art, i.e. Christian, or Manichaean art. A circumstance that indicates that the origin of Islamic miniatures with Old and New Testament themes must be sought outside Christian art, Sir Thomas continues, is when the handling of the themes is so foreign to Christian tradition that a transmission via Manichaeism must be assumed. Undoubtedly Manichaean art in turn contributed to the prolonged survival of Parthian-Sassanian artistic traditions in Islamic art.

CHAPTER EIGHT

THE SPREAD OF MANICHAISM

In the West – The Controversy between Christians and Manichees – In the East – Last Successes and The Decline of Manichaeism

In the West

MANICHAISM reached the Jordan region no later than the close of Mani's life, for a report (Epiphanius, *Panarion* LXVI 1) of 274 tells how a veteran named Acuas brought the Manichaean teachings from Mesopotamia to Eleutheropolis. The same author maintains that Mani sent disciples to Jerusalem to buy Christian books which – after a certain amount of adaptation – were then incorporated into his own works (*Panarion* LXVI 5). He adds that Thomas, Mani's apostle, preached the Manichaean gospel in Judaea (*Panarion* LXVI 5, 3). We have information too that Mani's disciples Thomas and Hermeias were dispatched respectively to Syria and Egypt. Thomas is supposed to have gone to Egypt also, but at a later date (*Acta Archelai*, Chapter LXIV).

It has been estimated that Manichaeism in fact spread into Egypt before 261, the initial mission being led by Bishop Addā who was amply furnished with propagandist literature (cf. above, p. 34). A note by the philosopher Alexander of Lycopolis to the effect that the first Manichee to arrive 'among us' was named Papos has survived. Thomas came only after him and 'some others later' (*Contra Manichaei Opiniones*, Chapter 2). It may be assumed that by the year 300, when Alexander composed his treatise against the Manichees, there must have been a larger number of them resident in Egypt since otherwise his piece would have been a supererogatory labour.

From Egypt Manichaeism spread to northern Africa and

Spain, from Syria via Asia Minor to Greece, Illyria, Italy and Gaul. The two western provinces, Gaul and Spain, were probably penetrated from north and south. In these westerly parts, where its missionaries were proclaiming their teachings inside the borders of the Roman Empire, Manichaeism from the outset had to take into account severe opposition not only on the part of the Christian church, which saw a dangerous rival, but equally that of Roman executive power. The Emperor Diocletian drew up in 297 his famous edict against the Manichees, addressing it to the African proconsul Julianus. He had become aware, it said, that of late the Manichees had like a fresh and sudden plague coming from the hostile Persians broken in upon the Roman lands and committed many crimes. They were exciting peaceful communities and there was reason to fear that by reason of their beastly habits and crazy Persian customs they were liable to try and contaminate as with a baleful poison people of a more innocent nature, the quiet Roman folk and indeed the whole world. Therefore he prescribed measures of the strictest sort: the tracts and their authors together with the ringleaders were to be burned, their followers to lose their lives and have their property confiscated by the State. Persons holding a position in society who had adhered to this disgraceful sect or succumbed to the Persian doctrine were condemned to compulsory labour in the mines and confiscation of property.

Diocletian's attitude to Manichaeism, in the light of his politico-military antagonism to Sassanian Iran on account of his wars with the Sassanid Narses and his belief that he was here dealing with an Iranian 'sect', is intelligible. Nevertheless it is interesting that the Iranian character of Mani's system had been so clearly perceived on the Roman side. Manichaeism was indeed in the West always regarded as a religion belonging to that Persian people which was ever hostile to the Romans, *adversaria nobis gens*, as Diocletian phrased it. Thus its Iranian origin alone sufficed to render the new religion a peril to imperial safety. The only strange and

surprising thing is that the Emperor's ruthless punishment was based on the Manichees' *maleficium* or witchcraft.

But a special circumstance needs mentioning in this connection. The year 297 saw Egypt in revolt against Rome and it is perfectly conceivable that the Manichees, taking advantage of bad economic conditions, were its instigators. Their action was probably taken in collusion with the Sassanid Great King Narses who had recently ascended the throne, despite the fact that the latter is known in Manichaean tradition as a fierce persecutor of the creed. Contrastingly, the Arabian prince 'Amr ibn 'Adi, ruler of Hirah, who ruled from approximately 270-300, was a defender of the Manichees and one of them, Innaios, is mentioned as his emissary to Narses. For the Manichees to have participated actively in the Egyptian insurrection means that a reconciliation must have occurred between Narses and their co-religionists in the Sassanian realm. Was 'Amr the mediator and its price the Manichees' seditious propaganda in Egypt? These are questions to which there is as yet no answer.

Nonetheless, the opposition encountered by Manichaeism from the Christian church was vigorous too. The Christian authorities at the start had to restrict themselves to spiritual weapons, but this did not make the fight less bitter and all conceivable means were enlisted in its pursuit.

Our knowledge of the singular story of the Manichaean missionary activity in the West rests upon the description by its opponents, but suffices fully to indicate how intercourse between the two divergent beliefs was handled.

An example was to be seen in Palestine about 375, a point of time just after the failure of Julian the Apostate's anti-Christian activity when Christianity for that very reason enjoyed a strong, so to speak 'official', position. The testimony was provided by Marcus Diaconus who in his biography of the holy Porphyrius of Gaza gave an illustration of how the Manichees sought converts. 'About this date a woman of Antiochia named Julia, who belonged to the abominable

heresy of the so-called Manichees, came to live in the city. And, believing that some were but faintly filled with the divine light and not yet fully fortified in the sacred creed, she worked secretly and corrupted them, bewitching them by her teachings but still more by bribery. For she, who had brought in this godless heresy, was not able other than by bribery to win over followers to it. For they who possess good sense see that its teachings are crammed with all sorts of blasphemy, damnation and old wives' tales void of reason and wit except to ensnare foolish womenfolk and childish men. For of various heresies and of views among the Greeks have they put together this wicked faith and wish by malice and cunning to win all people to their side. For to please the Greeks they say that there are many gods and at the same time accept horoscopes and decrees of fate and the knowledge of the stars so that they may sin without fear, believing that the commission of sins lies not in us but by necessity of fate.

'But they acknowledge Christ too, for they say that outwardly he was a man and they themselves are outwardly called Christians.

'But as said above, when that pernicious woman was come into the city certain persons were misled by her deceitful instruction. But after some days the holy Porphyrius, being informed by certain believers, sent for and questioned her who she was and whence and what her faith. And she named her land and that she was of the Manichees. And when those with him were enraged – for he had by him some pious men – he begged them to hold their indignation and rather patiently to admonish the woman a first and a second time in keeping with the words of the holy apostle, as in the third chapter and tenth verse of the book of Titus. Then did he say to the woman, "Desist from this evil faith, sister, for it is from Satan!" But she answered, "Speak and listen, and persuade or be persuaded!" And the blessed man said, "Prepare thyself for the morrow and come hither again!" Therewith she took her leave and departed.

‘The blessed man, having fasted and prayed much unto Christ that he might shame the devil, prepared himself for the following day and summoned some from among the pious, priests as well as laymen, to listen to the disputation between him and the woman.

‘And on the morrow the woman, accompanied by two men and the same number of women, appeared. These were young and handsome to look on and the faces of all were pale. Upon Julia the years had gathered. And their behaviour was modest and their air was meek, but – as already said – outwardly they were sheep and inwardly ravenous wolves and venomous beasts, for hypocrisy marks all their works and deeds. And the holy man, holding the sacred writings in his hand and after he had struck the cross upon his mouth, challenged them to declare their faith, and they began to speak. And Brother Cornelius, skilled in the shorthand of Ennomus, at the most blessed bishop’s behest noted at the promptings of myself and Brother Barochas all that was said and debated.’

Unfortunately Marcus failed to reproduce the matter of Manichæan teachings. His excuse was that these were too long, but it may be assumed that like most Christian chroniclers the omission was deliberate for fear that the dualistic ideas might attract the readers. Instead Marcus continued his tale as follows: ‘And when during four hours they had said many empty things and pronounced the usual blasphemies against the Lord and God of the universe, the holy Porphyrius was inflamed by divine passion as he heard him who comprehends all things, alike visible and invisible, being blasphemed by a woman possessed of the devil and submissive to him and he pronounced his judgment against her in these words:

God, who has created all things,
 Who alone is eternal,
 Who has neither beginning nor end,
 Who is exalted in trinity,

He thy tongue will strike
 And thy mouth will close,
 That thou evil things mayst not speak!

And with the judgment followed the penalty, for Julia began to tremble and the features of her face to change and for a time, as abiding in a trance, she spoke not but was bereft of speech and movement, her eyes open and fast upon the most holy bishop. But those who were with her and saw what she suffered were much alarmed and sought to wake her spirit and chanted adjurations in her ear, but she neither spoke nor heard. And after she had been dumb some time, she gave up the spirit and went away into the darkness that she honoured in that she held it to be light.' Bishop Porphyrius ordained befitting burial for the old woman. Marcus says that 'he was singularly sympathetic'.

Next it was the turn of those who had accompanied Julia. They confessed to their error, and the account narrates, 'But the holy man saw to it that they all cursed Mani, author of their heresy after whom they were called Manichees, and after he had instructed them for many days he received them into the holy church' (Marcus Diaconus, *Life of Porphyrius*, Paragraphs 86-91).

The Controversy between Christians and Manichees

The impression of the difficult conditions under which the propagation of Manichaeism proceeded is strengthened when attention is directed to the days when the Christian church had fully won the Roman state to its side and Christianity had become the sole officially recognized religion. The public disputations which Christians on various occasions had with Manichees were of course different from that of the unfortunate Julia and the holy Porphyrius, but the pressure was perhaps even greater. Indeed, the collision in Africa between the representatives of the Manichaean faith and Augustine, bishop of Hippo, a recent convert from Manichaeism to

Christianity, was very unpleasant. His arguments with the Manichees, Fortunatus and Felix, in this connection deserve special mention. It must be granted that the situation in which the advocates of the Manichaean standpoint found themselves in these public debates was not an easy one. They were championing a religion which, whilst lacking any Christian content as regards dogma and cult observance, nevertheless claimed to be the true Christianity. To counter this audacious contention was of course for Christians a comparatively easy matter. To give an account of all the questions deliberated would take too long, but we can enter a little more closely into one or two of the principal problems. The easiest way is by examining the personal view of the Manichees' great opponent.

What, one asks oneself, was it in Manichaeism that attracted Augustine's interest and won him over to its doctrines? To fancy that it was the indisputable force of the dualistic outlook would be a gross error. On the contrary, according to his own testimony, what fascinated Augustine was Manichaeism's apparent ability to suggest a complete cosmic interpretation, endeavouring at the very first examination to offer a rational explanation of all phenomena. This concurrence of religion and knowledge, this theosophy, this it was above all that impressed and absorbed the young African rhetorician. It was only, he said himself, their assertion of being able 'to remove the dread authority and by excellent and plain reason to lead to God and to free of all error those who would hearken to them' that led him to fall victim to such people. What other motive, so he asked, could have induced him during nearly nine years to scorn the creed taught him in childhood by his parents in order to attend to and zealously to obey these people unless it was the proposition that Christians were ruled by erroneous belief and had faith imposed upon them before reason, whereas they themselves accepted no article of faith until its truth had been debated and manifested (*De Utilitate Credendi*, Chapter 1). And

in another passage he maintained that the Manichees promised to those whom they tempted reasonable answers to the obscurest matters and censured Christian doctrine principally for enforcing in the first place mandatory belief upon those who came to it; they boasted, on the other hand, of laying the yoke of belief upon none without first showing a source of reasoning.

Christian apologists in the age of Augustine saw proof for the truth and divinity of Christianity primarily in two things, the miracles and the prophecies. The Manichees read in these, however, merely a sign that Christianity itself had doubts about the inner power of its truth. Not that they wished to dispute the reality of the miracles. But, since Jesus in their view had been simply an apparent corporeality and not a real person, his miraculous deeds could also be merely apparent and lacked inner, though having outer, reality. To the prophecies the Manichees attached no importance whatever. They did not consider that the Old Testament had any capacity to furnish proof about Christianity, even though it contained prophecies about Jesus – a point with which they disagreed. They considered that the Old Testament could be of value only to those who had been converted from Judaism to Christianity, in the same way as the prophecies of the Sibyl, Hermes Trismegistos or Orpheus might be of value to those who had gone over from paganism to Christianity.

Nor was the New Testament left unimpugned by the Manichees. The criticism exercised by Marcion was carried on even more determinedly by Mani. What coincided with Manichaean dualism was of course accounted part of the true constituents of Christian doctrine. To lend legitimacy to their own principles, the Manichees were fond of quoting the Pauline phrases respecting the antithesis between spirit and flesh. Any declaration contrary to Manichaean doctrine was simply taken as falsification of original Christian teachings. The parable of Jesus on the tares sown by the nocturnal enemy – *noctivagus quidam seminator* – was applied by the

Manichee Faustus to this alleged falsification of the books of the Christian canon: The writings of the New Testament contain many tares and consequently it is the Christian's duty fearlessly to undertake a clear distinction between the seed scattered by the good sower during the day and that of the evil sower by night (*Contra Faustum* XVIII 3).

The Manichees justified their attitude to the New Testament texts in a number of ways.

They did no more, they averred, as regards the New Testament than the liberties the Christians allowed themselves with the Old. Not everything that stood in the Old Testament was believed, even though its authority was recognized. Why then should not the Manichees be allowed to adhere to the purest contents of the New Testament?

Secondly, they maintained, its books had not been composed by Jesus' original disciples or, if they had, the texts were subsequently revised by Judaizing writers and therefore required to be subjected to strict scrutiny. As a whole they must be regarded as spurious and interpolated. The Pauline letters, on the other hand, sustained far milder criticism, and to this degree the Manichees again were true heirs to Marcion.

For the Manichees the guiding principle was to distinguish the falsifications which attempted to confuse the pure teachings of the gospel with the views of Judaism, and the criterion was of course the Manichaean dualistic antithesis between spirit and matter, light and darkness, good and evil.

Hence the essential question was, what rationalistic grounds could the Manichees cite to demonstrate that the criterion of Mani's teachings really amounted to the true revelation and sole reasonable doctrine? 'What witness,' demanded Augustine, 'has he (Mani) brought forward to testify to his apostleship? And Christ's own name – why has he snatched it up, why has he usurped it when he forbids you to believe the Hebrew prophets? So that it shall not be flung in his face, thou liest! let him cite the other prophets who according to him have presaged Christ' (*Contra Faustum* XIII 4).

Augustine's objection was perfectly logical. If Mani disallowed the Old Testament's evidence for Christ as the Messiah, what substitute support had he to offer for Christ's authority and hence his own as his apostle?

In fact the Manichees could call only upon Mani's word, and the Master himself does not seem to have adduced any external authority. We have seen him in the presence of King Bahrām (above, p. 4) invoking the revelation that had been made to him. But why was it expected that the doctrine proclaimed by him should be accepted as a direct divine revelation? Clearly because it must prove convincing by reason of its own inherent strength! Its plausibility had to be clear and unequivocal to every son of light. To this could be added the circumstance mentioned by Mani himself that not one of the earlier religious founders had composed writings in the way he had. But this too is a reason that would go unchallenged only on the part of those who already believed his doctrine. A truly rational reason can be cited as little by Mani and his followers as can external proof. In the face of rationalistic argument the Manichees are at a loss. That is obvious from Augustine's attack. It is, however, also quite natural, for a religion based simply on revelation is not a cogent doctrine whose truth can be established on logical grounds.

The Manichees stood no chance of success in debating with anyone so highly educated in rational reasoning as Augustine. Indeed, dealing with them, he bore the marks almost of a ratiocinatory philosopher – as he was in part. Probably this helplessness of Manichaeism in disputations with philosophically trained Christian theologians contributed towards eliminating its influence among the educated and thus rendering it harmless in the West. Many were attracted to a consistent theory of dualism, but the Manichees were incapable of its philosophical evolution.

In the East

Manichaeism reached Arab-speaking regions early on. Between 293 and 300 the Arabic patron of the Manichees 'Amr (cf. above, p. 119) ruled in the border city of Hirah in southern Mesopotamia, meeting place of Syriac-Sassanian and Arabic civilizations. Ibn Rustah the geographer reports the arrival of Manichaean missionaries at Mecca from Hirah whilst the historian Ibn Qutaibah says that certain Quraishites were responsible for bringing a heresy from there. Research has also established distinct echoes of the Manichaean doctrine in Mohammed's preaching and especially his interpretation of revelation. It is, however, improbable that Allah's apostle had any personal acquaintance with the Manichee religion.

Arab sources during the Omayyad period, succeeding that of the first four Caliphs, are completely silent on the subject of the Manichees and they were evidently left entirely in peace. These were the days when a great number who had fled to eastern Iran came back to Mesopotamia. The picture changed completely with the accession of the Abassids.

These rulers inaugurated Sassanian bureaucratic practices accompanied by Sassanian culture in the heart of the Caliphate. A new capital, Baghdad or 'Gift of God', was founded close to the old capital, Seleucia-Ctesiphon. The Persian name was indicative and the ninth century saw a revival of the national Persian spirit in eastern Iran. This was the vengeance of the once defeated and almost totally occupied Iran. During the eighth century translators and Persian men of letters had already begun to transcribe a part of the masterpieces of world literature from Persian into Arabic. Now translators and authors of the calibre of Ibn al-Muqaffa' and Baššār ibn Burd gave fresh impetus to this trend. The interesting point arises that, rightly or wrongly, all these writers of Persian origin were accused of Manichaean sympathies and branded 'dualists' or '*Ẓindīqs*'. The former term presents no

problems, but the latter requires some elucidation. The Arab word *zindīq* is a Persian loan-word, derives from Middle Iranian *zandik*, means 'followers of the *zand*', and refers to the special sort of fixed written tradition belonging to the Magi from Šīz (cf. above, p. 33). For the Manichees to be described as *zindīq* was a strange coincidence. It meant that not only were they regarded as disciples of a heretical tradition – clearly *zandik* already possessed that connotation in Sassanid times – but the appellation linked them to the religion of the Magi, which to a certain degree was correct (cf. above, p. 36).

The Persian authors just mentioned were probably chiefly responsible for the translation of Mani's writings into the new world language of Arabic. Mas'ūdī stated that Ibn al-Muqaffa' translated several of Mani's works and throughout the Abbasid era a rich Arabic literature is available. Scholars like Al-Bīrūnī and Al-Nadīm – to take only two names – were able to base themselves in their excellent reports about Mani, his doctrine and his church, on authentic Manichaean writings in Arabic.

Foremost among the quotations are those from Mani's own works, from which detailed and valuable extracts were taken. Alongside these were a string of other compositions whose titles are given in Al-Nadīm's *Fihrist*. Most of them are known only by name, but in some instances an idea of the contents was conveyed. This is the case with a defence of Manichaean doctrine against Islam which was later the subject of attack by an Islamic theologian. The latter's abstracts supply glimpses of what the defence maintained. Unfortunately the Islamic author shared with his Christian colleagues the trait of being satisfied with using propositions out of their context. His own thesis is marked by a tone of boorishness, whereas contemporary religious controversy is almost always courteous. His language is extremely difficult to follow and it is possible that the text is partially corrupt. This is regrettable since there is no doubt that it could have much to offer for the understanding of Manichaeism in the Islamic period.

Here should be mentioned the report on Mani's system by the Islamic theologian and religious philosopher Al-Shahrastānī. On this occasion his doctrine is more 'philosophically' clothed and there can be no doubt that in this form Manichaeism had the power to attract many thinkers with dualistic leanings. It is clear that during the Caliphate age Manichaeism wished to appear as an all-embracing exegesis of the world and indeed comprised a series of scientific and pseudo-scientific disciplines. Mas'ūdī related that the Manichees had a predilection for medical and astrological speculations. An example is the peculiar theory regarding evolution of the embryo in its mother's womb which can be traced in its variations from the Pahlavi treatise *Bundahišn* via the Manichees to the Islamic gnostic sects.

The Manichees met with very strong resistance from the authorities during the Abbasid period. Great harshness and intolerance marked especially the reigns of Al-Mahdī (775–785) and Al-Muqtadir (908–932). To take steps against all heretics, but above all the Manichees, a Court of Inquisition under the direction of a Chief Inquisitor, *sāhib al-zanādiqah*, Lord over the *Ẓindīqs* (or however the term is to be rendered) was set up. As his title shows, he had plenary powers and how fateful these ruthless measures proved to be was recorded by Al-Nadīm. Whereas in the days of the Buwayhid emir Mu'izz al-Dawlah in Baghdad (945–967) he had personally known some three hundred Manichees, there were at the time of his writing his book scarcely five remaining in the capital (*Fihrist*, p. 337: 26 *et seq.*).

Many are the dismal episodes told of the persecutions suffered by Manichaeism's adherents. Thus the respected scholar and translator Ibn al-Muqaffa' came to a dreadful end: a provincial governor, his enemy, had him burnt in the most gruesome way.

Some occurrences, however, though not lacking a dark background, can be recounted more cheerfully. The versatile academic Mas'ūdī narrated one from the days of the Caliph

Al-Ma'mūn (813–833) which serves to illuminate the methods employed against the Manichees. He was told it by Ṭumāmāh ibn Ašras, who said :

'Ma'mūn received news of ten inhabitants of Baṣrah, "heretics" of the sort that believed in Mani's doctrines and talked of "light" and "darkness". When he had heard their names, one after the other, he ordered them to be brought before him. When they had been assembled together, they were noticed by a parasite who thought, "They are undoubtedly getting together for a feast." This was because of their noble, respectable appearance and clean clothes. So he mingled among and went along with them until their guards brought them to the quayside. He still had no idea how things stood with them and now remarked to himself, "An outing, not a doubt of it!" So he went on board with them. But now it was not long before handcuffs were brought and the whole company chained up, the parasite along with them. Then the parasite thought, "This kettle of fish I have my toadying inclinations to thank for!" and, turning to the older prisoners, asked, "I beg your pardon, but who are you?" To which they replied, "Yes, but who are you and do you really belong to our brotherhood?" He said, "By Allah, I have no idea what kind of people you are, but for myself I am, by Allah, by profession no more than a parasite. I left my house and I met you. I saw how noble you looked, your fine appearance, and your agreeable behaviour, and I thought you old men, men of a ripe age, and youngsters, come together for a feast! And I mixed among you and took my place beside you as though I was of your company. You came to this ship and I saw it furnished with these cushions and rugs. I saw the loaded tables too and the luggage and the baskets and I told myself that you were off on an outing, to some palace or garden. Ah, what a blissful day! And I was in a state of delight when these guards arrived and handcuffed you and me too. My brain stopped working. Tell me what it is all about!" They laughed and were gladdened and made sport of the matter. Then they

said, "Now you can truly be accounted part of the reckoning and your handcuffs make you part of the chain! As for us, we are Manichees who have been denounced to Al-Ma'mūn and are being brought before him, and he will ask us what attitude we take and exhort us to discard our doctrine and invite us to abjure it and be converted by putting all sorts of trials upon us. These include his showing us a picture of Mani and commanding us to spit on it and renouncing him. And he will order us to sacrifice a partridge. Whoever acquiesces, thereby saves his life; whoever withholds, is killed. And if you are challenged and have to undergo trials, tell all about yourself and your faith, wherever your tongue may take you. But you did say that you were a parasite and parasites make a point of having a store of jokes and stories. So shorten our journey to Baghdad with a tale or fable!"

'And when they were arrived in Baghdad and brought before Al-Ma'mūn, the latter called them by their names, one after the other, and questioned each upon his understanding of the doctrine. And he instructed each in the teaching of Islam and put him to the test and summoned him to forswear Mani and, showing him his picture, enjoined that he should spit upon it and renounce him, and more of the like. But they refused and he had them put to the sword until he came to the parasite, when ten individuals had been killed and the (recorded) score of the community was complete. And Al-Ma'mūn said to the warders, "Who is this one?" To which they replied, "By Allah, we know not except that we found him together with the rest of them and brought him here." Al-Ma'mūn said to him, "What is thy case?" He answered, "Oh lord of true believers! Let me divorce my wife if I understood a word of what they said. No, no, I am a parasite . . ." and herewith he told him his story, from beginning to end. And Al-Mamūn laughed. Then he showed him the portrait and he (the parasite) reviled it and abjured it and said, "Give it me and I will spit upon it! I know not, by

Allah, who Mani was, whether Jew or Muslim!’”’ (*Murūğ al-dahab*, VII, pp. 12–16).

Last Successes and The Decline of Manichaeism

In Sassanian times Manichaeism had already reached and even crossed the river Oxus. This provided a base for Manichaean propaganda in Sogdian territory which provided good communications and connections both eastwards and westwards. The Sogdians were a race of merchants who looked after economic traffic with China. The ‘silk road’ leading from the latter to the lands of the west was famous both in ancient and more modern days. At various places along it the Sogdians planted commercial colonies. There, was one, for instance, immediately south of Lop Nor. Indeed, a Sogdian inscription has been discovered at faraway Karabalgasun on the upper reach of the Orchon river which debouches into Lake Baikal. For the spread of Manichaeism eastwards its firm establishment in the Sogdian cities of Samarkand and Tashkent was of outstanding importance. Especially in the former, Arab sources state, the Manichees were very numerous and influential.

A systematic labour of translation was pursued within the Sogdian language area. The quantity of Manichaean texts and textual fragments still in existence testify to the volume of such writings circulating in that tongue.

Political as well as economic considerations weighed heavily in the scale of Manichaeism’s progress eastwards. Since the Han dynasty (206 BC to AD 220) China had had important interests to protect in her neighbouring western regions. During the years 221 to 618, however, the middle kingdom went through a period of weakness and lost its influence in Turkestan. Only with the rise of the Tang dynasty was China able to recover her politico-military position there. But now the Chinese encountered not only Iranian and Turkish peoples, but were first and foremost faced with the Arabs

advancing victoriously after the downfall of the Sassanian empire in eastern Iran. By 667 the Arabs had crossed the Oxus and in the same year occurred the decisive battle with a Chinese army which had restored Pērōz, the son of the last Sassanid monarch, to the throne of Iran and had in 661 installed him as a Chinese vassal. The Chinese were thoroughly beaten and that put an end to Sassanian rule. Pērōz had to flee to China and died there.

Arab dominion brought to eastern Iran, as to Iraq, substantially better conditions for the Manichees. The authorities left them entirely alone. This period of respite and the resumed close connections between China and Turkestan were the prerequisites to the missionary activities now undertaken by the Manichees. Matters proceeded so far that a Manichaean *electus* appeared at the court of the Chinese emperor. A still more senior Manichaean dignitary was dispatched in 719 to the imperial court by the viceroy of Tocharistan (i.e., Bactria), who was subject to the emperor. The viceroy was able to recommend the Manichaean ecclesiastic to his master as an excellent connoisseur of astronomy and other sciences and he begged the emperor to give the Manichaean permission to build a temple wherein he might hold divine service. Probably such Manichaean missionaries were responsible for introducing into China the western planetary calendar, for the planets in China were accorded Iranian names.

Nevertheless in 732 an imperial edict was launched against the Manichees in the following words: 'The doctrine of Mar Mani is through and through a perverted creed. Falsely it takes the name of Buddhism and deceives the people. This must be formally prohibited. But since it is the indigenous faith of the western barbarians and other people, it shall not be accounted a crime for them to practise it on their own behalf.'

Yet not long after the imperial edict had extended to the Manichees no more than a very conditional tolerance, one

which properly speaking forbade further missionary activity, improved prospects opened up for Manichaeism.

Around the middle of the eighth century the Turkish Uigure tribe played an important part in the Chinese territories and in 762 even obtained possession of the large city of Lo-Yang, which was regarded as the eastern capital. At the capture of it the Uigurian prince Bugug Khan (760-780) met some Manichaean electi who not only converted but induced him to proclaim Manichaeism the state religion within his realm.

Inside China Manichaeism from the eleventh to the fourteenth century enjoyed high favour above all in the province of Fu Kien. But as a religion it went in China also the way of syncretism and two of Mani's works were even adopted into the Taoist canon.

Buddhists and still more Confucianists nevertheless vigorously opposed the objectionable Manichaean doctrine and, as the executive authority in China also sided against it, Manichaeism there as in other countries became an underground religious movement. The breakdown of the Uigurian power in the ninth century robbed it of a powerful political ally. Clearly the Mongol troubles were fateful too. When it lost its last supporters on Chinese soil is unknown, but there were probably Chinese Manichees as late as modern times. Of this Chinese Manichaeism there was little record until the finds in central Asia, especially the discovery of a major doctrinal treatise from Tuen Huang and of the so-called great hymnal scroll, brought its importance clearly to the fore.

CHAPTER NINE

MANI AS PERSONALITY

‘AT WHAT LEVEL of ratiocination did Mani stand?’ Hans Heinrich Schaeder, the German Orientalist who devoted himself during the twenties and thirties to Manichaean research, underlined this question in his work *Urform und Fortbildungen des manichaischen Systems*. And in his view the answer provides the key to understanding the personality of Mani and the Manichaean system.

First it must be stated that to try to elucidate the personality and achievement of a religious founder by asking at what level of ratiocination he stood is in itself a distinctly individual method of approach.

But if we do not leave the matter at that and try to get somewhat closer to the problem, then surely *our* first question must be: Did Mani move in any realm that can be designated as ‘ratiocination’? Was *ratio* the dominating factor in the ‘reason’ that accompanied the formation of Manichaean doctrine? Literally this would appear to be so. We recall that Augustine according to his own statement was attracted to the Manichaeans more than anything else by their assurance of being able to furnish a reasonable explanation for every phenomenon the world had to offer (cf. p. 123 above). And we remember too that Manichaean criticism of Christianity was based on the Christian having first to force himself to believe before he was allowed to use his reason. All this indisputably points in the direction of a scientific, not to say rationalistic, outlook.

Our passage through the Manichaean system has confirmed for us, however, that this alleged scientific outlook ‘dissolves in myths’ (Puech).

Nor did their opponents ever cease to charge the Manichees with championing not a scientific but a pseudo-scientific cosmic interpretation. Their wisdom or *sophia*, ran the taunt, was not philosophy but theosophy. 'With their fables,' wrote the Neo-Platonic philosopher Alexander of Lycopolis, 'they surpass by far those mythologists who talk of Uranos' genitals being cut off or of a conspiracy against Cronos by his sons to gain dominion or, again, of the same Cronos gobbling up his sons, and then suffering himself to be fooled by a stone-figure' (*Contra Manichaei Opiniones* X). The myths that Mani's system had to offer seemed to the author of the *Acta Archelai* (Chapter LII–LIII) so childish that he propounded in all seriousness that Mani had seized on a book by one of his predecessors, added old wives' tales, and 're-told the whole with a large super-abundance of unnecessary words'. Indeed, some Christian controversialists made puns on his name and explained that Mani appropriately bore the name *Manes* because obviously he was raving (Greek, *manes*).

Whatever we may make of these polemics, what we cannot infer is any particular esteem for the 'level of thought rationalization' that the Mesopotamian-Iranian religious founder had chosen for himself.

The objection that a religious founder should not be judged by the spiteful and on occasion even brazen assertions of his opponents can certainly be sustained. Schaeder too, in order to explain and excuse the preponderant part played by myth in Manichaeism, sought to expound its function in a purely Platonic sense, i.e., Mani's *mythos* exists only to illustrate his *logos* intelligibly. Let us take a closer look at Mani's myths rather than ask whether Plato perhaps also chose a myth only to demonstrate the *logos*. What in the final analysis will be decisive for the problem is how Mani evolved his system. Did it happen by way of a rational solely reasoned process of reflection *or* by a series of divine revelations?

If once more we listen in the first place to what opponents have to say, Alexander of Lycopolis makes no bones of how he

views Manichaeic doctrines: 'Their propositions are neither founded on reasonable proof, so that we can undertake verification, nor are they built up on one or two premises, so that we can see what follows from them. Any scrap of philosophy in their simple chatter is really no more than a coincidence. They appeal alike to old and modern writings, passing them off as divine inspirations and picking their notions out of them, and they do not regard themselves as confuted short of their words or actions not tallying with these (doctrines). For them the pronouncements of the prophets are what for others, philosophizing in the Greek manner, the premises of their argumentations are' (*Contra Manichaei Opiniones* V, p. 8, 17-9, 4, ed. Brinkman).

Analysis of Manichaeic dogma will convince anyone that the foregoing standpoint is not malicious perversion of the facts but touches on something fundamental to Manichaeic thought. It may be that Mani did not himself believe word for word the naïve and detailed myths; but that is not the decisive factor. The salient point is stated in Alexander's final phrase – what premises were to philosophers, revelation was to the Manichees. The wisdom that Mani, as he himself so emphatically stated, sought to proclaim was not of this world, a rational interpretation of things founded on logical considerations or practical realities, but a revelation from the father of light transmitted to him by his higher ego, the Twin, and he himself claimed this as his legitimation. The antithesis between Greek philosophy and Oriental redemption-revelation could not be more glaring. Here is Mani's association with religious tradition. By origin he was from north-western Iran, or Armenia, where his kin was firmly rooted as a princely Parthian clan. Zervanism, which in those parts ruled the spiritual life of the population, was the form of religion from which he proceeded. It is not by chance that the antecedents of his system, whether its dualistic-pessimistic outlook on the world and life or the corresponding reflection in the myths, are encountered in Zervanism again and again. From

there too he borrowed, as we have seen, those conceptions of evil power and contempt for sexual activity, finding expression in the myths, which more than anything else shocked his opponents (the tale, for example, of the seduction of the Archons which is also in the Zervanite mythological lore). Obviously he neither could nor wished to free himself of this inheritance.

Puech is probably right in saying that the Indian, Iranian, Christian – and, we may add, Mesopotamian – elements were for the most part not influences integral to the system from the start but later, more supplementary, extrinsic features, the result of a deliberate effort of adaptation on the part of its founder.

This can be the more confidently asserted by keeping in mind that the whole system is Iranian, specifically Zervanite, in concept. The idea of the ‘redeemed Redeemer’, as dominant in Manichaeism as in all gnosticism, is Iranian, the idea that the Redeemer is himself the sum of all the souls to be redeemed, a notion bound up with the thought of identity between the higher human ego and this heavenly Redeemer. In Manichaeism this sequence of thinking is echoed in that complex of ideas which revolves around the figure called ‘the Great Vahman’, a complex whose consanguinity with the Indian Atman-Brahman speculation vouches for the Indo-Iranian origin of these ideas.

Mani’s pessimistic view of life, the apprehension of the material world as essentially evil, created and controlled by the Prince of darkness is Iranian and, in particular, Zervanite. Iranian, too, the entire fear of life, so typical of Mani’s attitude, the scorn for women and the loathing of sex that stamp his presentation of the system. The antecedents are Zervanite in this strictly personal sphere just as in the portrayal of the world’s evolution one lineament after another can be traced back to Zervanism.

What Mani did was to interpret this Iranian world of thought in the light of his own religious experiences. His basic

concepts were derived from Iranian mythology and theology, but his exposition was in the spirit of gnosticism. This was made the easier for him because certain forms of Indo-Iranian belief displayed an almost gnostic quality. This was above all true of Zervanism. The well-known gnostic formula that a man must know who he is, whence he comes, where he is, whither he goes, was patently modelled on Indo-Iranian antecedents.

Mani's predecessors, Basilides, Marcion, Bardesanes, all developed a gnosticism that gave Christianity a veneer of the Iranian dualistic outlook. But the difference between them is that the three gnostics felt themselves to be Christians in the first place and undeniably stayed within the Christian limits. Theirs is not the enunciation of a new religion, but proper elucidation of the already revealed Christian religion. They are expositors and reformers.

Mani's case was otherwise. It was a completely new religion, one which admitted and was comprised of all earlier creeds and doctrines in which he saw any good, that he desired to proclaim. His pretension cannot be understood by itself alone, but demands closer scrutiny of his personality and the various aspects of his achievement.

He was the last of the great gnostics. The outstanding dualistic tendency among his predecessors, Basilides, Marcion, and Bardesanes, found its culmination in his own theosophic-gnostic system. Thereby he signified the close of one epoch and the introduction of another. His predecessors were concerned only with a reformation of Christianity, a restoration of Christ's religion to its original state of purity; Mani claimed with full awareness to be the founder of a new religion. He was quite prepared to give his precursors their due: the only true religion had once been made known by Buddha in India, by Zoroaster in Iran, and by Jesus Christ in the West. But to the land of Babel, lying at the centre of the earth and surrounded by these other three great territories, there had in the last era come Mani as final prophet of the eternally

divine law and as seal of the prophets, as the conclusion to and corroboration of all previous presages of God. He was the last incarnation of the heavenly Redeemer, of the all-apparent *Nous*, of the Great Vahman, of Jesus' promised Paraclete. Buddha, Zoroaster, Jesus, and Mani had been the four great prophets of the true religion, but Mani as the Paraclete and seal of the prophets was the greatest of them.

A vivid sense of mission sounded through all Mani's words. He proclaimed his teaching with natural authority. His intercourse with Sassanid princes, even with the Great King, had the self-possessed dignity and air of birthright attaching to his royal descent.

Astonishing too was his vigour and versatility. He intervened at all points, teaching, consoling, admonishing, bringing order. He was one of the most tremendous church founders and religious organizers the world has ever seen. In his own lifetime his faith stretched from the west of the Roman Empire to India, from the borders of China to Arabia. At its greatest his creed had followers from the coasts of the Atlantic to those of the Pacific. Become the official religion of the Central Asian Uigurian state, Manichaeism sought to conquer the middle kingdom and nearly achieved this ambition. Devotees of the Religion of Light in China persisted for centuries, regardless of all persecutions. Precisely how long Manichaeism survived we do not know, but it was in any case more than twelve hundred years. Granted that external success is no measuring-rod for the personality behind it, the proposition may perhaps nevertheless be ventured that the facts cited do suggest the founder of this religion to have been a quite extraordinary personality who was brought low only by external forces. Hardly another religion has been persecuted as ruthlessly and ferociously as has Mani's.

His personality also was out of the ordinary in a way that is distinctly attractive to us. The brisk and successful missionary, shrewdly and methodically building up his propaganda, is as

intelligible to us as the careful organizer who lays down both a firm and supple structure for his church. Nor do we have any difficulty in comprehending the pre-eminent political ecclesiastic who made such skilful use of opportunities as they presented themselves.

There were nevertheless other aspects of his character, aspects that have since ancient times been hall-marks of Middle Eastern religious leaders. He was a miracle-worker in the classic style. Above all he was a physician capable of driving out the demons possessing the sick and thus healing them. The art of healing was throughout the Middle East accounted among the outstanding marks of wisdom. The Syriac word for knowledge of physic, *āsūtā*, derives in the last resort from the Sumerian *a-zu*, meaning 'water knowledge' and signifying the science of water cures by which the possessed were freed of demons. This wisdom was not only theory, but also and foremost a matter of practice. The Arabic word for 'doctor' is *ḥakīm* and is synonymous with 'wise'. In this sense Mani was a 'wise man' who was capable of performing the strangest things, a charismatic miracle-worker. To Prince Mihršāh, for example, whose body lay as dead for three hours whilst his soul wandered in heavenly regions, he showed the garden of paradise. Mani himself evidently could command levitation at will, a psychical feature characteristic of miracle-workers from the Israelite prophets to Islamic holy men and mystics. He apparently claimed to have ascended to heaven and there to have received the divine revelation in the shape of a book – an assertion frequently met in the religious history of the Orient, especially in the Islamic record. That the imputation of such attributes should have served to render his person somewhat strange and uncanny to contemporaries can be safely assumed.

Mani's artistic and literary endowment was surprisingly varied. He was a complete master of all the different branches of Oriental literature. Not only was he lyrical and epic, but so vivid in his description of the struggle between the world of

light and that of darkness that he could almost be called a dramatist, had the Middle East known the classification. His sermons too were admirably contrived. In unpretentious, simple language he showed the ordinary man the situation of the material world. He employed all the symbols, similes, and allegories of the gnostic language to give his preaching life and colour. The phrases he wanted to impress on his hearers became particularly graphic through his numerous illustrations, tragic, comic, and even the coarse, taken from animal fables, crime and horror stories, and tales from everyday or court life. His capacity to hold his listeners must have been very striking. Fascinated, indeed almost obsessed, by obscene myths, he turned to them again and again to create the atmosphere he wanted.

Without pedantry, he preached with great vivacity, in a way that everybody could understand. As a 'hot gospeller' Mani was the popular speaker who has his technique at his finger-tips and knows exactly how to engage the attention of his audience.

But Mani was also a great ritualist who developed a special type of divine service in which the word of God as shaped by the Master was at the centre. His hymns and psalms gave the lead to the rich deployment of sacred poetry that so markedly distinguished his religion. Of an aesthetic nature himself, he understood – as has probably no other religious founder – how to bend aesthetic factors to the use of spiritual life. His zealous efforts to enlist art in the service of religion reached from the sacred writings to the rich costumes of the officiating priests and the embellishment of the holy precincts. Ahead of his time, he grasped how to blend word and picture.

Yet what a different spectacle Mani presents in his dogmatic texts! Here the speculative numeral scheme, so popular in late classical times, often enough had to provide the framework. Triads, tetrads, pentads, and hebdomads dominate his system. The various portions of his dogma have the balance of architectural masterpieces. The leaning towards speculation

by numbers, pronounced among the pious of those late classical days and not least so among the gnostics, began with Mani to lose sight of natural limits. With his followers in China the trend overstepped all bounds of good sense and nearly strangled all other aspects of his teaching. Obviously there was a quite deliberate didactic intention on Mani's part: the numerical system was designed to aid committal to memory and thereby the acquisition of his basic principles. At the same time he probably fancied, on the neo-Pythagorean pattern, the existence of special secrets in the inter-relationship of figures, and in this connection his predilection for astrology requires note. Here, too, he was a typical representative of late classicism.

In his argumentation, so far as criticism of Christianity as a major ecclesiastical organism was concerned, Mani was particularly the heir of Marcion and Bardesanes. On the whole – and corresponding to his entire attitude – he was much more radical. His attacks on all former 'dogmas' or 'teachings', as he described the religions preceding his, were fierce. Whilst giving all due recognition to *their relative truth*, he regarded himself as the sole possessor of *the absolute truth*. As recipient of the divine revelation he felt free to take or discard whatever he wished from other creeds.

Mani was not a religious philosopher in the proper sense of the word. Rather he was a type of miracle-worker and revelation-bearer. Nevertheless the content of his myths can of course find abstract expression. It occurs chiefly in Alexander of Lycopolis, who felt perhaps more strongly than all others that Mani was no philosopher but a 'mythologist'. The fact that he chose mythology as his natural method of expression is indicative of his intellect.

He was not the logically thinking philosopher, but the eclectic-syncretic theosophist. It was not a religious philosophical system that he propounded, but a divine revelation.

He sought nourishment and took material for his system from everywhere. He did so deliberately. Probably never

before or after has the world seen such a 'self-conscious syncretist' (Lidzbarski). Looking at matters from his point of view, nothing was more natural than for him to have pursued this line. If the truth had always been made known and had – though in a halting and incomplete manner – shone through all the great religions, then Mani was right to take from all the older systems what fitted into his own scheme. Obviously this was not always possible without incurring logical inconsistencies. Nor was there anything remarkable about this in Mani's case. Aristotle's logic became familiar to the Syrians fairly early on, but there is nothing whatever to suggest that Mani ever became acquainted with it. And, even though he had, he would not have felt in the least bound by it. He has been cited as a representative of Asiatic Hellenism (Nyberg). Doubtless this is correct, but the emphasis needs to be placed on 'Asiatic'. For in Mani and in Manichaeism are to be discovered those features of Hellenism which, though not those a modern observer would select as the most significant, are those that were to display the greatest effective power in the Middle East: speculation by numbers, astrology, ritual practices, and all kinds of pseudo-physiological science were passed on by Manichaeism to Islam. Truly no appreciable trace here of 'ratiocination'.

Mani's historic grandeur is not thereby diminished. He should, however, be judged for what he was and wanted to be: the bearer of divine revelation and the Apostle of Light.

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A synopsis of research is available in Nyberg, *Forschungen über den Manichäismus*, ZNW XXXIV/1935, pp. 70-91, and in Ries, *Introduction aux études manichéennes*, I, *Ephemerides Theologicae Lovanienses*, XXXIII/1957, pp. 453-482; II, *Analecta Lovaniensia Biblica et Orientalia*, Ser. III, Fasc. 11/1959, pp. 362-409. An excellent bibliography (down to about 1945) is contained in Puech, *Histoire générale des religions* (Paris 1947), 3, pp. 446-449.

I MANI'S BACKGROUND

The great inscription of Shāpur I and Kartēr's inscription have been edited, translated, and annotated (somewhat arbitrarily) by Sprengling, *Third Century Iran: Sapor and Kartir* (Chicago 1953).

The Greek version of the great Shāpur inscription and comparison of this with the Parthian and Middle Persian versions has been edited, translated, and annotated by Maricq, *Res Gestae divi Saporis* (Syria XXXV/1958, pp. 295-360).

Of the manifold literature available there may be mentioned Honigmann-Maricq, *Recherches sur les Res Gestae divi Saporis* (*Mémoires in 8° de l'Académie royale de Belgique (Lettres)*, XLVII, Fasc. IV); Rostovtzeff, *Res Gestae divi Saporis and Dura* (Berytus VII/1943, pp. 17-60); Ensslin, *Zu den Kriegen des Sassaniden Schapur I* (*Sitzungsberichte der Bayerischen Akademie der Wissenschaften*, Phil.-hist. Kl. 1947, 5, Munich 1949).

The following studies deal with various aspects of contemporary cultural conditions:

Baumstark, OLZ 1933, Col. 345 *et seq.*; Cumont, CRAIB 1931, pp. 233-250; CRAIB 1932, pp. 238-260.

Segal, *Some Syriac Inscriptions of the 2nd-3rd Century A.D.*, BSOAS XVI/1954, pp. 13-36.

Streck, *Seleucia und Ktesifon*, AO XVI 3-4 (Leipzig 1917).

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Widengren, *Iranisch-semitische Kulturbegeugung in parthischer Zeit*, AGF 70 (Cologne-Opladen 1960).

Respecting the Jews in Mesopotamia and Iran, see Widengren, *Quelques rapports entre Juifs et Iraniens à l'époque des Parthes*, VT, Suppl. IV/1957, pp. 197-241.

In matters relating to Syrian Christianity the best description is still to be found in Burkitt, *Early Eastern Christianity* (London 1904). With this may be compared Baumstark, *Ostsyrisches Christentum und ostsyrischer Hellenismus*, *Römische Quartalschrift* 1908, pp. 17-35, and Bauer, *Rechtgläubigkeit und Ketzerei im ältesten Christentum* (Tübingen 1934), as well as Widengren, *Mesopotamian Elements in Manichaeism*, *UUÅ* 1946, 3.

For such terms as *bōlsā*, *hūlā*, and *nāmōsā* cf. Duval-Berthelot, *La chimie au moyen âge*, II, Paris 1893, p. 240 n. 3. The two words *hūlā* and *nāmōsā* are met with also in Mandaeen literature.

Harnack made Marcion the subject of a detailed monograph, *Marcion: das Evangelium vom fremden Gott* (Leipzig 1921, 2nd edition 1924). It lacks, however, a religious-historical analysis.

There is no modern monograph on Bardesanes. To some degree Schaefer, *Bardesanes von Edessa*, *ZKG* LI/1932, pp. 21-74, serves as a substitute, but the gnostic admixture in Bardesanes' thought is there systematically reduced to a minimum.

In recent years the *Song of the Pearl* has been translated three times into German: Adam, *Die Psalmen des Thomas und das Perlenlied als Zeugnisse vorschriftlicher Gnosis*, *Beih. ZNW* 24, Berlin 1959; Widengren, *Iranische Geisteswelt* (Baden-Baden 1961), pp. 256-262; Bornkamm, *Handbuch d. neutest. Apokryphen*, II, pp. 349-353.

The fact that in this poem Seleucia is not yet the capital of the Parthian kingdom calls for notice. This shows it to presuppose an older period when the capital was still in the East.

The Mithras mysteries have been dealt with in a well-known but now outdated monograph by Cumont, *Die Mysterien des Mithra* (German edition by Gehrich and Latte, 3rd impression, Leipzig 1923). This may be compared with remarks on the subject in Widengren, *Stand und Aufgaben der Iranischen Religionsgeschichte* (Leyden 1955), pp. 113-120 (also in *Numen* I/1954 and II/1955). There is a short summary in *Handbuch der Orientalistik*, VII, 2, pp. 44-55. It is important to note that a *mithraeum* has been found in Uruk, cf. Lenzen, XIV, vorläufiger Bericht. . ., pp. 18-20 with Pls. 7-8, 45a. Cf. also Widengren, *Die Religionen Trans* (Stuttgart 1965), pp. 222-32.

Judaic-Iranian gnosticism is just beginning to become known. Cf. Doresse, *Les livres secrets des gnostiques d'Égypte* (Paris 1958), pp. 170 *et seq.*

Regarding the Mandaeans there is now available a very detailed

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description in Rudolph, *Die Mandäer*, I-II (Göttingen 1960-61). Very brief treatment is given to the subject in Widengren, *Die Mandäer, Handbuch der Orientalistik*, VII, 2, pp. 83-101, but the view taken in both works (viz., the Western origin of the Mandaeans) is identical.

Rudolph's sceptical opinion of the value of the so-called Haran Gawaita legend for the question of Mandaean connections with Parthia is founded on very subjective reasons, and therefore unacceptable to me. Cf. *Die Mandäer*, I, p. 55 f. On the other hand I agree with Macuch, *ThLZ* 1957, 401-408.

The encounter between Iranian religion in Parthian times and Semitic culture is treated by Widengren, *Iranisch-semitische Kulturbegegnung in parthischer Zeit*.

On Zervanism cf. on the one hand, Zaehner, *Zurvan. A Zoroastrian Dilemma* (Oxford 1955), on the other Widengren, *Stand und Aufgaben*, p. 88 *et seq.*

2 MANI'S LIFE

For Mani's life the standard modern work is Puech's detailed study, *Le manichéisme. Son fondateur - sa doctrine* (Paris 1949). Only in one or two particulars is it possible, with the material available, to take matters beyond this. Authority for the chronological link between Mani's journey to India and his audiences with Shāpur is to be found in Maricq's researches. The latter are of great importance for the chronology of the early Sassanian period as a whole. They put problems into perspective and support with sound reasoning (the account in *Syria* XXXV/1958 deserves special mention) the traditional chronology established by Nöldeke which has accordingly been adopted here.

The question of Mani's origin has been settled once and for all by Henning in *BSOAS* XI/1943, p. 52, Note 4.

For Mani's summons by the celestial Messenger, 'the Twin', cf. Widengren, *The Great Vohu Manah and the Apostle of God*, *UUA* 1945, 5, pp. 10-41. In regard to p. 25 of the text above, the ascetic way of life of the Magi should be borne in mind, cf. Clement, *Stromata*, III 6, 48, 3.

On the politico-religious situation during the reigns of Ardashir and Shāpur, cf. Wikander, *Feuerpriester in Kleinasien und Iran* (Lund 1946), especially pp. 125-191, and Widengren, *Stand und Aufgaben*, pp. 58-77, 137-145.

The technical significance of the term 'helpers' was misunderstood by Henning in *BSOAS* X/1942, p. 949 ('his friends').

It should be noted that the Kartēr mentioned on p. 39, the son of Artabanus who also is named in the Shāpur inscription, is not identical

with Mani's great foe as Henning, BSOAS X/1942, mistakenly assumed (an error taken over by Puech, *op. cit.*, p. 51). Sprengling, *op. cit.*, p. 41, corrected this slip.

The text M 47 seems to take it for granted that Mani was able to speak with the Sassanian prince Mihršāh in his own language.

3 MANI'S TEACHING (I)

Reference must again be made to Puech's authoritative study. An excellent and compressed description of Mani's system was given by Polotsky, *Manichaeism*, RE Suppl. Vol. VI, Cols. 241-272. I have tried to give sharper emphasis to the Iranian background and particularly the link with Zervanism.

The designation of the five spiritual qualities of God, the 'dwellings', was put together by Schaeder, SAS, p. 285, for Syriac and Greek.

For the dialogue given on p. 51 *et seq.* as well as Theodor bar Kōnāi's report as a whole the reader is referred to the sound German translation by Schaeder, SAS, pp. 342-347. The translation of the words *tā bašlām maytē / tēguraṭ šaynā wašlāmā* is discussed in Widengren, *Mesopotamian Elements*, p. 94 *et seq.*

The concept of the 'great *Nous*' was examined by Widengren in *The Great Vohu Manah*. The passage of the *Kephalaia* which contains the expression 'the great *Nous*' has been translated but not yet edited. Cf. Böhlig, *Wissenschaftl. Zeitschrift der Martin-Luther-Universität*, Halle-Wittenberg, V, No. 6/1956, p. 1083, *Kephalaia* CXXI. For the concept of the 'blend', cf. Nyberg, JA 1931, p. 29 *et seq.*

Respecting Artavazd in Armenian folk tradition, cf. Wikander, *Feuerpriester*, p. 99 *et seq.*

The Syriac name for the *splenditenens* had to await Polotsky's correct elucidation. The reading was generally *šefaṭ zīwā*. The difficulty lies in the rare occurrence of the verb *šft*, but resolves itself if it is accepted that in dialect *f* could be interchangeable with *b* and that *šāfet zīwā* corresponded to an Akkadian expression *šābit zīmi*. The Greek and Latin designations reflect the precise meaning. Cf., the discussion in Rosenthal, *Die aramaistische Forschung seit Theodor Nöldekes Veröffentlichungen* (Leyden 1939), p. 151. For earlier views, cf. Cumont *Recherches sur le manichéisme* (Brussels 1908-12), p. 22, Note 1 with comment by Kugener, and Burkitt, *The Religion of the Manichees* (Cambridge 1925), p. 28.

Respecting the Sphere and its possible Mesopotamian background, cf. Cumont, RHR LXXII/1915, pp. 384-388.

The ascension of the particles of light should be compared to the passage Kausītakī-Upanishad I 2.

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Respecting the notion of the passage of the souls along the Milky Way, cf. Cumont, *After-Life in Roman Paganism* (New Haven 1923), pp. 94, 104, 152 *et seq.*

A special study of the 'Seduction of the Archons' myth is to be found in Cumont, *Recherches*, pp. 54-68, and above all Benveniste, *MO* XXVI/1932-33.

Respecting the medical speculations relating to sperms and *pneuma*, cf. Olerud, *L'idée de Macrocosmos et de Microcosmos dans le Timé de Platon* (Uppsala 1951), pp. 58 *et seq.*, 92 *et seq.*, 97 *et seq.*, and Schumacher, *Antike Medizin*, I (Berlin 1940).

4 MANI'S TEACHINGS (2)

Puech has treated the Manichaean doctrine of redemption in a special study. For the concept of redemption in Manichaeism, *vide Eranos Jahrbuch* 1936, Zurich 1937, pp. 183-286.

For the name Namrā'el cf. the study by Furlani, *AANDL*, Ser. VIII, Vol. VI/1951, pp. 519-531.

The proper reading and interpretation of the name Ašqalun is still doubtful. At a purely formal level the name could be taken to be an 'aq'al formation from the stem *šql* with the derivative ending *-ōn*, which is fairly common in Syriac, resulting in *ašqalōn*, but that does not take one very far.

The apt characterization of humanity's origin is owing to Puech, *Le manichéisme*, p. 80.

Respecting the past-present-future formula, cf. Widengren, *ZRGG* IV/1952, p. 103. The *Rigveda* X 90, 2 attests its antiquity.

Respecting the term 'the rebels', cf. Widengren, *Mesopotamian Elements*, p. 42 *et seq.*, and *Muhammad, the Apostle of God*, UUA 1955, 1, pp. 162 and 164, by the same author.

The Mesopotamian background of Manichaeism was discussed in Widengren, *Mesopotamian Elements*. Something can now be added to the proof adduced there. It is not possible here to enter upon the arguments arising from this work.

Reitzenstein, *Vorchristliche Erlösungslehren*, KÅ 22/1922, p. 188 *et seq.*, mentioned the Indian parallel to the concept cited in the text on p. 62.

Respecting the 'gnostic' attitude in Indo-Iranian religion, cf. Widengren, *ZRGG* IV/1952, pp. 97-105.

The view taken by Polotsky as reflected on p. 63 of the text is to be found in Schmidt-Polotsky, *Ein Mani-Fund in Ägypten* (Berlin 1933), p. 71 *et seq.* It has recently been opposed by Colpe, *Die religionsgeschichtliche Schule* (Göttingen 1961), p. 105 *et seq.*

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Wikander, *Vayu I* (Lund 1941), p. 42 *et seq.*, has revealed the Indo-Iranian background to the eschatological images. His excellent exposition has been too much, indeed frequently totally, ignored. Cf. further what he has said *op. cit.*, p. 208 (and 212) on *ahrevar* (<*arera vairi*) M 104, in MirM III K 11. For Hadōxt Nask cf. Widengren OLZ 1963, cols. 536 *et seq.*

For *kunišn* as the designation of the heavenly maiden, cf. Y. 26: 4 Pahlavi translation, Bailey, *Zoroastrian Problems* (Oxford 1943), p. 115; Widengren, ZRGG IV/1952, p. 113. The concept of the Treasure is briefly treated by Widengren, *The Great Vohu Manah*, pp. 84-86.

The Ossetic tales of Batradz are to be found in Dumézil, *Légendes sur les Nartes* (Paris 1930), p. 51 *et seq.* The concepts of μεταγγισμός and Andrias deserve closer examination. Some useful observations are to be found in Foucher, *La vieille route de l'Inde*, II (Paris 1947), p. 293 *et seq.* Jackson's interpretation, JAOS 45/1925, predated the discovery of the latest material. In regard to p. 67, it should be noted that the text T.M. 180 has been edited by Le Coq, *Türkische Manichaica aus Chotscho*, II (Berlin 1919), p. 5 *et seq.*

Another name for 'the great war' is *vazurg kārēcār*, AZ XVI 35.

The term *rex magnus* is encountered in Bidez-Cumont, *Les mages hellénisés*, II (Paris 1938), p. 370 (Lactantius, Instit. VII 17, 11).

The expression *Apokatastasis* occurs in Epiphanius, *Panarion*, LXVI 31, 7.

In regard to the section astrology the reader is referred to Stegemann, ZNW XXXVII/1938, pp. 214-223. The inaccuracy of Mani's time calculation has been proved in Henning, *Ein manichäisches Henochbuch* (Berlin 1934), pp. 10, 34 *et seq.*

For the remarks on p. 73, cf. Foucher, *op. cit.*, p. 294, where he aptly says: '*Au temps de sa plus grande expansion, il était d'ailleurs inévitable que, demeuré plus mandéen en son centre, il prît dans son aile occidentale une tournure chrétienne plus caractérisée, tandis que son aile orientale adoptait une phraseologie plus voisine de celle du bouddhisme.*' Cf. also below, p. 158.

5 THE MANICHAEAN SCRIPT AND LITERATURE

Lidzbarski, *Warum schrieb Mani aramäisch?*, OLZ 1927, Cols. 913-917, gave it as his opinion that 'where he chose the Aramaic script of Babylon for his writings, he also employed the Aramaic language of Babylon' (Col. 914). On the other hand, it must be agreed with Burkitt that the papyrus fragments found in Egypt clearly demonstrate that Mani actually composed his writings in Syriac. The poetic fragments preserved in Theodor bar Kōnāi, about which Schaeder wrote a fascinating essay, *Ein Lied von Mani*, OLZ 1926, Cols. 104-107, point in the same direction. Nor is it possible to share the views propounded by Lidzbarski in his study, *Die*

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Herkunft der manichäischen Schrift, SBAW 1916, pp. 1213-1222, because there he links Mani's Aramaic script with Palmyra and seeks to rediscover points of accord between the Manichaean alphabet and the Palmyrene cursive hand. The closeness of identity between the Manichaean and Babylonian scripts is clearly demonstrated by the plate accompanying p. 26, Montgomery, *University of Pennsylvania, the Museum Journal*, III, 1912.

The whole problem of Mani's language has been treated in Rosenthal, *op. cit.*, pp. 207-211. His conclusion approximates very much to mine: 'In the light of prevailing conditions it is highly likely that Mani will have used an idiom grammatically (and certainly orthographically) nearer to the older language (and therefore also to Edessene Syriac) than were the eastern Aramaic vulgar tongues.' Nevertheless it remains possible that Mani did adopt from his earlier Mandaean period certain terms, such as *Bān rabbā*, *ṣāfeṭ zīwā*, and certain orthographical peculiarities. This is a point which cannot be discussed here.

The sole detailed account is still that of Alfarcic, *Les écritures manichéennes*, II (Paris 1919), a most excellent work in the light of the then available knowledge which must, however in the state of present knowledge undergo some revision.

For *Šāhbuhragān*, cf. Boyce, *A Catalogue of the Iranian Manuscripts in Manichaean Script in the German Turfan Collection* (Berlin 1906), p. 31, MS470.

For the Gospel, cf. Boyce, *op. cit.*, p. 3: MS17; 13: MS172 I; 44: MS644; 49: MS733; 109: MS5439.

For the *Treasure of Life*, cf. Boyce, *op. cit.*, p. 62: M 915.

For the *Pragmateia*, cf. the discussion in Schmidt-Polotsky, *Ein Mani-Fund in Ägypten*, p. 38, and Schaeder, *Gnomon* 9/1933, p. 347.

For *The Book of Mysteries*, cf. Schmidt-Polotsky, *op. cit.*, p. 38 *et seq.*, and Schaeder, *op. cit.*, p. 347.

For *The Book of the Giants*, cf. Henning, BSOAS XI/1943, pp. 52-74, where all available fragments have been collated and are discussed. In the Aramaic inscriptions from Hatra and Palmyra there occurs a name 'Ogā which it is tempting to associate with that of Ogia which is found in the *Book of the Giants*. Cf. also Widengren, *Iranische-semitische Kulturbegegnung in parthischer Zeit*, p. 45.

Prof. Böhlig has told me that it would appear that the majority of the surviving *Letters* have perished through circumstances connected with the Second World War. For the two hitherto unknown *Letters*, cf. Schmidt-Polotsky, *Ein Mani-Fund in Ägypten*, p. 39. For the Middle Iranian fragments of the *Letters*, cf. Boyce, *Catalogue*, p. 29: MS455; 46: MS677; 49: MS731, MS733; 54: MS801 a; 60: MS882; 69: MS1221, MS1313; 73: MS1524.

The catalogue of Mani's letters is to be found in the *Fihrist*.

For the Middle Iranian fragments, cf. Boyce, *Catalogue*, p. 2: MS3; 17: MS236; 19: MS270 a; 29: MS454 I (misprint); 37: MS523; 111: MS 5569; 118: MS 6031; 119: MS 6033.

The character of the *Kephalaia* is briefly discussed in Schmidt-Polotsky, *op. cit.*, pp. 17–23, and in greater detail in Böhlig, *Probleme des manichäischen Lehrvortrages* (Munich 1953).

For reports on the activity of Mani's closest disciples, cf. Boyce, *Catalogue*, the details given on p. 147 B. 12.

The *Xvāstvānēšt* has appeared in the standard edition and translation of the Turkish version, together with an excellent commentary, by Bang, *Muséon XXXVI/1923*, pp. 137–242. Cf. now also Asmussen *Xvāst vānēšt. Studies in Manichaeism* (Copenhagen 1965).

Sogdian fragments have been edited by Henning, *Sogdica* (London 1940), pp. 63–67.

The Chinese confessional prayer has been published by Waldschmidt, cf. Waldschmidt-Lentz, *Die Stellung Jesu im Manichäismus* (Berlin 1926), p. 123.

The confessional formulary for the elect has been edited, with translation and commentary, by Henning, *Ein manichäisches Bet- und Beichtbuch* (Berlin 1937).

With reference to the remarks on p. 83, I would like to say that as far as I am aware Henning was the first to conjecture that the *xvēštar* depicted in Illustration a, Plate 8b, of Le Coq, *Die Manichäischen Miniaturen* (Berlin 1923), is reading a confessional formulary. Cf. *Bet- und Beichtbuch*, p. 12.

For the section on hymnic literature Allberry, *A Manichaean Psalm-Book II* (Stuttgart 1938), is of importance and should be used particularly in conjunction with the epoch-making work of Sāve-Söderbergh, *Studies in the Coptic Manichaean Psalm-Book* (Uppsala 1949).

Baumstark has undertaken an analysis of the literary categories, cf. oc 36/1941, pp. 122–126. The remark quoted on p. 000 is to be found on p. 119.

Respecting the phonetic Chinese hymn, cf. Waldschmidt-Lenz, *op. cit.*, p. 12.

I have examined certain translation mistakes in *Mesopotamian Elements*, pp. 17, 20, 75, 106, and 125.

A bibliography of the *Zoroaster Fragment* is listed in Boyce, *The Manichaean Hymn-Cycles in Parthian* (Oxford 1954), p. 1, Note 6.

For the homiletic literature, cf. among others Bang, *Manichäische Erzähler*, *Muséon XLIV/1931*, pp. 1–36; Henning, *Sogdian Tales*, BSOAS XI/1945, pp. 465–487. Regarding the Turkish and Sogdian forms of Boddhisattva, cf. for example, Bang, *op. cit.*, p. 7.

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For the *Thomas Psalms*, cf. above all Säve-Söderbergh, *op. cit.*, pp. 85–154. In amplification it may be said that apparently the Mandaean term *Uthra* is everywhere to be found underlying the expression 'riches'. Cf., for example, Säve-Söderbergh, *op. cit.*, p. 91, corresponding to *Psalm-Book II*, p. 204, 7 *et seq.*, where 'his rich brethren' corresponds to 'his bretheren, the Uthras'.

The feudal terms in Mandaean and Manichaean literature are discussed by Widengren, *Iranisch-semitische Kulturbeggnung in parthischer Zeit*, p. 58 *et seq.*

6 THE ECCLESIASTICAL ORGANIZATION AND THE CULT

For the organization in general, cf. Baur, *Das manichäische Religionssystem* (reprint Göttingen 1928), pp. 264–272, 281–290.

For the five categories of believers, cf. Burkitt, *The Religion of the Manichees*, pp. 105–107.

Henning takes a somewhat different view, *Asia Major III*/1952, cf. below, p. 157.

The head of the Manichaean church in Iranian communities was called *sārār* (in Parth. *sardār*). Cf. MirM II, p. 36, Note 1.

For the nourishment of the *electi*, cf. also Allberry, *znw XXXVII*/1938, p. 7 *et seq.*, who surmises in this instance a sacrament.

For this topic cf. the view taken by Baur, *op. cit.*, pp. 273–279; Puech, *Histoire générale des religions*, 3, pp. 111 *et seq.*; Schaefer, *Iranica* (Göttingen 1934), pp. 19–34; and especially Puech, *Le Manichéisme*, p. 180 *et seq.*, Notes 363–364.

For the connection between the ascent of the soul, the purification in holy water, and the entry into the bridal-chamber, cf. Widengren, *Mesopotamian Elements*, pp. 109–122; *ROB V*/1946, pp. 37 *et seq.*, 49 *et seq.*, 51, 54 *et seq.*

Respecting the unpublished Chapter CXLIV of the *Kephalaia*, cf. Böhlig's note to Puech in *Le manichéisme*, p. 183, Note 366.

Cf. in this connection particularly Allberry, *Das manichäische Bema-Fest*, *znw XXXVII*/1938, pp. 2–10. The quotation in the text on p. 104 is to be found there on p. 8.

For the Manichaean communion, cf. also Baur, *op. cit.*, p. 280 *et seq.*

For the concept of Christ and Mani as the 'Tree of Life', cf. Widengren, *Mesopotamian Elements*, p. 124 *et seq.*

The baptismal terminology, *'aqim*, *qayyem*, and *στηρίζειν*, is discussed

by among others Widengren, *ROB V/1946*, p. 45 *et seq.*, and in *Mesopotamian Elements*, p. 123 *et seq.*, Segelberg, *Maṣbūtā* (Uppsala 1958), pp. 152–154, and Rudolph, *Die Mandäer II*, p. 95 (not altogether convincingly, in my opinion). No effort has yet been made to work out correspondence of it on the mythic-ritual plane. The suggestions here should really be taken further. It may be added that the ‘drawing up’ was a phrase, *avištād hēm*, encountered in Middle Iranian tradition too, cf. *HR II*, p. 53 (M 4).

7 MANICHAEAN ART

The first section is based on Le Coq, *Die manichäischen Miniaturen*, p. 13 *et seq.*, plus the amplifications listed here.

The Mandaean *Divān Abātūr* has been edited and translated by Lady Drower, *Diwan Abatur or Progress through the Purgatories* (Città del Vaticano 1951).

Respecting the illustration of gnostic writings, cf. Alfarcic, *Les écritures manichéennes*, I, p. 23.

Details of the illustrated Hellenistic and Judaic-Hellenistic manuscripts are to be found in Weitzmann, *Illustrations in Roll and Codex* (Princeton 1947), *Münchener Jahrbuch für bildende Kunst*, 3rd Series, Vols. III–IV/1952–53, pp. 96–103, and *Ancient Book Illustrations* (Harvard University Press 1959).

The problem of Manichaean book-painting in relation to contemporary book-painting has hitherto been neglected. The discussions in the text require, of course, to be expanded.

The concept of Mani as the prophet descended from heaven is treated by Widengren in *Muhammad, the Apostle of God*, p. 83 *et seq.*, and *Iranische-semitische Kulturbegegnung in parthischer Zeit*, p. 64.

Lacking personal knowledge of the Manichaean manuscripts, which have not so far been accessible to me, I have simply followed Le Coq, *op. cit.*, p. 15 *et seq.*

It calls for notice that both the *Shāhnāmāh* and the *Song of the Pearl* mention silk as writing material.

In general cf. Le Coq, *op. cit.*, pp. 34–36.

For the painting from Bāzākik, cf. Hackin, *RAA IX/1955*, pp. 138–142 with Plates XXXIV, XLV.

Regarding the style of Manichaean painting it should be said that the ever-recurrent and highly characteristic floral ornamentation clearly belongs to early Sassanian, possibly Parthian art. Not only is it to be found as the principal theme of decoration on Sassanian ewers and basins, but also on a representation of the adoration of the Magi which, whilst under

Iranian stylistic influence, appears to be of Parthian ancestry. Cf. on the one hand Cumont, *L'adoration des Mages et l'art triomphal de Rome* (*Memorie della pontif. accad. romana di archeologia*, Ser. III, Vol. III/1932-33, Plate IX 2-3, with Cumont's analysis in the text), on the other hand Widengren, *Iranisch-semitische Kulturbegegnung in parthischer Zeit*, p. 70, Note 246 (the illustration Fig. 33 lacks the side with the floral ornamentation). Investigations of this kind into style and theme do not, as far as I am aware, exist at all as yet.

The quotation on p. 115 is to be found in Le Coq, *op. cit.*, p. 36.

Arnold, *Survivals of Sassanian and Manichaean Art in Persian Painting* (Oxford 1924), pp. 14-23, made a start on a very fascinating problem that could also be approached from the angle of studies in style such as, for example, the way in which lute-players are represented in Manichaean and Persian-Islamic art respectively. The influence of the Manichees on the development of Islamic book-painting generally has been emphasized in Kühnel, *Miniaturmalerei im islamischen Orient* (Berlin 1923), p. 18.

8 THE SPREAD OF MANICHAISM

New discoveries have outdated the monograph by De Stoop, *Essai sur la diffusion du manichéisme dans l'empire romain* (Ghent 1909). The studies cited here serve to supplement it.

Seston, *Mélanges de philologie, de littérature et d'histoire anciennes offerts à Alfred Ernout* (Paris 1940), pp. 345-354, deals with the authenticity and the background to Diocletian's edict. The same scholar has given attention to the relations between the Manichees, the Great King Narses, and the Arabian prince 'Amr, cf. *Mélanges syriens offerts à M. René Dussaud* (Paris 1939), pp. 227-234. The problem posed by the fact of Narses being a persecutor of the Manichees seems either not to have been taken seriously or not to have been realized. In this connection there is an interesting passage reflective of 'Amr's go-between part in the Coptic surviving documents, cf. Schmidt-Polotsky, *op. cit.*, p. 28. Vergote, *Jaarbericht Ex Oriente Lux*, III 9-10/1952, pp. 74-83, deals summarily with the subject of the Manichees in Egypt.

Burkitt, *op. cit.*, pp. 8-10, has emphasized the significance of the Palestinian episode from the year 375. *The Life of Porphyrius of Gaza* is accessible in the edition of Grégoire-Kugener. Cf., Marcus Diaconus, *Vie de Porphyre* (Paris 1930).

On the attitude of Augustine in relation to Manichaean polemics, cf. Alfarc, *L'évolution intellectuelle de Saint Augustin* (Paris 1919), pp. 193-213, 507-513, and *Les écritures manichéennes*, II, pp. 161-169.

The most important representative of Manichaeism inside the Roman

empire was Faustus (cf. pp. 43, 125) who has in general been underestimated as a personality. Cf. Bruckner, *Faustus von Mileve* (Basle 1901), which contains a good summary of Manichaean arguments. Bruckner for his part overestimates Faustus' originality.

The history of Manichaeism in the early Abbasid period has been described by Vajda, cf. RSO 17/1938, pp. 173-229, with a wealth of detail. The proper etymology of *zindiq* was provided by Schaefer, *Iranische Beiträge* (Königsberg 1930), pp. 274-276, and in *Schriften der Königsberger Gelehrten Gesellschaft*, 6th annual edition, No. 5, pp. 288-90. Ibn al-Muqaffa' is mentioned by Mas'udi, Murūḡ VIII, p. 293, together with others as a translator of works by Mani, Bardesanes, and Marcion.

For Manichaean-Muslim polemics, cf. Nyberg, OLZ, 1929, Cols. 425-441, and a very useful discussion by Guidi, *La lotta tra l'Islam e il Manicheismo* (Rome 1927), where the relevant texts have been edited and translated.

The report of *Shahrastāni* has been edited by Cureton, *Book of Religious and Philosophical Sects* (reprint Leipzig 1923). There is a translation by Haarbrücker, *Religionspartheien und Philosophenschulen* (Halle 1850), I, pp. 285-288, which is, however, somewhat outdated in parts.

Manichaean theories of embryology are to be found in Mas'ūdī *Murūḡ al-ḡahab*, III, pp. 435 *et seq.*, in the edition by Pavet de Courteille and Barbier de Meynard. The passage in the *Bundahišn*, ed. Anklesaria, p. 16, should be compared with this. A translation by me is available in Olerud, *L'idée de macrocosmos*, p. 130 *et seq.*, and in *Iranische Geisteswelt*, p. 66 *et seq.*, as well as by Zachner, *Zurvan. A Zoroastrian Dilemma* (Oxford 1955), p. 318.

Vajda, *op. cit.*, remarks in regard to the name *taḡraḡ* (cf. p. 131) that this is very unlikely to be a water-fowl, but much more probably a partridge. Dr Mundri-Zādeh draws my attention to New Pers. *turang*.

Colpe, ZDMG 109/1959, pp. 82-91, deals with *Die Anpassung des Manichäismus an den Islam* (*Abū 'Isā al-Warrāq*).

The history of Manichaeism in China has been described by Chavannes and Pelliot, *Un traité manichéen retrouvé en Chine*, JA 1913, pp. 99-199, 261-394, where there is a wealth of detail available.

A short, popular review is contained in Schaefer, *Der Manichäismus und sein Weg nach Osten, Glaube und Geschichte, Festschrift für Friedrich Gogarten*, pp. 1-19 (of the separate reprint).

The great Chinese treatise has been edited and translated with a commentary by Chavannes and Pelliot, *Un traité manichéen retrouvé en Chine*, JA 1911, pp. 499-617.

The great hymnal roll was partly edited by Waldschmidt and Lenz, *Die Stellung Jesu im Manichäismus* and completely translated by Tsui Chi in BSOAS XI/1943-1946, pp. 174-219.

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To this must be added the Sogdian Fragment Stein – cf. the review by Puech in *Actes du XX^e Congrès International des Orientalistes* (Paris 1950), pp. 350–354. An edited version was issued by Henning and Haloun, *Compendium of the Doctrines and Styles of the Teaching of Mani, the Buddha of Light, Asia Major*, N.S. III 2/1952, pp. 184–212.

For the conditions in the kingdom founded by the Uigur tribe we now possess an excellent monograph, A. von Gabain, *Das uigurische Königreich von Chotscho*, Berlin 1961. Here above all various aspects of this civilization are given due attention.

9 MANI AS PERSONALITY

The sketch given here differs to a considerable extent from the picture drawn by Jackson, *The Personality of Mani*, JAOS 58/1938, pp. 233–240.

Schaeder put his question in *Urform und Fortbildungen des manichäischen Systems* (reprint from Warburg Library Lectures, IV/1924–25, Leipzig 1927), p. 121.

Puech's apt aphorism is to be found in *Le manichéisme*, p. 73, where he says: '*Malgré toutes ses ambitions, dans le Manichéisme comme dans tout gnosticisme, cette science que se croit pure Raison se résout en mythes.*'

Puech's view cited on p. 138 is to be read in *Le manichéisme*, p. 69. My own, as set down here, renders it impossible for me to accept the theory put forward by Schaeder in *Urform und Fortbildungen des manichäischen Systems*. Here he largely adopted Burkitt's postulate in *The Religion of the Manichees* and basically regarded Mani as a Christian gnostic, even going so far as to maintain that his system 'displays a positive Christology of peculiar beauty' (*sic*) 'and depth' (*sic*), *ibid.* p. 151. No doubt but that the Christology is indeed peculiar; whether it strikes one as beautiful and deep is presumably a matter of subjective judgment and does not depend on academic considerations.

At the same time Schaeder, *ibid.*, p. 118, took the line that the entire arrangement of Mani's propositions 'presupposes familiarity with the Greek manner of thought and with Greek learning'. That is why on p. 157 he gave first of all 'the Hellenistic concepts at the root of the system' and followed these up with what he called extensions, these including the Syriac and Middle Iranian terms for basic ideas. This resulted in the paradoxical situation, evidently not noticed by Schaeder, that the concepts and names used by Mani himself in his writings were labelled extensions (*Fortbildungen*) whilst Greek ideas of which he *never* made use and which do not form a part of his language were called their original form (*Urform*). It is an odd misconstruction of the facts.

There is no question but that in the last period of his life Mani was to

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some degree influenced by Christianity and that Jesus came then to mean more to him than his other precursors (cf. above, p. 37), but this partiality for the Christian complexion was conditioned mainly by missionary considerations. How entirely different Mani was from Christ and Christianity is probably plain from the present account. An exaggeration of the significance for Mani's system of Jesus is also encountered in Waldschmidt-Lenz, *op. cit.* A contrast is provided by Peterson, *ThLZ* 1928, Col. 246: 'For this redeemer necessarily to bear the name "Jesus" is not a point comprised in the structure of the Manichaean system. But in the history of religion it is in this instance the system alone, and not the name which has been arbitrarily attached and could just as well . . . be replaced by others, that is of importance.'

Böhlig, in *Christliche Wurzeln im Manichäismus*, *Bulletin de la Société d'Archéologie Copte*, XV/1960, pp. 41.61, is much more cautious in his estimate of Christian elements. Yet it does not seem, nor indeed is it essential to his theme, that the basic Iranian structure has been taken into account, for the facts mentioned in the present work are nowhere heeded. Peterson's challenge holds good, however, in part for Böhlig too. In Manichaeism Jesus could just as well have had another name.

I have pointed out on p. 72 that Iran was bordered by the Western and Eastern worlds. Consequently the Mesopotamian-Iranian shape of the system was its original form whereas the Christian and Buddhist versions of Manichaeism were its respective extensions.

ABBREVIATIONS

AANDL	—	<i>Annali dell' Accademia Nazionale dei Lincei</i>
AGF	—	<i>Arbeitsgemeinschaft für Forschung des Landes Nordrhein-Westfalen</i>
AO	—	<i>Der alte Orient</i>
AZ	—	<i>Ayātkār i Zāmāspik</i>
BSOAS	—	Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies
CRAIB	—	<i>Comptes rendus de l'Académie des Inscriptions et Belles Lettres</i>
JA	—	<i>Journal Asiatique</i>
JAOS	—	Journal of the American and Oriental Society
KÅ	—	<i>Kyrkohistorisk Årsskrift</i>
MO	—	<i>Le Monde oriental</i>
OC	—	<i>Oriens Christianus</i>
OLZ	—	<i>Orientalische Literaturzeitung</i>
RAA	—	<i>Revue des arts asiatiques</i>
RE	—	<i>Realencyklopädie der klassischen Altertumswissenschaft</i>
RHR	—	<i>Revue de l'histoire des religions</i>
ROB	—	<i>Religion och Bibel</i>
RSO	—	<i>Rivista degli studi orientali</i>
SAS	—	<i>Studien zum antiken Synkretismus aus Iran und Griechenland von Reitzenstein und Schaeder</i>
SBAW	—	<i>Sitzungsberichte der Berliner Akademie der Wissenschaften</i>
ThLZ	—	<i>Theologische Literaturzeitung</i>
UUA	—	<i>Uppsala Universitets Årsskrift</i>
VT	—	<i>Vetus Testamentum</i>
ZDMG	—	<i>Zeitschrift der deutschen morgenländischen Gesellschaft</i>
ZKG	—	<i>Zeitschrift für Kirchengeschichte</i>
ZNW	—	<i>Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft</i>
ZRGG	—	<i>Zeitschrift für Religions- und Geistesgeschichte</i>

The Middle Iranian texts are quoted in accordance with the old signs. A review of the new ones is to be found in Boyce, *A Catalogue* (cf. above, p. 151, 2a).

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