

Nag Hammadi and Manichaean Studies 87

# Mani at the Court of the Persian Kings

*Studies on the Chester Beatty*

*Kephalaia Codex*

By

Iain Gardner, Jason BeDuhn

and Paul Dilley

BRILL

## Mani at the Court of the Persian Kings

# Nag Hammadi and Manichaean Studies

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LEIDEN | BOSTON

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Gardner, Iain.

Mani at the court of the Persian kings : studies on the Chester Beatty Kephalaia Codex / by Iain Gardner, Jason BeDuhn, Paul Dilley.

pages cm. – (Nag hammadi and manichaeen studies ; v. 87)

Includes bibliographical references and index.

ISBN 978-90-04-23470-3 (hardback : alk. paper) – ISBN 978-90-04-28262-9 (e-book)

1. Mani, active 3rd century. 2. Kephalaia. 3. Manichaeism. I. BeDuhn, Jason. II. Dilley, Paul. III. Title.

BT1410.G37 2015

299'.932–dc23

2014032759

This publication has been typeset in the multilingual “Brill” typeface. With over 5,100 characters covering Latin, IPA, Greek, and Cyrillic, this typeface is especially suitable for use in the humanities. For more information, please see [www.brill.com/brill-typeface](http://www.brill.com/brill-typeface).

ISSN 0929-2470

ISBN 978-90-04-23470-3 (hardback)

ISBN 978-90-04-28262-9 (e-book)

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This book is printed on acid-free paper.

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## Preface

This volume represents the first fruits of a major and laborious project to edit and translate the Chester Beatty *Kephalaia*, a Coptic codex discovered more than eighty years ago, but neglected until now due to the readily evident challenges of the poor condition in which it was found. The project was initiated by the authors of this volume in 2008 with a determination to work as quickly as possible to reconstruct an accurate, if necessarily provisional text, using the full range of modern papyrological tools and techniques, and make it available for the benefit of research at the earliest possible date. That goal is within reach in the next few years. This volume offers a substantial introduction to the codex and to some of the potential significance of its content for future scholarship in a number of fields. It is our intention and hope that interested researchers will take inspiration from the following pages, and begin planning how to incorporate the *Kephalaia* into their future projects when it becomes available.

Despite surface appearances, this project is not the work of a team of three; its successful outcome is the work of a team of dozens. We have been unbelievably fortunate to be aided and surrounded by gifted individuals, all expert in their own work, and enthusiastic about ours. Over the entire course of the project, the staff of the Chester Beatty Library have been extraordinarily understanding and helpful, beginning with two successive Directors, Dr. Michael Ryan and Dr. Fionnuala Croke, and Charles Horton, Curator of the Western Collection (retired), and extending to librarians Celine Ward and Hyder Abbas, curatorial assistant Elizabeth Omidvaran, and conservator Jessica Baldwin, as well as the many others who have assisted at one time or another, from the conservation lab to the photography room, from handling the glassed leaves to archival research. Our imaging team of Daniel Boone and Ryan Belnap, of the Northern Arizona University IDEA Lab, provided skills of the most essential kind, enabling us to read the potentially unreadable in the manuscript. The planning and coordination of their multi-spectral imaging of the codex benefited from the management of the IDEA Lab's Director, Marcelle Coder. For consultation on various aspects of the project, we would like to give special thanks to Wolf-Peter Funk of the Université Laval, and to acknowledge the kind assistance of John Gee of Brigham Young University.

The project has been blessed from the start by the generous support of many institutions and individuals. Foremost among this support have been major grants from the Australian Research Council and the United States National Endowment for the Humanities, without which the project would have been impossible. Iain Gardner would like to express gratitude to the School of Let-



ters, Art and Media, and the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences, at the University of Sydney for enabling dedicated research time and use of its facilities, as well as to the Ancient World Mapping Center for the map used in this volume. Jason BeDuhn would like to acknowledge the generosity of the Goheen Fellowship of the National Humanities Center, and the many individual acts of support and kindness from the staff of the NHC. For their part in enabling his work, he would also like to thank the Northern Arizona University Intramural Grants Program, Dean Michael Vincent of the College of Arts and Letters, and Alexandra Carpino, Chair of the Department of Comparative Cultural Studies. Paul Dilley wishes to thank the American Philosophical Society, the Alexander von Humboldt Stiftung, and the University of Iowa Arts and Humanities Initiative for their support of his work on the project.

Lastly, we would like to extend warm gratitude to the city of Dublin and to the Republic of Ireland for making the setting of our labors over the last six years so lovely and hospitable.

*Iain Gardner, Jason BeDuhn, Paul Dilley*  
Dublin, June 2014

# Abbreviations

1 Ke	<i>Kephalaia</i> vol. 1: “Kephalaia of the Teacher” (eds. Polotsky 1940/Böhlig 1940 and 1966/Funk 1999 and 2000)
2 Ke	<i>Kephalaia</i> vol. 2: “Kephalaia of the Wisdom of My Lord Mani” (eds. Gardner, BeDuhn, and Dilley, in progress)
2 Ps	<i>Psalm-Book</i> part 2 (eds. Allberry 1938/Richter 1996/Wurst 1996)
AMS	<i>Acta Martyrum et Sanctorum</i> (ed. Bedjan 1890–1897)
BSOAS	<i>Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies</i>
CMC	<i>Cologne Mani Codex</i> (eds. Koenen and Römer 1988)
EIr	<i>Encyclopaedia Iranica</i>
GCS	Die griechischen christlichen Schriftsteller der ersten Jahrhunderte
Hom	<i>Homilies</i> (eds. Polotsky 1934/Pedersen 2006)
HTR	<i>Harvard Theological Review</i>
JECS	<i>Journal of Early Christian Studies</i>
JRAS	<i>Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society</i>
K	Kephalaion (chapter numbers in 1 Ke and 2 Ke)
NHMS	<i>Nag Hammadi and Manichaean Studies</i>
P. Kellis VI	<i>Kellis Literary Texts</i> , vol. 2 (ed. Gardner 2007)
SC	Sources Chrétiennes



# An Introduction to the Chester Beatty *Kephalaia* Codex

*Iain Gardner*

In this volume the reader will find a series of essays occasioned by our (the editors) efforts to make sense of what remains from an ancient book with the title: *The Chapters of the Wisdom of My Lord Manichaios*. This codex now belongs to the Chester Beatty Library in Dublin, and as the editorial team we have the honour and privilege of being the first persons to read its contents since late antiquity. This is because the codex is the unique surviving copy of a work otherwise lost, which circulated amongst followers of a once-famous religious preacher, healer and visionary; an historical figure of the third century C.E. whom the devotees termed ‘apostle’, ‘enlightener’, ‘father’ and ‘master’. Mani, (this is the usual form of his name employed in modern studies), lived during the early years of the Sasanian dynasty; and his followers (‘Manichaeans’) ascribed to him divine wisdom and knowledge of all things. They were eager to demonstrate the superiority of Mani’s teachings, the recognition of his mastery by others, and in particular the success he enjoyed amongst religious sages of the time, nobles at court, and even the ‘king of kings’ himself. Since this context is a particularly striking feature of the narrative, we have given this volume the title: *Mani at the Court of the Persian Kings*.

The word translated as *Chapters* in the codex title is a Greek term, κεφάλαια. In what follows we will generally refer to this book as the ‘Chester Beatty *Kephalaia*’; this is because many different works circulated in the ancient world under variations of the name. The word has the following connotations: ‘headers’, ‘principal points’, ‘summaries’, ‘topics’, and ‘chapters’. As a literary genre it was popular, and the Manichaeans appropriated it and made it one of their characteristic formats for recording and circulating the teachings of Mani. Thus, this was not the only volume of *Kephalaia* produced by that community; but the contents of our codex are, for the most part, not found elsewhere amongst the surviving Manichaean literature. In the following essays we will discuss these matters of genre, the question of literary parallels and the development of the text found in the Chester Beatty codex. This introduction will itself focus on a brief history of the codex since its discovery, the objectives and procedures of our research project, and the general purpose of this present volume of essays.

The Chester Beatty *Kephalaia* represents one codex amongst seven that are commonly attributed to the 'Medinet Madi library'. This famous discovery, which contains some of the largest books ever recovered from the ancient world, was announced to scholarship by C.G. Schmidt and H.J. Polotsky in 1933.<sup>1</sup> It seems that the codices (see further below), all written in Coptic on papyrus, had already been broken up before they were offered for sale on the antiquities market. The first sighting of material belonging to the find is now ascribed to the Danish Egyptologist H.O. Lange, who was in Cairo during November 1929. However, it was Schmidt in 1930, whilst on his way to Palestine to collect manuscripts for the Prussian Academy, who first suggested a connection between these ancient books and the Manichaeans.

News of the discovery was immediately communicated to a renowned scholar, Adolf von Harnack, in Germany; but, before adequate funds could be organised for purchase of the codices, part of the find was acquired by the Irish-American philanthropist and book collector A. Chester Beatty. His famous collection of classical and biblical manuscripts was housed in London; but then in the 1950s transferred to Dublin, at first to a site on Shrewsbury Road. The present library is a fine building at Dublin Castle, and the collection is one of the premier attractions of the city. Meanwhile, it was arranged for Schmidt to purchase the remainder of the codices with financial aid from the Stuttgart publishing company Kohlhammer, who would proceed to publish the text editions, and they were shipped to Berlin.

The entire collection appears to have comprised seven codices,<sup>2</sup> and is now preserved part in Dublin and part in Berlin. A few leaves are known to be in Vienna and Warsaw, some may possibly be in Russia (if so, it has never been publicly acknowledged). In Berlin are found the majority of: *The Chapters of the Teacher* (a small section was purchased by A. Grohmann and taken to Vienna); *The Epistles of Mani* (other than remnants in Berlin and a few leaves that are now in Warsaw, the greater portion appears to have been lost in the aftermath of the second world war); and a history of the church, which we here term the *Acts* (one leaf is in Dublin). In Dublin: *The Psalm-Book*, together with an index; a collection of *Homilies* (part probably went to Berlin, but is now lost); *The Synaxeis of the Living Gospel*; and *The Chapters of the Wisdom of my Lord*

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1 Schmidt and Polotsky, 1933. Reviews of the work can be tracked in Mikkelsen 1997 (no. 2652).

2 In fact, this is one of the many aspects of the discovery which (though commonly repeated) remains unsubstantiated. Schmidt was told that the find originally consisted of eight parts shared amongst the antique dealers, and then further broken up for greater profit.

*Manichaïos* (a few of the final leaves are in Berlin). Our concern here is with the last of these, which was termed Chester Beatty 'Codex C'.

It must be emphasised that any apparently straightforward summary obscures crucial complications. For a start, the different codices no longer exist as whole productions, i.e. 'books' in the conventional sense. Various sections, indeed individual leaves, have been repeatedly moved, reorganised and even reclassified, for a variety of purposes. This process seems to have been begun even before the find arrived in Cairo, as different players in the murky antiquities business sought to maximise their profits. Then there was the lengthy process of conservation by Hugo and Rolf Ibscher, which continued for several decades from the 1930s (and indeed has never been completed as significant sections remain either unconserved to the present day or were lost / destroyed before conservation). There were further transfers and reordering in the 1980s whilst S. Giversen sought to organise his facsimile edition of the Chester Beatty codices,<sup>3</sup> and was permitted to take conserved pages under glass to Copenhagen for study. But the great tragedies occurred during the second world war. Despite attempts to safeguard the codices held in Berlin, some parts were apparently seized as 'spoils of war' by Soviet forces and transported east, or destroyed during military action.

The best general published account of the codices and their remarkable history is that of J. Robinson;<sup>4</sup> but important details of the story remain unclear, with significant sections of the 'library' probably permanently lost or destroyed. There are major problems in terms of reconstructing the codices to their original formats, even when leaves have been conserved and glassed, and where inventory records exist. Just for example, there is no record of the original size of the *Epistles* codex; but it must have been substantial, perhaps several hundred pages in length by comparison to others in the 'library'. Now, only a few disordered leaves remain in the Berlin state museum system (Berlin P. 15998); three more in the Warsaw National Museum; and a further one apparently in private hands in Poland. Brief transcripts by Polotsky from the 1930s exist, pointing to leaves that can no longer be found. These are the paltry remains of a find of great significance; but, fortunately, there is much more to say about the Chester Beatty *Kephalaia* codex.

It has generally been presumed that the Coptic codices themselves date from about 400 C.E., and that they contained translations of texts originally written in Syriac / Aramaic. Some of the texts purport to have been authored by Mani

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3 Four volumes: Giversen 1986, 1988.

4 Robinson 1992. See also Gardner and Lieu 1996 for a broad summary.

himself, as with the canonical *Epistles*; or otherwise were written during the first generations of the church, i.e. from the late third through the early fourth century. They are all written in a form of Coptic known as sub-Achmimic or Lycopolitan (specifically dialect L4); and thus may not have originated from their purported find site of Medinet Madi in the Fayoum (Faiyūm), but perhaps from the region of Assiut (Asyūt, ancient Lycopolis) in upper Egypt. Indeed, many details of the conventional ‘snap-shot’ are open to question, or at least unsubstantiated. These matters include such crucial issues as: The date/s of the codices;<sup>5</sup> the original language/s and processes of translation (thus the question of a Greek vorlage has been much debated); the find site; the extent and context for the so-called ‘library’.

The first years after the ‘discovery’ of the codices saw rapid progress in the preparation of scholarly editions. The first to appear was H.J. Polotsky’s edition of the Chester Beatty *Homilies* in 1934,<sup>6</sup> followed by C.R.C. Allberry’s ‘Part II’ of the *Psalm-Book* in 1938.<sup>7</sup> Meanwhile, fascicles of *The Chapters of the Teacher* (from Berlin), edited by Polotsky and A. Böhlig, had begun to appear, with ‘1. Hälfte’ completed by 1940.<sup>8</sup> However, due in good part to the various disasters of the second world war,<sup>9</sup> no editions of any of the remaining four codices have ever appeared.<sup>10</sup>

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5 Our project has pursued this matter in considerable detail, and in 2013 succeeded in obtaining multiple and consistent radiocarbon dates that appear to confirm production *circa* the first decades of the fifth century C.E. This important finding, together with further detailed research into the modern history of the codices, was announced to the quadrennial meeting of the International Association of Manichaean Studies in London, September 2013; see BeDuhn and Hodgins (forthcoming). Nevertheless, certain questions about the relative dates of the individual codices within the find remain undetermined. It is possible that the supposed ‘library’ contained works that were produced over a period of (say) a century.

6 Polotsky 1934. See now Pedersen 2006.

7 Allberry 1938. ‘Part I’ remained unpublished in 2013, although an edition with German translation is well advanced by the team of S. Richter, G. Wurst et al.

8 Polotsky and Böhlig 1940 (pp. 1–102 were edited by Polotsky, pp. 103–244 by Böhlig). The ‘Zweite Hälfte’ remains in progress. Böhlig published pp. 244–291 in 1966; then W.-P. Funk pp. 291–366 in 1999 and pp. 366–440 in 2000. Funk is near completion of the codex, and intends to publish the final sections, together with a complete index to the work and substantial ‘Addenda et Corrigenda’, in the near future.

9 Apart from the disruption and loss of substantial parts of the Berlin codices, one must mention the death of Allberry in the war and the departure of Polotsky to Israel.

10 W.-P. Funk has coordinated work on the remains of those three codices held primarily in Berlin. The most advanced edition is that of the *Epistles* (by Funk and I. Gardner). Tran-

It was Hugo Ibscher who, in the 1930s, first succeeded in restoring a number of pages of what he called Codex C, probably thirty-four, before giving up because of an apparently inseparable book block, topped off with poorly preserved text. It seems that he did not work on the manuscript again before his death in 1943. During the second world war Codex C was stored in a safe at the Zoologischer Garten train station in Berlin. Then in 1944 Hugo's son Rolf Ibscher moved it and other manuscripts to the house of his father-in-law in Bavaria. After the war, Rolf Ibscher contacted Chester Beatty, who hired him to resume the conservation of the manuscripts during a series of trips to London. In 1951 he started to work on the Codex C, and made progress on the book block by adopting a new conservation technique. By 1954 R. Ibscher had succeeded in finishing his work on the book block, conserving 140 sheets.

In 1986 S. Giversen published a facsimile edition of the Chester Beatty *Kephalaia* codex. Although this publication provided no transcripts, and left many of the codicological problems unsolved; nevertheless, the simple opportunity to view and attempt to read from the plates of the manuscript led to a renewed if modest interest in this substantial and unique codex. Remarkably, it had been almost entirely ignored (other than the efforts of the Ibschers) ever since the initial reports of the find over fifty years earlier. A number of articles appeared over the following decades, with occasional transcripts and discussions of short passages.<sup>11</sup> A particular interest was the question of the relationship between this codex and the other one in Berlin, also entitled *Kephalaia* (i.e. *The Chapters of the Teacher*) and much better known, that had been partially edited and published by Polotsky and Böhlig. Indeed, as W.-P. Funk began the laborious task of completing the edition of the Berlin *Kephalaia*, he also worked intermittently on the Chester Beatty codex. Funk's efforts to reconstruct the codicology

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scripts of parts of the *Acts* and *Synaxeis* codices have been circulated privately to interested scholars, and some information made public in conference papers and elsewhere; e.g. King 1992. A proposal to edit the Chester Beatty *Kephalaia* codex was announced in the 1980s by the 'International Committee for the Publication of the Manichaean Coptic Papyri Belonging to the Chester Beatty Library', directed by S. Giversen, R. Kasser and M. Krause. See Kasser 1992. However, it is apparent that no work proceeded on Codex C.

11 Of particular note are the following: Böhlig 1989, 1992; Funk 2002; Gardner 2005; G. Gnoli 1990; Sundermann 1992(b); Tardieu 1988, 1991. In the writings of Gnoli and Tardieu can be found variations on a thesis that the Chester Beatty codex represents an eastern or Iranian tradition of the oral teaching of Mani, to be associated with the influence of the apostle's disciple Mar Ammo; in contrast to the Berlin codex which is supposedly more western and perhaps to be associated with Mar Addā.



of the latter manuscript, and to understand its relationship to the former, have been especially valuable for our own project.<sup>12</sup>

I have been interested in Codex C and the possibilities of an edition since the start of the 1980s, when in fact I first visited the Chester Beatty Library and looked briefly at the glassed frames of Medinet Madi papyri. However, the sheer mass of destroyed fibre, blurred text and disordered remains of pages promoted caution rather than valour. The genesis of our project to edit the codex did not occur until 2005. It was during the 6th International Congress on Manichaean Studies, held in Flagstaff in Arizona, that Jason BeDuhn and myself first seriously considered the logistics of putting together an efficient, tightly-scheduled project for retrieving as much as might be possible from the badly damaged codex. We made inquiries as to the existence and status of any other work being actively done on it; and, when we had satisfied ourselves that the way was open and we would not be intruding upon anyone else's effort, we decided to proceed. We consulted with representatives of international editorial teams working on the other Medinet Madi codices, reviewing with them the status of their efforts and the challenges they faced. We inquired with W.-P. Funk about his preliminary studies of the codex, and any wish on his part to lead this new project; he declined due to his many other commitments, and very graciously made available to us his own preliminary readings and codicological research. As we began to look at technical aspects of the work, we conferred with John Gee of Brigham Young University, who had performed tests of specialised photography on the Medinet Madi codices in the Chester Beatty Library in 2003. As a result of all these careful explorations, we decided in 2007 to proceed with the project, and developed our plan to publish an edition and translation of the codex.

From the start, we have regarded efficient completion of the project as a core objective. Progress in editing the Medinet Madi texts has been extremely slow since that first decade, the 1930s; although often due to entirely understandable and sometimes tragic reasons. Still, we think it essential that this not be another unfulfilled endeavour. One point about this must be made clear. Whilst we always strive to the very highest scholarly standards, we have decided that our work has to be made available to the wider community at the first reasonable point. Such is the poor state of the manuscript that one could simply continue to make improvements from one year to the next. However, in that

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12 Funk 1990, 1997. The editors wish to record their thanks to W.-P. Funk for his generous provision of unpublished materials, and informal comment on issues of interest to us on many occasions.

process nothing would ever be finished. We thus intend to publish our edited text once we have placed it in reasonable order, and read what can be read to a sufficient standard for future generations to use and hopefully improve upon. This present publication of a series of papers occasioned by the project needs to be understood in the same light, with an acknowledged element of provisionality.<sup>13</sup>

In order to bring the project to success we invited Paul Dilley to become a full member of the editorial team and to share the labour. Further, we needed assistance in digital enhancement and specialised photography in the hope of extracting more data from the codex than is possible with conventional papyrological methods. Northern Arizona University has an advanced Imaging Laboratory and we turned to its leading specialist, Daniel Boone, to provide technical advice and services on the project. Finally, we needed substantial funds for the digital photography and image enhancement work, so that we would be able to prepare the draft editions on our computers in Australia and North America. Every line of text is of course checked against the original manuscript in the Chester Beatty Library; but the pages are set up and prepared before we visit Dublin. We are indeed grateful to the Australian Research Council, and the United States National Endowment of the Humanities, for major grants without which this project would have been impossible.<sup>14</sup>

The challenges to editing the Chester Beatty *Kephalaia* codex are considerable. It has been aptly characterised as the most fragmentary of the Medinet Madi manuscripts. Like all of these manuscripts, its papyrus has darkened almost to the colour of the faded ink used on its pages. Its conservation was irregular, and the correct order of the pages remains to be established. Although both Giversen and Funk made progress in understanding the codicology, there are major problems to solve. In particular, it appears that a substantial portion of the codex no longer exists: The number of extant leaves are considerably

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13 In this present volume we have decided not to provide our provisional Coptic edition as it is still in the process of revision. For this reason only certain technical terms, toponyms and so on are given in Coptic. The English translations provided are also not to be supposed finished. In these the reader will find difficult and usually highly lacunose text indicated simply as ...; and, further, we have also made free use of rounded brackets ( ) to indicate our understanding of the general train of thought and to provide easier reading. The purpose of these brackets is to show that the English as given is not based precisely on the Coptic text, reconstructed or extant.

14 All sources of support for the project, including our various institutions, and the very generous assistance of the staff at the Chester Beatty Library, will be acknowledged in the Preface to the published edition.

less than the original size of the work, which was most probably 496 pages in length.<sup>15</sup> The quires are quaternios (i.e. 4 bifolia and thus 16 pages), and we have now read quire number 30 at the upper left hand corner of the first page of what we think must be the penultimate quire. This number is visible ( $\lambda$ ) on plate 215 of the facsimile edition (in general the order of pages in that publication should be ignored). Of course, the reading of both chapter and quire numbers (there are no page numbers in the manuscript), and an understanding of the construction of the codex, enable important progress to be made in ordering the pages now conserved under glass. Notes written by the conservators and placed on or within the frames, together with other records held in the Library or published accounts written by the Ibschers (although there are remarkably few of such), are a further aid. Although it remains improbable that all extant pages will ever be restored to their proper sequence, the latter part of the codex can be ordered with a reasonable degree of surety, and where possible in this publication we have provided the 'real' page numbers based on the reconstruction of the quires.<sup>16</sup>

There is also the enormous difficulty of actually reading what text remains visible. An examination of the photographic plates in the facsimile will demonstrate that many pages retain only very faint or 'blurred' text. The latter is a widespread phenomenon, and we wonder if it is purely the effect of moisture acting on the papyrus and ink over the centuries, or may also be the result of the conservation process. Whatever the cause, the fact remains that even the very best of photographs can be extremely difficult to read; and, obviously, where the papyrus itself is seriously damaged (or simply missing) then no amount of technical manipulation can restore the text.

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15 There are 354 plates in the facsimile edition, although a number of these are so poorly preserved as hardly to count as extant pages. There is the further problem as to whether layers of papyrus (i.e. from discrete pages) may not have been separated by the conservators; or, alternatively, remnants of a single page may have been conserved individually. We also believe that the final leaves of the manuscript are held in Berlin (and are consequently not found in the facsimile). Given all these factors it is difficult to arrive at an exact number of pages that are preserved; but it is certainly well in excess of 100 that are missing.

16 In this volume the reader will find references to the codex given in the following form: (e.g.) 2 Ke 402, 9 / G276. In this instance the first set of figures gives the page and line numbers of the original codex following our reconstruction of quire sequences; this is followed by the plate number in the facsimile edition published by Giversen 1986. The purpose of the latter is to enable the interested scholar to check the relevant text and readings if they wish. In some instances we have not yet finalised the codex page to be used in the critical edition, and in these cases only the Giversen plate number is given.

One enhancement technique is the so-called ‘normalisation’ of the image. Normalisation involves selectively (and subjectively) expanding some part of the mid-tonal ranges of the 256-shade colour band, whilst reducing the extreme ranges towards the black and white ends of the spectrum. This has the effect of changing the shading and sharpness of the image in ways that can help to bring the script out against the background of the papyrus. This adjustment can be done to the Red, Green, and Blue colour channels of a digital photograph collectively; or to each colour channel individually, which are then reassembled into an RGB image. The individually-manipulated R, G, and B colour channels can also be rendered into greyscale, which in some cases is easier to process visually for the reader. ‘Inversion’ involves switching one or more of the R, G, and B colour channels into its negative, radically changing the colour values in ways that can cause the script to practically glow on the page. This inversion effect can also be viewed in greyscale.

Whilst working with a preliminary set of conventional digital photographs, Boone also employed a software program to select out certain shades of the 256-shade colour band and remove them from the image; in this way ‘shading-in’ extraneous visual features of the image that distract the eye (and mind) from seeing the continuity of script forms, such as lacunae and flecks of foreign material (mostly salt and sand crystals). This can generally be done in a single adjustment, which safely distinguishes the faded black colour of the ink from the true black showing through holes in the text as photographed on the photographer’s velvet. From this point, one can darken to black any colour beyond a shade of darkness as selected from a spot on the image, which has the effect of ‘filling in’ letter forms broken up by the ageing of the manuscript. Further, one can expand that adjustment progressively to an optimum point for recovery of faded and flaked letter forms.

In 2010, the imaging team of Daniel Boone and Ryan Belnap developed a set of protocols and plan of execution for multi-spectral photography of the codex. Although infra-red photography has been beneficial in recovering text from some ancient manuscripts, previous multi-spectral experiments on the Medinet Madi codices under the direction of John Gee of Brigham Young University had shown poor results with infra-red. Boone and Belnap experimented with photographing different possible ink formulations that might be present in the Chester Beatty *Kephalaia*, and concluded that they should concentrate their efforts in the ultra-violet area of the spectrum. With the cooperation and assistance of the staff of the Chester Beatty Library, they took a full suite of multi-spectral images, from which they produced various mixes by layering selected spectra on top of one another, in order to yield images visually optimised for our use in reading the text.

From these digitally enhanced images, we read the manuscript on the computer screen, working with nearly unlimited magnification possibilities as well as an additional repertoire of adjustment options that can be applied to each page individually as it is read, in order to deal with the varying conditions of the individual leaves. These adjustment options include contrast and sharpness; looking at individual colour channels; and switching to greyscale, back and forth as necessary to capture individual letters. As reading of these processed images proceeds, we have been making determinations on adjustments to the digital photography, refinements of the processing techniques, and to what degree it might be helpful to resort to specialised photography of the manuscript. We have also considered such possibilities as a pseudocolour process similar to that used successfully on the Archimedes Palimpsest. J. Gee's report at the 7th International Congress of Manichaean Studies on the prior efforts at specialised photography of the Medinet Madi materials, by a team from Brigham Young University, has offered helpful pointers to which techniques might prove useful.

It remains a remarkable fact that no amount of technical expertise can substitute in the final analysis for traditional autopsy of the text. Nevertheless, image enhancement has assisted greatly in the rapid production of a draft edition, and minimised the amount of time needed to be spent in Dublin to the point where, during the course of 2014, we have now completed a full first transcript of the surviving Coptic text. There is, however, a great deal of checking, revising, indexing and general tidying-up of the edition to be undertaken before it can be published; even given our avowed intentions to make it available as soon as possible. Consequently, this collection of papers is offered as a kind of interim report on the project's progress. We are convinced that, despite the manifold difficulties involved, the reading of the Chester Beatty *Kephalaia* will mark a significant step forward for a number of fields of study. In the following papers we have sought to introduce and give our perspective on some of the more important of these.<sup>17</sup>

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17 It should be noted that the papers have been written by individual authors, and that each person has independent views on certain matters. Nevertheless, there is a strongly collaborative aspect to the volume. All the papers have been read and commented on by the three of us, and in a broad sense (if not in every detail) the entire volume is a collective endeavour. The edition of the Coptic text and its English translation is a product of the editorial team. Since Gardner is the most experienced papyrologist, he has taken the lead in the development of procedures; he also has the responsibility for final decisions, where necessary.

In 'Part 1: Studies on the Manichaean *Kephalaia*', we introduce the Chester Beatty codex. In the first paper Paul Dilley discusses the question of genre, including the relationship of *The Chapters of the Wisdom of my Lord Manichaios* to *The Chapters of the Teacher*. These are two of the seven codices ascribed to the Medinet Madi library, and between them they would have contained approximately one thousand pages of text. The Berlin codex is certainly much better known to scholarship than the one in Dublin, and has had a substantial effect on the development of Manichaean studies since the editing process began in the 1930s. Why did the community find this literary form such an appropriate vehicle for the recording and transmission of their teachings? What were the models that they developed, and what do these influences tell us about the development of the tradition? Our editing now of a second *Kephalaia* codex, with entirely different content to the first, enables a much fuller and more rounded discussion of the topic. Dilley examines the context of learned debate between sages at Sasanian courts. He argues that the Manichaeans developed their *Kephalaia* as a hybrid literary form which bridged Graeco-Roman, Judaeo-Christian and Buddhist influences, to become something characteristically its own.

In the second paper Jason BeDuhn discusses the vexed question of the relationship between the supposed 'western' and 'eastern' traditions of Manichaeism. It has become something of a commonplace to assert the independent development of these wings of the church, spreading on the one hand into the Christianised Mediterranean world and on the other along the trade routes of Central Asia. The Manichaean *Kephalaia* have often been thought a product of the westwards mission; but now, as with the previous paper by Dilley, we have a much bigger picture and a better opportunity to frame the proper context for their development. In particular, the Chester Beatty codex provides a new opportunity to investigate textual links to Manichaean literature recovered from Central Asia in Middle Iranian languages. This discussion by BeDuhn connects to a vigorous new trajectory in Manichaean studies that interrogates this apparent divorce between the 'two wings' as in good part a product of the vagaries of textual survival and disciplinary boundaries.

In the third paper Iain Gardner turns to providing specific detail of the content of the Chester Beatty codex. His editorial responsibility began with the end quires of Codex C, which contain some of the best-preserved sections of its text. Using an investigation of the 'final ten chapters' of the Coptic *Kephalaia*, as found here in our new material, Gardner attempts to sketch out principles for developing an archaeology of the literature as it has come down to us. He will cast light on the redactional processes involved in its creation, whilst also providing textual content to whet the appetite of scholars in the field.

In 'Part 2: New Sources from the Chester Beatty Codex' the editors continue this study of content, utilising new textual material taken from the draft edition to study three topics of broad interest. In the first paper Paul Dilley examines the apparent quotations from a work designated as the 'law of Zarades', as found in the *Kephalaia* codex. These sayings are of considerable potential importance for reconstructing the history of Mazdayasnian literature; especially given the extreme paucity of surviving material datable to the early Sasanian period, and the ongoing debates about the development of the *Avesta*. In the second paper, Jason BeDuhn considers what appears to be the earliest witness to an episode known from the Iranian *Book of Kings*. In both these instances, (and there are other examples as well), the Chester Beatty *Kephalaia* would seem to push back by several centuries the date of textual traditions generally regarded as of major significance for the history of human culture. They are certainly fundamental building-blocks of pre-Islamic Iranian national identity, and their preservation here in an ancient Coptic book is entirely remarkable.

In the third paper, Iain Gardner examines a new version of the literary cycle regarding Mani's 'Last Days', to be found in the codex after the conclusion of the final kephalaion. This passion narrative was absolutely central to the life and practice of the Manichaean community; but all surviving accounts are fragmentary, and the reconstruction of the sequence of events is still a work-in-progress. Gardner's study will introduce otherwise unknown episodes, and he will also argue that certain crucial events in the cycle have previously been misunderstood. This involves a re-reading of some of the most famous passages in Manichaean literature, specifically concerning Mani's final journeys and his trial before King Bahram I in Gondēšāpūr (Bēlapat or Bēt Lapat).

In the final essays in this volume, 'Part 3: Manichaeism and the History of Religions', Dilley and BeDuhn utilise their work on the project as a springboard to consider much broader issues in the history of religion and culture. The pivotal position of early Sasanian Iran between east and west, its location as a meeting-point of emerging world religions, and the potential role played by Manichaeism in all of this prior to and perhaps as a precursor of Islam; these are themes have been suggested in the past. However, the Chester Beatty *Kephalaia* provides new and unique evidence of telling significance, which should be of great interest to all scholars interested in the history of late antiquity and those currents of thought and practice that traversed the trade routes between India, China and the Mediterranean world.

PART 1

*Studies on the Manichaean Kephalaia*







## Mani's Wisdom at the Court of the Persian Kings: The Genre and Context of the Chester Beatty *Kephalaia*\*

Paul Dilley

The mise-en-scène of the Chester Beatty *Kephalaia*, when it can be reconstructed, unfolds largely within the courts of Sasanian Iran, and includes historical figures such as Shapur I and the Turan-shah; the manuscript itself was produced and read in Egypt, where the text had been translated into Coptic from either Greek or Syriac / Aramaic. The extant Coptic version bears the mark of multiple redactions, and it is even possible that the scribe added an account of Mani's death at the end, without the usual chapter form, while keeping the heading used throughout the manuscript: *The Chapters of the Wisdom of my lord Manichaios* (ⲛⲕⲉⲫⲁⲗⲁⲓⲟⲛ ⲛ̅ⲧⲥⲟⲫⲓⲁ ⲙ̅ⲡⲗⲁⲓⲥ ⲙ̅ⲛ̅ⲛ̅Ⲯⲥ).<sup>1</sup> External sources provide no detailed information about a work of this title, which may be alluded to in a prophecy from the *Sermon on the Great War*: 'The waters of his mysteries will be found [in the] *Wisdom of My Lord Mannichaios* and his Church.'<sup>2</sup> Epiphanius, who had visited Egypt at around the time of the manuscript's production, listed the *Kephalaia*, with no further specifications, alongside the *Book of Mysteries*, the *Gospel*, and the *Treasury*, as texts supposedly inherited by Mani.<sup>3</sup> In the following chapter, I make some preliminary remarks about the Chester Beatty *Kephalaia*'s typical literary content and forms, considering what clues they might provide about the context in which it was produced and read. This

\* Parts of this chapter were presented at the Eighth Conference of the International Association of Manichaean Studies, London, September 2013.

1 See further Gardner, 'Mani's Last Days', chapter 7 in this volume.

2 Hom 28, 8–10. The reading 'waters' ⲙ̅ⲙⲟⲩⲉⲓⲉⲩⲉ as opposed to ⲙ̅ⲙⲟⲩⲉ (Polotsky 1934; Pedersen 2006) follows Iain Gardner's identification of ⲩⲉ added by the scribe after ⲙⲟⲩⲉ and above the line (personal communication). Cf. ⲕⲓⲗⲓ (1 Ke 372, 10–16): 'The writings and the wisdom and the revelations and the parables and the psalms of all the first churches have been collected in every place. They have come down to my church. They have added to the wisdom that I have revealed, the way that water might add to water and become many waters.'

3 Epiphanius, *Panarion* 66, 2. Of course, Epiphanius likely repeated these claims from the *Acts of Archelaus*, which he closely follows in his treatment of the Manichaeans.

analysis will require moving quickly between the Sasanian ‘east’ and Roman ‘west’, following the journeys of Mani’s disciples, who were likely responsible for producing the earliest collections of *Kephalaia* literature.

My study will also shift between two manuscripts: the Berlin *Kephalaia* and the Chester Beatty *Kephalaia* in Dublin (hereafter 1 Ke and 2 Ke). These volumes appear to share consecutive chapter numbers, suggesting that they were considered a formal unit. And yet the page headings differ: *The Chapters of the Teacher* in the Berlin volume, and *The Chapters of the Wisdom of My Lord Manichaios* in the Dublin volume. In his pioneering study of selections from the second codex, Michel Tardieu identified different emphases from the Berlin volume, including: a preponderance of dialogue over monologue; identified speakers and context, which involve Mani’s exchanges with representatives of other ancient wisdoms found in the Sasanian empire; and an emphasis on ‘prophetology’—i.e. claims of legitimacy and authority.<sup>4</sup> These important distinctions have been largely confirmed for the latter part of the codex; although the earlier sections, so far as they have been edited, correspond more closely to the didactic emphasis of the Berlin volume. This is a reminder that both philological and interpretive work on these difficult manuscripts is ongoing, and much remains to be discovered.

Our work to date has revealed a series of episodes detailing Mani’s agonistic encounters with sages at court. There are three chapters concerning the king of Touran / Turan (κ323–325), at least the first of which takes place in his palace (παλάτιον). This section features a passage in which Mani leads a ‘righteous one’ on an ascent to heaven, at the end of which Mani is declared as the ‘apostle’ and the communicator of the ‘wisdom of God’.<sup>5</sup> A second cycle (κ327–339) takes place in or near the palace of King Shapur; this one featuring Goundesh / Gundesh, a sage in the king’s retinue who debates with Mani and eventually recognizes his supremacy. Goundesh’s awed declaration captures well the general content of the Chester Beatty *Kephalaia*: “I have debated with the sages ... I was victorious over them in the wisdom of philosophy. Now, behold, you have been victorious over me ... there is no sage equal to you”.<sup>6</sup>

4 Tardieu 1988: 162. After our preliminary readings of the manuscript, it is clear that most of these dialogues are at court.

5 2 Ke 356, 3 / G230. Compare the Parthian parallel, in which Mani teaches ‘much wisdom’ to ‘the righteous one’ (Sundermann 1981: 19–24, text 2.2). For the passages on the King of Touran and Goundesh, see further BeDuhn, ‘Parallels between Coptic and Iranian *Kephalaia*’, chapter 3 in this volume.

6 From 2 Ke 380, 25–29 / G254.

After winning Goundesh's allegiance, Mani debates and overcomes a new wise man, Masoukeos (κ337). He then defeats the mysterious Iodasphes, a 'wise man from the east' described as 'greater than Masoukeos and Goundesh', who boasts to Shapur that no one in the realm can best him (κ338). Mani's victory leads to what is presented as his first audience with Shapur.<sup>7</sup> He is introduced by Kardel son of Artaban, one of several highly placed figures with whom Mani interacts in 2 Ke. These include Pabakos, a well-connected catechumen with whom he discusses the 'law of Zarades' (κ341 and 343);<sup>8</sup> and an anonymous 'noble of the kingdom' (κ342). These chapters form part of a larger unit (κ341–345) with an eschatological focus, in which Shapur himself appears to have been a discussant (κ345), and are particularly useful for reconstructing the complex relationship between Mani and Kartir.<sup>9</sup> The latter, with King Bahram I, also features in the concluding section on Mani's last days, with an account of his arrest and death.<sup>10</sup> Even when the narrative setting is uncertain, the content itself may reflect court dialogue and life: For instance, the reported discussion between King Chasro and his lieutenant Iuzanes about the absence in paradise of marriage, gold, and silver; as well as traditional elite pastimes such as hunting and war.<sup>11</sup> Finally, Mani employs a number of 'king parables', sometimes with detailed images of the royal entourage.<sup>12</sup>

In the CMC, as in 2 Ke, great importance is attributed to Mani's debates, which play an important role in his mission from its beginning. According to the CMC, before Mani leaves the Baptist community of his youth, he debates with its leader, Sita, who accuses him of undermining the community's law, and 'violating the commandments of the savior'.<sup>13</sup> Mani denies this, bolstering his point by quoting from the gospels; similarly, he appeals to various statements and deeds of Alchasaïos, offering an authoritative interpretation of the teaching of the sect's founder. Vanquished in debate, Sita and the others beat Mani, who cries in frustration to the paraclete: "How then, if these people have given me no room to accept the truth, will the world, its princes or its (sects), receive

7 For the difficulties in reconciling this account of Mani and Shapur's first meeting with others, see Gardner, 'The Final Ten Chapters', chapter 4 in this volume.

8 See further Dilley, 'Also Schrieb Zarathustra?', chapter 5 in this volume.

9 See Dilley, chapters 5 and 8 in this volume.

10 See further Gardner, chapter 7 in this volume.

11 2 Ke 129, 10–13 / G301.

12 On the 'king parable' in rabbinic literature, see Applebaum 2010. Interestingly, these comparisons might be both with the powers of light and darkness. For the latter, see e.g. 1 Ke 119, 24–29, in which the king is compared with archons in the sky.

13 CMC, 91.

me when it comes to hearing these secrets and accepting these hard precepts? How shall I (speak) before the kings ... and the leaders of sects?"<sup>14</sup> The paraclete answers that he will support Mani as he takes his religion to all peoples. The references to 'princes', 'kings', and 'leaders of sects' clearly foreshadow Mani's debates with sages in the courts of the Persian kings, as documented especially in the latter parts of the 2 Ke codex.

In contrast to the CMC, which is attributed to a series of disciples who have transmitted its accounts, the two volumes of *Kephalaia* do not have named authors or tradents. There are few clues about the authorship of either volume of the *Kephalaia*, but clues lurk in the two titles: The term 'teacher' may be an honorific of Mani, who functions as teacher *par excellence* in the text.<sup>15</sup> Similarly, the term 'my lord' in the title of the Dublin volume is probably a literal translation of Syriac *mār(y)*, which is frequently applied to Mani in Parthian and Middle Persian documents.<sup>16</sup> Alternatively, 'teacher' might refer to the compiler of the document, rather than its hero: The twelve teachers are the highest grade of the Manichaean ecclesiastic hierarchy, beneath the head.<sup>17</sup> There are several early disciples who were given this title: Baraies, Abiesus, and Pattig 'the teacher' (to be distinguished from Mani's father Pattig). The testimony of the first two figures is collected in the CMC, which demonstrates significant overlap with the *Kephalaia*. Might one (or several) of these influential leaders have been the author of one or both volumes?

Michel Tardieu has proposed that Mar Addā, the primary Manichaean missionary to the west, composed 1 Ke; and that, in contrast, 2 Ke represents the tradition of Mar Ammo, as reflected by its close interaction with Buddhism.<sup>18</sup> While there is no direct evidence that Addā or Ammo were teachers, given their leading role in early missionary activity, it is certainly possible that they were, at some point, invested with this high office. But Tardieu's hypothesis is based on a perceived difference in cultural contexts: He argues that 1 Ke consists of dialectic, allegories, and didactic expositions appropriate for a Christian environment; while 2 Ke was originally written in Middle Persian, and con-

14 CMC, 103–104.

15 In the *Kephalaia* 'teacher' is used frequently to denote an advanced disciple who offers instruction, and it is uncertain whether the ecclesiastic office is intended.

16 The titles 'lord' and 'teacher' are used together, probably in reference to Mani, at Hom 56, 11. Iain Gardner notes (personal communication) 1 Ke 221, 20 as a particularly important instance of 'teacher' for Mani, embedded in the structure of the Berlin text; he references also 1 Ke 234, 21 and 286, 22.

17 On the Manichaean ecclesiastic hierarchy, see e.g. Lieu 1992: 27.

18 Tardieu 1988: 181.

tains 'parables and conversion stories' more suitable for a Mazdayasnian and Buddhist milieu. In contrast, I will argue that the two volumes are best understood as related works, and should not be contrasted according to an east / west dichotomy.

Thus, 2 Ke reflects the borderlands in which it was composed, read, and further redacted; in particular Sasanian Mesopotamia, but also eastern courts such as Turan. The Coptic manuscript itself demonstrates that the western mission inherited the concerns and history of the Mesopotamian community, including its appropriation of Iranian traditions and interactions with Buddhist culture. In the first part of this chapter, I argue that the form and content of the two volumes would have been recognizable within the Graeco-Roman, Iranian, and Buddhist literary traditions; that is, they exhibit a generic polymorphy reflecting the variegated cultural environment of Mani and his disciples. In the second part, I argue that the particular focus of 2 Ke, as reflected in its title, is 'wisdom', a concept encompassing cosmological and soteriological knowledge, as well as practical advice. Wisdom was widely understood to be possessed in various degrees by different cultures, especially ancient ones, but also by cultural mediators such as Apollonius of Tyana. Having established that both the Severans and Shapur sought mediators of wisdom, in the third part I examine the evidence for the presence of various philosophical and religious groups at the Sasanian court in late antiquity. Mani's debates with Goundesh and other wise men in 2 Ke are thus placed in a broader context of agonistic exchanges between sages to gain patronage.

### Part I: Genre(s) and Author(s)

The Berlin *Kephalaia* have already been convincingly tied to Graeco-Roman genres: Kurt Rudolph first noted their connection to the *erōtapokrisis*; that is, question-and-answer literature, which was used in an instructional setting by a variety of ancient groups, including Christians.<sup>19</sup> I would add that the most likely path of influence of the *erōtapokrisis* on Mani was through Syriac literature, for example Bardaisan's *Book of the Laws of Countries*.<sup>20</sup> This text features a rather mechanical 'dialogue' in which Bardaisan responds at length to the questions posed to him by his disciple Awida; Mani may have been

19 Rudolph 1968.

20 Syriac text and English translation in Drijvers 1965. For an overview of the *erōtapokrisis* literature in Syriac, see Ter Haar Romeny 2004.

familiar with it, or similar works of his school, such as an anti-Marcionite dialogue.<sup>21</sup> The *erōtapokrisis* addressed various points of doctrine and exegesis, without calling for a highly structured treatment of topics, all qualities shared by 1 Ke. Timothy Pettipiece calls attention to that volume's connections with another genre, *Capitaliteratur*, collected teachings of philosophers arranged by topic.<sup>22</sup>

Both the *erōtapokrisis* and *Capitaliteratur* were flexible genres, and indeed we see variation within this literary form as employed by the Manichaean community. Gregor Wurst, expanding on Rudolph, has argued effectively that the *Capitula* of bishop Faustus represent another Manichaean example of the Coptic *Kephalaia* genre, namely an adaptation of *erōtapokrisis* for the purpose of community instruction.<sup>23</sup> Faustus's *Capitula* consisted of a series of critical comparisons between the Old and New Testaments, which he sought to demonstrate were contradictory; each chapter discussed a specific passage or pair of passages. As Wurst himself notes, there are some differences between the *Capitula* and the Coptic *Kephalaia*, beyond the exegetical focus of Faustus: The former is in the first person, with Faustus as teacher, while the latter is in the third, featuring Mani; and the former does not mention a specific context, interlocutor, or positive resolution to the problem, in contrast to the latter, all of which are usually found in the Coptic *Kephalaia*.<sup>24</sup>

Scholars have generally assumed an educational setting for *erōtapokrisis* literature. But this mode of instruction did not only occur in schools, as is clear from the activities of Dionysius, the bishop of Alexandria from 248–265 C.E. (around the beginning of the Manichaean mission to Egypt). According to Eusebius, Dionysius traveled to the region of Arsinoe in response to the rising popularity there of the millenarianism espoused by a certain Nepos, based on a literal interpretation of the *Apocalypse of John*; in his account of this

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21 Hippolytus, *Refutation of All Heresies* 4, 31.1. Cf. κ89, in which Mani debates a 'Nasorean', who appears to offer Marcionite viewpoints.

22 Pettipiece 2009: 9–10. He also notes a connection with the *erōtapokrisis*.

23 Wurst 2001. Indeed, the *Capitula* of Faustus of Milevis is a Latin form of the Graeco-Coptic title. The content and structure of the *Capitula* can be reconstructed with a reasonable degree of accuracy from Augustine's refutation of it, in his *Against Faustus*. The patristic references to *Kephalaia* collected in Alfarcic are summaries of Manichaean doctrine (Alfarcic 1918: 21–34); while they might be based on a work like the one we find in the two Medinet Madi codices, the citations do not correspond to extant passages in the Coptic texts.

24 These differences may explain why Faustus used the diminutive *Capitula*, instead of the expected *Capita* as a translation for *Kephalaia*. See Van den Berg 2009: 194–196.

visit, Dionysius notes how bishops are able to 'persuade and instruct' through 'question and answer' in public dialogues.<sup>25</sup> Thus, Dionysius uses *erōtapokrisis* (the Graeco-Roman genre connected to the Berlin *Kephalaia*) to convince other Christians about the correctness of a specific point of doctrine. In other words, the genre was simultaneously pedagogical and exegetical.

Important evidence for the compatibility between monologue / didactic expositions and more extended dialogue in a single genre is found in the *Dialogue with Heracleides*. Origen (184/185–253/254 C.E.) was a noted teacher and debater like Mani, and a guest at both regional and imperial courts, holding colloquy with the governor of Arabia in 215; and even the mother of Alexander Severus, Julia Mamaea, who invited Origen to her court in Antioch, where she was based in 232–233, just after the Roman defeat of Ardashir in the early years of the Sasanian dynasty.<sup>26</sup> The *Dialogue with Heracleides* purports to be a transcript of Origen's debates with Heracleides, a bishop in Roman Arabia whose theological and liturgical innovations sparked much controversy, resulting in a request for mediation to the famous Alexandrian.

In the first part of the transcript, Origen engages in a courteous debate with the bishop, in which he takes the lead, asking questions, pointing to inconsistencies, and ultimately garnering his assent (which involved signing an agreement to a statement of doctrinal orthodoxy); this closely resembles the exchange between Mani and his interlocutors, such as Goundesh and Iodaspes, in 2 Ke. The next section of the *Dialogue* is much closer in form to 1 Ke: A group of bishops ask Origen questions on theology, usually confined to a single line; Origen then responds at great length.<sup>27</sup> For instance, the text notes: 'When bishop Philip came in, Demetrius, another bishop, said: "Brother Origen teaches that the soul is immortal"'.<sup>28</sup> Thus, the *Dialogue with Heracleides* demonstrates the flexibility of the genre, suggesting that 1 Ke and 2 Ke could reasonably be considered two volumes of the same work, despite their respective emphases on catechesis and debate.

Just as it is difficult to draw a sharp distinction between the two volumes of *Kephalaia* in terms of genre, we should also be wary of assigning the Berlin volume to the 'west' and the Dublin volume to the 'east'. The missionary narratives

25 Eusebius, *History of the Church* 7, 24.5.

26 Eusebius, *History of the Church* 6, 19.15 and 6, 21.3–4, respectively. Origen, it might also be noted, experienced the same drastic shift in imperial favor as did Mani, reportedly suffering imprisonment and torture during the Decian Persecution in 250, less than two decades later.

27 For more on the various debates in which Origen engaged, see Lim 1995: 16–20.

28 Origen, *Dialogue with Heracleides* 24, 25–26.



from both Rome and greater Iran were collected in Sasanian Mesopotamia, and then circulated widely; hence we have narratives of Addā's journey to Egypt in Parthian, and Mani's debates with Goundesh in Coptic. Moreover, the question-and-answer genre existed in numerous varieties across Eurasia. We have already explored its various forms in the Graeco-Roman literary tradition; in what follows, I discuss its cognates in Iran and India, considering both didactic and controversial forms.

The Iranian genre of *frashna*, or question-and-answer literature, has its roots in Avestan dialogues between Ahura Mazda and Zarathustra, for instance in the *Vidēvdād*.<sup>29</sup> While these texts predate Mani, other evidence for the dialogue genre comes from later Pahlavi texts. Zarathustra appears as the archetypal teacher behind the late Sasanian *Pand-Nāmag i Zardušt*, which provides responses to key questions regarding Mazdayasnian belief and practice.<sup>30</sup> Some *frashna* literature, while educational, was also controversial. The *Dēnkard* relates Zarathustra's debates with the wise men of Hystaspes's kingdom in order to convert him.<sup>31</sup> Much of the *Dēnkard* itself, including its longest chapter, book three, is in the form of dialogue between a nameless teacher and either students, heretics, or potential converts; the topics include basic tenets of Mazdayasnianism, both in the form of shorter and longer explanations.<sup>32</sup> Other groups are refuted in book three, including Judaism and Manichaeism; one interesting passage juxtaposes ten precepts of Mani with ten of Ādurbād ī Mahrspandān, the famous priest under Shapur II.<sup>33</sup> Similarly, book five of the *Dēnkard* consists of dialogue between a Mazdayasnian high priest, Ādurfarnbag, a certain Ya'qūb, and a Christian, Bōxt-Māhrē. Thus, like the two volumes of the *Kephalaia*, books three and five of the *Dēnkard* feature two kinds of dialogue: catechesis and debate.

Interesting similarities also exist with Buddhist genres. In a discussion of the prologue to the Chinese Manichaean *Traité*, Lieu has already commented on the similarities of its dialogue form to Buddhist Sutras.<sup>34</sup> He suggests that

29 For a brief overview of the text, see Shaki 1991.

30 Skjaervø 1997: 336–337.

31 *Dēnkard* 7, 73; the episode is greatly expanded in the *Zarātoštnāmeḥ* (741–817), for which see de Jong 2003: 17, note 3.

32 Secunda has also noted in passing the resemblance between the *Dēnkard* and the Manichaean *Kephalaia* (Secunda 2013: 172).

33 *Dēnkard* 3, 200.

34 'It is therefore entirely possible that what we have in Chinese is a translation of the prologue of a different Parthian version based on the style of interlocution in the *Kephalaia*' (Lieu 1998: 67–68, with references).

it may be traced to Manichaean *Kephalaia*-literature, in Parthian, rather than Buddhicization. However, the early development and circulation of the *Kephalaia* form itself occurred, at least partly, in contact with Buddhist literature: For example, the *Ekottara Agama*, which was used in northwest India around the time of Mani, is formally a dialogue of Buddha with his disciples, including an initial heading that sets the dramatic scene.<sup>35</sup> The *Ekottara Agama*, also called the 'numerical discourses', explains doctrinal concepts by collecting them in groups of different numbers, from one to eleven: i.e. 'books of four', 'books of five', etc. This procedure recalls the marked scholastic strategy evidenced clearly in 1 Ke of organizing doctrinal concepts numerically, especially into groups of five, which Timothy Pettipiece has describes as 'pentadization'.<sup>36</sup> The *Milindapañha*, probably composed in Gandhari or another northwest Indian language in the first centuries C.E., purports to record a conversation between the Graeco-Bactrian king Menander and the Buddhist sage Nagasena, among others.<sup>37</sup> Thus, Buddhist dialogues circulating at the fringes of the Sasanian empire exhibit both dialogue for instruction and court dialogue, just as do the two Coptic volumes of *Kephalaia*.

In summary, the genre of the *Kephalaia* was likely understood, depending on the cultural location of its authors and readers, as a modified example of Graeco-Roman *erōtapokrisis*, Iranian *frashna*, or Buddhist dialogue. This generic polymorphy reflects the production and circulation of the *Kephalaia* across the two distinctive borderlands of Syro-Mesopotamia and Gandhara. The spread of the traditions from both locations is documented by the manuscript evidence, which suggests that eastern and western Manichaeans transmitted materials now found across 1 Ke and 2 Ke. Werner Sundermann, building on Tardieu's observation that a version of the Goundesh episode also appears in 2 Ke, demonstrated further close connections with a bilingual Middle Persian / Parthian manuscript in both expository style and content: A section on the 'fifteen ways' to paradise, recalling κ90; and an astrological section on 'the seven and the twelve', similar to κ69. He sensibly argues that the two geographical traditions represent 'verwandte Versionen desselben Überlieferungsstoffes'.<sup>38</sup>

35 See Lamotte 1988: 154.

36 Pettipiece 2009. Samuel Lieu has already noted how pentadization 'lends itself to Buddhicisation' in the cultural environment of *Chinese Manichaeism* (Lieu 1986: 208).

37 For the most recent overview and bibliography, see von Hinüber 2000: 82–86.

38 Sundermann 1992(b): 316. For additional parallels, in particular between the Parthian *wifrās* and Graeco-Coptic *Kephalaia*, see Sundermann 1984: 232–236.

In addition to its question-and-answer format, 2 Ke also contains substantial biographical material. One might even argue that the Berlin and Chester Beatty volumes together present, in broad outline, a kind of ‘Gospel of Mani’. Indeed, at the time of the production of the Berlin and Dublin codices, gospel manuscripts were typically divided according to chapter headings called *Kephalaia*, consisting of a description of their content (i.e. ‘Concerning ...’), precisely as do the Manichaean *Kephalaia*.<sup>39</sup> The prologue gives a prophetic genealogy of Mani, rather than a Davidic one, while the main body contains the teaching and dialogue so frequent in the gospels. The final chapter of 2 Ke is followed by a kind of passion narrative, in which Mani’s arrest and death are recounted.<sup>40</sup> Other Middle Iranian collections, as well as the CMC, might similarly be understood as informal ‘lives of Mani’, blending biographical and instructional material in various degrees.<sup>41</sup> On the other hand, 2 Ke appears to have been a loose and evolving collection of traditions, suggesting that any attempts to create a coherent or complete biography were secondary: The section on Mani’s last days may be a later addition, while several other points in the text bear the mark of sloppy redaction.<sup>42</sup>

## Part II: Manichaean Wisdom and Its Cognates

In this section, I explore the rich meanings of the term ‘wisdom’ in Manichaean texts, including its revelatory, mythological, and cultural implications, in both the Graeco-Roman and Iranian contexts. Wisdom in Coptic Manichaean texts is denoted primarily by the Greek loan word σοφία; in Middle Persian, by *xrad* and *wihih*; and in Parthian, by *žīrīft*. The concept, which is only rarely personified, is a key aspect of Mani’s revelation; in an excerpt of the *Living Gospel*, for instance, he states that his wisdom (σοφία) is sufficient for the entire world.<sup>43</sup> In the opening lines of the *Šābuhragān*, he states that ‘wisdom and knowledge’ (*xrad ud dānišn*) have been sent periodically to the world;<sup>44</sup> the same assertion is made in the citation of Bīrūnī, in which the messengers are

39 For example, there are similarities with the layout of Codex Alexandrinus, a fifth-century bible manuscript probably copied in Egypt.

40 See Gardner, ‘Mani’s Last Days’, chapter 7 in this volume.

41 On the Parthian manuscript, see Sundermann 1974; and BeDuhn, ‘Parallels between Coptic and Iranian *Kephalaia*’, chapter 3 n. 30 in this volume.

42 See Gardner, ‘The Final Ten Chapters’, chapter 4 in this volume.

43 As quoted by Baraies in CMC 69, 7–8.

44 *Šābuhragān* 18–21 (MacKenzie 1979: 505).

identified as Buddha, Zoroaster, Jesus, and Mani himself.<sup>45</sup> The phrase 'wisdom and knowledge' seems to be Pauline, and based especially on Colossians 2:2–3:<sup>46</sup>

I want their hearts to be encouraged and united in love, so that they may have all the riches of assured understanding and have the knowledge of God's mystery, that is, Christ himself, in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.

This identification of Christ as the guardian of 'wisdom and knowledge' is echoed in the *Šābuhragān* by his title *Xradešahr-yazd*, 'God of the land of wisdom'; the Pauline passage also firmly identifies wisdom as divine revelation, the 'mystery of God'.

Wisdom has a similarly broad meaning in the Coptic Manichaica, where it frequently occurs alone. In the *Homilies* (hereafter Hom), it is divine, often denoted as the 'wisdom of God'.<sup>47</sup> The same phrase is found in a text from Kellis: 'Look, you have seen everything from an eye-revelation. You do not lack anything from the mysteries of the wisdom of God'.<sup>48</sup> Mani's own writings are referred to as 'books of wisdom' and 'books of the mysteries of wisdom'.<sup>49</sup> These usages present wisdom as divine revelation, and Mani as transmitter of this revelation in written form. On the other hand, Mani's wisdom is not only written, but also preached.<sup>50</sup> Insofar as the two volumes of the Coptic *Kephalaia* are discourses, surely developed in part from Mani's own writings, both might be said to be compendia of his wisdom.

Wisdom is also integrated into Manichaean cosmology and cosmogony, as one of the four-fold aspects of the Father of Light.<sup>51</sup> Although Manichaean wisdom lacks the personification and transgression found in some Sethian

45 Reeves 2011: 102–103. For the corrected reading 'wisdom and knowledge' (rather than Bīrūnī's 'wisdom and deeds'), see Tardieu 1981. Note, however, the discussion of the phrase 'wisdom and deeds' by Henning, who observes that this is the same expression as in Bīrūnī (Henning 1933: 5, n. 2).

46 NRSV. Sophia is paired with other aspects of cognition in 1 Corinthians 12:8; Romans 11:33 (σοφία-γνώσις); Ephesians 1:8 (σοφία-φρόνησις); and Colossians 1:9 (σοφία-σύνησις).

47 Hom 47, 13; 12, 24; 80, 15–16. It is also given by God (Hom 47, 8).

48 P. Kellis VI Copt. 54, 8–11, tr. Gardner (adapted). The combination of mysteries and wisdom recalls Colossians 2:2–3.

49 Hom 33, 17; 43, 17.

50 Hom 12, 24; 71, 13.

51 For more on wisdom as a divine aspect, see Widengren 1974: 506–507, with references.

accounts of Sophia, it plays a key role in the struggle against darkness:<sup>52</sup> 'I bow down and give praise to the greatest armies; and to the luminous gods, who with their wisdom have transfixed and dislodged the darkness and restrained it'. This image of wisdom as the kingdom of light's weapon is more explicitly related to cosmogony later in the same prayer:<sup>53</sup>

I worship and glorify the great powers, the shining angels: Having come forth with their own wisdom, and having subjected the darkness and its arrogant powers that were desiring to make war with the one who is first of all; these are they who put heaven and earth in order, and bound in them the whole foundation of contempt.

As we shall see in the next section, the same metaphor is found in descriptions of Mani's disputes with other sages.

Mani gives a programmatic statement about the relationship of his wisdom to those of other religions in K151, in his famous list of ten advantages:<sup>54</sup>

The Fourth: The writings and the wisdom and the revelations and the parables and the psalms of all the first churches have been collected in every place. They have come down to my church. They have added to the wisdom that I have revealed, the way that water might add to water and become many waters. Again, this also is the way that the ancient books have been added to my writings, and have become great wisdom; its like was not uttered in all the ancient generations. They did not write nor did they unveil the books the way I, I have written it.

Mani thus boasts that he has made use of the writings of the 'first churches', as a font of wisdom; at the same time, however, he is clear that his own wisdom is superior, a 'great wisdom' replacing the ancient traditions. The slightly different passage preserved in M5794 is more explicit about the superiority of Mani's system: 'Fourth: this revelation (of mine) of the two principles and my living books, my wisdom and knowledge are above and better than those of previous

52 Translation from the Arabic of Ibn al-Nadīm by De Blois; quoted in Gardner 2011: 252.

53 English translation in Gardner 2011: 252; Greek text and commentary in P. Kellis VI, 111–128. In a fragmentary Middle Persian text, M 7980, wisdom and knowledge are mentioned in the cosmogonic context of Primal Man's defeat of the King of Darkness (*pad xrad ud dānišn*).

54 1 Ke 372, 10–20. I use the English translation in Gardner and Lieu 2004: 266.

religions'.<sup>55</sup> In summary, then, Manichaeans did not reject earlier wisdoms, but they were selective and supercessionist.

An important explanation of the diversity of wisdoms is found in Berlin K143, entitled: *Every Apostle who Comes into the World is Sent from a Single Power; but they Differ on Account of the Lands*.<sup>56</sup> This passage, one of numerous Manichaean 'king parables', highlights the differences between the wisdom of Mani and the earlier apostles of light, which it attributes to different lands and languages.<sup>57</sup>

Just like the king is a single person, but the laws and the ambassadors do not resemble one another, and his letter-bearers do not resemble one another, because the lands and the languages to which they are sent are different from one another—the one does not resemble the other—so also is the great and glorious power, through which all apostles are sent: The revelation and the wisdom (σοφία) which is given to them is given in different forms. This is the case because none is similar to another because the languages to which they are sent do not resemble one another.

This interesting passage emphasizes differences between the revelations, which reminds us that Mani's assertion to have collected various earlier wisdoms into a 'great wisdom' does not imply similarity. While Manichaeans accepted the wisdom of Zarathustra and Buddha, their revelation was intended for other lands and spread in other languages, a primary marker of difference. Furthermore, they also assert that these teachings had been corrupted, either because the founders failed to write them down themselves,<sup>58</sup> or because their followers became corrupt and neglected the commandments after they had ascended into heaven.<sup>59</sup>

To some extent, Mani's appropriation of earlier wisdom traditions stands in continuity with second-century Christian apologists, who asserted that the insights of Greek thinkers were derived from Hebrew religion, as well as to

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55 For a discussion and new English translation of this and associated fragments, see Lieu 2006: 526. The next point also concerns wisdom, but breaks off mid-sentence: 'Fifth: All writings, all wisdom and all parables of the previous religions, when they to this [religion of mine came ...]':

56 1 Ke 345, 21–345, 26.

57 1 Ke 346, 2–13.

58 1 Ke 8, 5–28.

59 *Šābuhragān* (M5794 I + M5761), tr. Lieu (Gardner and Lieu 2004: 109).

other cultures such as the Egyptians. The Syrian author Tatian thus called Moses the ‘founder of all barbarian wisdom (πάσης βαρβάρου σοφίας ἀρχηγόν).’<sup>60</sup> Yet Mani’s claims differed in several important respects. First, while rejecting Mosaic Law, he appealed to Zarathustra and Buddha, the latter being little-known in the Roman empire. Second, Tatian’s point was to encourage the reading of the Hebrew prophets, not all non-Greek wisdom traditions. Yet certain voices within early Christianity did advocate such a wide-ranging theological scope. An interesting though unidentified non-canonical text attributed to Paul, quoted with approval by Clement of Alexandria, suggests a second-century precedent.<sup>61</sup>

Take also the Hellenic books, study the Sibyl, how it is made clear that God is one, and the things which will happen in the future. And, taking Hystaspes, read, and you will find that the son of God is described much more luminously and clearly, and how many kings will draw up their forces against Christ, hating him and those that bear his name, and his faithful, and his patience, and his coming.

Here Clement invokes the Iranian figure Hystaspes as a prophet of apocalyptic struggle.

The pagan Neoplatonist Porphyry (ca. 234–ca. 305 C.E.), a younger contemporary of Mani, also exhibited an open, if selective approach to ancient wisdoms.<sup>62</sup> A Phoenician born in Tyre, Porphyry was familiar with the Aramaic philosopher Bardaisan, whom he used as a source of his writings on India. Porphyry, like Mani, promises followers of his own philosophy salvation (in the sense of the soul’s return), which he claims cannot be assured with recourse to a single tradition, such as that of the Indians or Chaldaeans.<sup>63</sup> Following a gen-

60 Tatian, *Oration* 31, 1.

61 Clement of Alexandria, *Miscellanies* 6, 5.43.1.

62 ‘Theosophy’, the term coined by Porphyry to describe the philosophical exegesis of non-Greek oracles, was appropriated by Eusebius and later Christian apologists to describe the testimony of pre-Christian and non-Christian authors (Neoplatonist philosophers) on doctrines such as the Trinity and the Incarnation. This selective appeal to sages such as Hermes and Hystaspes, distinguishing authoritative prophecy from pagan folly, resembles Mani’s own appropriation of wisdom traditions; indeed, a certain Aristocritus produced a work entitled *Theosophy* in which he sought to demonstrate that Judaism, Christianity, Hellenism, and Manichaeism reflect the same truth (Lieu 1986: 141).

63 *De Reg. An.* fr. 302F (Smith 1993: 347–350); and *Philosophy from Oracles* fr. 303F (Smith 1993: 351–353). Discussed in Schott 2005: 289.

eral trend among post-Hellenistic philosophers to look for traces of the 'true doctrine' of the first humans as remaining in ancient traditions, Porphyry cites sources of varying reliability from a number of cultures, including Egyptian, Jewish, Phoenician, Syrian, Mesopotamian, Iranian, and Indian.<sup>64</sup> Moreover, despite his polemics against Christianity, Porphyry differs from earlier critics such as Celsus in offering a positive evaluation of Christ as a wise man (σοφός) in his *Philosophy from Oracles*.<sup>65</sup>

Mani was therefore not the only high-placed figure in the third century who attempted to collect and refurbish ancient wisdom. Some of these figures had close ties to the imperial court: the Severan empress Julia Domna, for instance, requested the sophist Philostratus to write the *Life of Apollonius*.<sup>66</sup> Apollonius, a well-known *theios anēr* from Cappadocia who was contemporary with Jesus, is described by Porphyry as a wise man (σοφός).<sup>67</sup> The *Historia Augusta* suggestively notes that emperor Alexander Severus kept statues of Apollonius of Tyana, as well as Orpheus, Abraham, and Christ.<sup>68</sup> According to Philostratus's portrait, Apollonius was a sage who traveled throughout the Roman and Iranian empires, dispensing advice by drawing upon traditions of ancient wisdom, including those which he especially sought out, namely the Indian Brahmins.<sup>69</sup> While the 'historical' Apollonius was a first-century wandering sage and wonderworker, his third-century biography provides perhaps the nearest contemporaneous parallel to the debates at court over wisdom in 2 Ke.

Philostratus claims to have based his *Life of Apollonius* on the Syriac notes of Damis, Apollonius's disciple from Nineveh, which Julia Domna later obtained and passed on to himself. The figure of Damis is usually regarded as a literary fiction,<sup>70</sup> and Philostratus's account of his hero's journey to India contains little more than allusions to classical descriptions of the respective areas.<sup>71</sup> And,

64 On 'post-Hellenistic philosophy', see Boys-Stones 2001.

65 *Philosophy from Oracles* fr. 345 aF, line 34 (Smith 1993: 397).

66 Philostratus, *Life of Apollonius* 1, 3.

67 Porphyry quotes from *On Sacrifice*, a work attributed to Apollonius, but does not mention his name (*On Abstinence* 2, 34).

68 *Augustan History, Alexander Severus* 29, 2.

69 Pythagoras's wisdom is associated more with practice than with doctrine: 'It is a result of his wisdom that I keep myself clear from animal food' (1.32). On appeals to ancient wisdom in the *Life of Apollonius* see further Belloni 1980; and, more generally on Greek and Roman accounts of India, Parker 2008: 251–307.

70 And yet Mani may have been familiar with the legend of Apollonius, who, as a native of Cappadocia, possibly wrote in a dialect of Aramaic close to Syriac, and was known in the Syriac milieu. See Dzielska 1986: 150, with references.

71 See e.g. Jones 2002, with bibliography.



yet, while the evident exoticism and fantasy in the *Life of Apollonius'* portrayal of eastern courts betrays a further remove than 2 Ke, both texts focus their hagiographic gaze on the performance of wisdom through courtly dialogue. The author's stated intent is to describe 'the means of his wisdom, through which he was almost considered divine and godly'.<sup>72</sup> Like Mani, this wisdom was tested in agonistic encounters with other wise men, while pointing to its international scope.

According to Philostratus, Apollonius went on a long journey through Mesopotamia and Iran to visit the Indian Brahmins; this involved several stops at intervening courts, where he interacted with rulers and other sages. During his visit to King Vardanes in Babylon (an inaccuracy of course, Seleucia-Ctesiphon was the Parthian capital), Apollonius demonstrates his authoritative possession of *sophia* in many ways: Through discussion on the proper behavior of the sage; and advice on disparate topics, from justice (sparing a eunuch who has been intimate with a woman of the royal harem) to diplomacy (how best to respond to a Roman embassy).<sup>73</sup> He offers cultural commentary, refusing to take part in the hunt, which he argues is an abuse of animals. Finally, when Vardanes is sick, Apollonius discourses with him on the soul, causing the king to recover, with a new perspective: 'contempt' for his kingdom and for death. Although Apollonius does not debate the Magi, there is a brief reference to a discussion with them, and he challenges the authority of Magian wisdom.<sup>74</sup> In general, Apollonius is unimpressed by the wealth, power, and projects of the king, who nonetheless admires him and follows his advice.<sup>75</sup> When the sage expresses his desire to leave, Vardanes provides him with a guide and provisions for the journey. In Taxila, he further converses (in Greek!) with the philosopher-king Phraotes, who in turn sends him on his way to the Brahmins, with a letter of recommendation describing him as 'wisest'. In short, Philostratus's imagined

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72 Philostratus, *Life of Apollonius* 1, 2.

73 Philostratus, *Life of Apollonius* 1, 9–40.

74 Apollonius is 'desirous also of examining the wisdom which is indigenous among you and is cultivated by the Magi, and of finding out whether they are such wise theologians as they are reported to be' (1.32). Yet Apollonius also asks Vardanes to give the Magi a parting gift for him, proclaiming that they are 'wise' (1.40). Among Graeco-Roman authors, Zoroaster and other *magos hellénisés* are described as σοφός, and possessors of σοφία (Bidez-Cumont 1938: *passim*).

75 Philostratus's portrait of Apollonius is an apologetic depiction of his reliance on σοφία, rather than μάγεια (Dzielska 1986: 92). Other followers of Apollonius had instead emphasized his allegiance to the Persian *Magi*, as evidenced by several pseudepigraphic letters in which he defends his embrace of this tradition (*Letters* 17; 48).

Apollonius is the closest counterpart we have to the Mani of the 2 Ke text: Both figures are presented as honored advisors in practical and spiritual matters, whose authority is ultimately greater than that of the kings who consult them.

While Apollonius has provided a useful Graeco-Roman parallel for Mani's wisdom, close connections also exist with late antique Iranian and Manichaean notions. Zarathustra is the sage par excellence, and wisdom is a key aspect of the struggle against Ahriman, who maintained his power through ignorance and deception; as in Manichaeism, it was seen as a weapon against him.<sup>76</sup> Wisdom was also active in cosmogony: According to the later Pahlavi text *Mēnōg ī xrad*, it is with Ohrmazd at the creation, and will allow him to destroy Ahriman and his demons at the renovation of the universe.<sup>77</sup> Connections with personal eschatology exist as well: After escaping from hell, the souls of the righteous arrive securely in heaven by the power and protection of wisdom.<sup>78</sup> Finally, despite the *Mēnōg ī xrad*'s clear grounding in Iranian tradition, it also recognizes the quest for wisdom as an international endeavor: in its preamble, Dānāg ('knowing'), is said to have traveled to many lands and studied with many sages, searching for truth until his discovery of wisdom (*xrad*).

In later Pahlavi tradition, Shapur himself sponsored this international pursuit of wisdom, which he carried out not long after the Severans. According to the fourth book of the *Dēnkard*, Alexander the Great's conquest had shattered and dispersed Iranian learning, as enshrined in the Avesta:<sup>79</sup>

The King of Kings Shābūr son of Ardašīr collected again the writings deriving from the religion concerning medicine, astronomy, movement, time, space, substance, accident, becoming, decay, transformation, logic, and other crafts and skills, which were dispersed among the Indians and Greeks and other lands, and caused them to fit the Avesta.

This medieval account must be used with caution: It is extremely unlikely, for example, that the collection and writing down of the Avesta occurred under Shapur. But a gradual process of assimilating Graeco-Roman and Indian learn-

76 Russell 1990(b): 82–83.

77 *Mēnōg ī xrad* 57, 3–6.

78 *Mēnōg ī xrad* 57, 9. Though note that in the Mazdayasnian tradition wisdom also enables success in the material world, contrary to Manichaean ethics: 'It is possible to seek the good living pleasure, good repute, and every happiness of people in the worldly existence, through the power of wisdom' (*Mēnōg ī xrad* 57, 10).

79 Translation in Shaked 1994(a): 102–103; for further Iranian and Arabic references, see van Bladel 2009: 31–32.

ing, at least, is confirmed by its presence in the philosophy, medicine, and science of the ninth-century theological books.<sup>80</sup> And there is evidence that Greek astrological literature, including a text attributed to Zarathustra, had been translated into Persian, probably under court patronage, in the third century.<sup>81</sup>

Thus, in the world of Mani and his disciples, ancient wisdom was collected, discussed, and contested by wise men, as well as at the imperial courts of Rome and Iran. Various strategic positions might be adopted vis-à-vis this wisdom: In the late third and early fourth centuries, Christians such as Lactantius mimicked Porphyry's strategy of reading non-Greek sources in service of Hellenism and Neoplatonism, but shifted it by placing 'barbarian' (Christian) tradition at the center of the project.<sup>82</sup> Mani's approach also reflects Shapur's alleged attempts at collecting the wisdom of other cultures and incorporating it within an authoritative tradition to which it is subordinated; indeed, he was part of that process himself, transmitting reworked Jesus traditions, including those relevant to the end-times, in Middle Persian through his *Šābuhragān*. He differed, of course, in that he did not seek to reconstitute a specifically Iranian wisdom, but his own revelation, which both encapsulated and superceded all earlier ones.

### Part III: Contending with Wisdom at Court

#### *Non-Manichaeans at Court*

The interest in sages and wisdom demonstrated by the third-century courts of the Severans and early Sasanians have their roots in the Hellenistic era. The successors of Alexander supported wise men (*σοφοί*), including philosophers of various kinds, artists, historians, poets, and scholars, who composed treatises, educated elite children, and contributed 'practical' advice as friends of the

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80 See the discussion of Mazdayasnian anthropology in Bailey 1943: 78–119, who is skeptical about dating the process to Shapur, noting instead similar translation efforts from Greek into Syriac by the Church of the East, especially during the sixth century and later (pp. 80–81).

81 The purported author of the *Kitāb al-mawālid*, a seventh-century Arabic translation of a Pahlavi translation of the Greek original, which contains a horoscope taken at Ḥarrān on April 9 in 232 C.E., probably translated in the later third century; the Pahlavi translation of Dorotheus of Sidon contains a Sasanian horoscope taken 20 October 281, confirming the third-century activity (Pingree 1997: 45–46).

82 Schott 2008: 88–119.

king.<sup>83</sup> The same phenomenon appears at the Parthian court, which, according to Strabo, consisted of not only family, but also Magi and sages.<sup>84</sup> In late antique Iran, the representatives of various religious groups, including Jews, Christians, Mazdayasnians and Buddhists, joined the philosophers, astrologers, and other advisors. All might claim the king as a sponsor. In the following section, I explore the dynamics of each group's court presence in order to contextualize the dispute passages in 2 Ke.

Later Pahlavi tradition presented the Sasanian emperors as dutiful patrons of the Mazdayasnian religion, also asserting that their support was legitimated through multi-group debates under successive kings. Thus, the fourth book of the *Dēnkard* describes how Shapur II<sup>85</sup>

... caused, through disputation, all the inhabitants of the country to be without fault, and brought all (theological) discussions to deliberation and examination. After Adurbad won the case by seemly discourse against all those sectarians, students of the *nask*, and heretics, he (the king) said: "Now that we have seen the religion in existence, we shall not let anyone (approach) evil religion". We shall exercise greater zeal (over this). He (indeed) acted in this manner.

A similar passage describes Khusro I as an unwavering patron, who rejected theories 'external to the Mazdean religion'.<sup>86</sup> Despite their confident tone, these accounts suggest a royal initiative for court debate, and may point to a developed strategy of moderating the influence of different groups through a series of controlled agonistic encounters. As we shall see below, they are echoed in other sources as well.

Several late antique Greek authors note the Sasanian court's welcoming of philosophers, both as diplomats and itinerant sages. According to the *Dēnkard*, Shapur I himself sought out Greek and Indian philosophical learning;<sup>87</sup> but the earliest identified figure is Eustathius, whom Eunapius claims was sent to the Sasanian court in order to delay the invasion of Roman territory, and subsequently inspired the shah to abdicate and take up philosophy with his brilliance.<sup>88</sup> A later account of Agathias, though less hagiographic in tone, is

83 Gammie 1990.

84 Strabo, *Geography* II, 9.3.

85 Translation in Shaked 1994(a): 101; see also the discussion in Vevaina 2010: 137.

86 Shaked 1994(a): 102.

87 See Bailey 1943: 85–86.

88 Eunapius, *Lives of the Sophists* 6, 5.2–10.

similarly marked by Graeco-Roman chauvinism. Thus, Khusro I is said to have proclaimed Uranius to be the greatest philosophers, ‘in spite of the fact that the shah had previously beheld real philosophers of great distinction who had come to his court from Byzantine territory’.<sup>89</sup>

Another philosopher who visited Khusro’s court, Priscianus of Lydia, is associated with the Latin *Solutionum ad Chosroem*, which purports to be the transcript of a conference held there.<sup>90</sup> The topics covered reflect those debated by Mani in 2 Ke: the origin of the universe, whether it is eternal; and the nature of the soul. Alexander of Lycopolis addressed the same topics in his refutation of Manichaeism at the end of the third century, not long after the mission to Egypt had been established.<sup>91</sup> Almost three centuries later, the Neoplatonic philosopher Simplicius, prefaces his polemical account of Manichaean cosmogony with the remark, ‘as one of their sages explained to me’.<sup>92</sup> Though this precious late evidence for dialogue between Manichaeans and philosophers may have occurred in Alexandria; the Sasanian court, which Simplicius visited sometime between 531 and 533, is equally plausible as a forum for debate.

A number of stories in the Babylonian Talmud feature Shapur in dialogue with rabbinic sages, particularly the *amora* Shmuel. These usually present the shah as a supporter of the rabbis, who even takes part in rabbinic legal discussions. As Jason Mokhtarian notes, both Mazdayasnians and Jews appealed to Shapur I and his reign as an authoritative figure: Shmuel’s dictum, *dina demalkhuta dina* (i.e. ‘the law of the kingdom is the law’), combined with Shapur’s alleged support for his legal decisions, ‘shows that the rabbis construe the authority of the early Sasanian empire as upholding Babylonian rabbinic authority and identity’.<sup>93</sup> In another story, Shmuel acts as the king’s sage advisor, interpreting his dreams.<sup>94</sup>

King Shapur said to Shmuel: “You Jews say that you are very wise. Tell me what I will see in my dream”. (Shmuel) replied to him: “You will see the Romans come and seize you, and they will make you tend pigs with a golden staff”. (King Shapur) thought about (this) and he saw it.

89 Agathias, *Histories* 2, 30.3.

90 See Erhart 2009. For the famous sojourn of the Alexandrian Platonists at the Persian court in the wake of Justinian’s closing of the Academy at Athens, see Watts 2004.

91 This interaction between Manichaeans and Platonists is anticipated by the presence of Sethians at the seminar of Plotinus in Rome, on which see Burns 2014: 48–76.

92 Simplicius, *On Epictetus’ Handbook* 27 (treatise 35), tr. Lieu and Sheldon 2011: 222.

93 Mokhtarian 2012: 160.

94 *Baba Metzia* 19a, tr. Mokhtarian 2012: 173. Immediately before this there is a similar exchange between Caesar and R. Yehoshua b. R. Hanina.

Although these anecdotes are clearly not historical, it is certainly possible that Shapur had Jewish interlocutors; conversely, despite the lack of extended dialogue between *magoi* and rabbis in the Babylonian Talmud, the text itself clearly shows traces of cultural interaction.<sup>95</sup> By the fourth century the presence of Jews at the Sasanian court is attested by external sources: The Christian historian Sozomen asserts that a wife of Shapur II was attracted by Jewish wisdom and adopted Jewish practices.<sup>96</sup>

The Christians are also first attested at the Sasanian court under Shapur II, as recorded in both a series of martyr acts, and external accounts such as Sozomen, who also sought to implicate Jews in the persecution.<sup>97</sup> In the associated martyrological literature (e.g. the *Acts* of Symeon bar Sabbae, and of Pusai) they exchange polemics with *magoi* at the Persian court, whom they condemn especially for worshipping the sun, moon, and fire.<sup>98</sup> After Shapur II's long reign, Christians experienced a drastic shift in their relationship with the state under Yazdegerd I (399–420 C.E.), who officially convened and enforced the Synod of 410, working in tandem with Mar Isaac, the Catholicos of Seleucia-Ctesiphon. With their growing numbers and influence, Christians projected this more favorable position back to the reign of Shapur I, creating a counter-narrative in which the shah supports the ascetic Mar Awgīn, instead of Mani, granting him free travel throughout the realm.<sup>99</sup>

Indeed, according to another Christian source, the *Chronicle of Seert*, the Catholicos Aḥāī, successor of Isaac, and like him a 'friend of the king', is said to have initiated a persecution of Manichaeans and Marcionites.<sup>100</sup> This *rapprochement* between the Sasanian king and the Catholicos was reflected on the village level, as described in the sixth century by John of Ephesus, who noted that the *mōbed* in the region of Amida would judge theological disputes

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95 Secunda 2013: *passim*. This may have occurred at the *bei abeidan*, perhaps a temple, in the presence of Iranian authorities and religious others. As Secunda notes: 'The suggestion of some medieval commentators that the *bei abeidan* is a place of interreligious disputations is a fair attempt to pull all the pieces together, but is admittedly not an ironclad conclusion' (Secunda 2013: 58).

96 Eusebius, *History of the Church* 2, 12.2.

97 Sozomen, *History of the Church* 2, 9.

98 A sustained engagement with Mazdayasnian tradition is not observed in the Syriac martyr acts until the *Martyrdom of Pethion, Adurhormizd, and Anahid* in the late fifth or early sixth century, on which see Payne 2010: 27–91.

99 *AMS* 3, 493.13–494.12; see also the discussion in Reeves 2011: 82–83.

100 *Chronicle of Seert* 1, 69; see discussion in McDonough 2008: 88. The situation changed under Yazdegerd's reign, when the Christian attack on a fire temple initiated a series of martyrdoms.

between Christians.<sup>101</sup> The *Chronicle of Seert* also includes an account of an imperially-sponsored ‘competition’, similar to those mentioned in the *Dēnkard*: It reports that, around 490, King Kavad requested all religions in the empire to submit a statement of faith to him. The Catholicos Acacius commissioned Elisha of the school of Nisibis to write the Christian response, which he then translated from Syriac into Persian, and submitted to Kavad.<sup>102</sup> Its contents, which the *Chronicle* asserts were preferred by the king, included summary positions on key areas such as cosmogony, anthropology, and eschatology, topics also covered in Mani’s *Šābuhragān* and Priscianus of Lydia’s *Solutionum ad Chosroem*.

There is no certain evidence for Buddhist teachers at the Sasanian court. They were represented in the group of Indian sages (Samaeans and Brahmins) who traveled to Rome under the emperor Elagabalus (218–222), meeting with the Edessene philosopher Bardaisan on the way.<sup>103</sup> Significantly, Bardaisan’s description of this encounter, which was perhaps known to Mani, emphasizes the prerogative of the wise man in the face of royal authority.<sup>104</sup> Itinerant Buddhist wise men are also featured in the *Questions of King Milinda*, which is similar in genre to 2 Ke, as argued above. In it, the Graeco-Bactrian king Menander I (165–130 BCE) engages in dialogue with the Buddhist sage Nagasena on various topics, including wisdom, the soul, ethics, and rebirth; according to the Pali version, Menander I subsequently becomes a lay follower of Buddhism.

In many ways the court debates suggest analogies to diplomatic exchanges with the Roman empire: A ritualized dialogue, not between equals, but by rival groups who accepted one another’s existence, if not their position. Such interactions would have risks and potential benefits for all parties, including the Mazdayasnians. Thus Kartīr could seek to ceremonially affirm his dominance over other groups, presumably through declaration of victory by the king; the king, in turn, reaffirmed his right to solicit and evaluate various traditions of wisdom. Indeed, imperial patronage was not guaranteed to any group, and levels of support might fluctuate. For example, the Christians experienced a drastic shift in their relationship with the state, moving from persecution under Shapur II to patronage under Yazdegird.

101 John of Ephesus, *Lives of the Eastern Saints* 10. Though note that some Christian martyr acts from this period feature disputes with *magoi* in villages: see Lieu and Lieu 1991: 209 n. 19, with references.

102 *Chronicle of Seert* 14.

103 On Bardaisan’s description of India, see Winter 1999: 101–142 and Ramelli 2009: 91–109.

104 Porphyry, *On Abstinence* 4, 17.49–63, discussed in Reed 2009: 68 n. 87. For royal patronage of Brahmins, including Indian sources, see also Parker 2008: 273.

### *Manichaeans and Court Exchange*

In this section, I explore the activities of Mani and his disciples at the courts of Sasanian Iran, including the context and the dynamics of his debate there.<sup>105</sup> While it is clear that Mani's efforts at winning the support of rulers was key to his missionary strategy, the *Kephalaia* and related literature have an obvious hagiographic agenda that must also be evaluated.<sup>106</sup> It should also be remembered that Mani was valued at court not only for his teaching and dialectic skill, but also as a physician, and perhaps an astrologer.<sup>107</sup> But the emphasis of 2 Ke is on the victory of Mani and his wisdom against opposing sages.

The Coptic Manichaean texts contain numerous references to the Sasanian court, which demonstrate a basic familiarity with its structure.<sup>108</sup> In the *Kephalaia*, the general term for the king's attendants, independent of place, is  $\kappa\omicron\mu\iota\tau\alpha\tau\omicron\nu$ , a loan word from the Latin *comitatus*, denoting the imperial retinue.<sup>109</sup> Thus Mani declares: 'I even spent some years ... him in the retinue ( $\kappa\omicron\mu\iota\tau\alpha\tau\omicron\nu$ ):'<sup>110</sup>  $\phi\omicron\sigma\sigma\alpha\tau\omicron\nu$ , from Latin *fossatum* ('ditch'), has the more specific meaning of military camp.<sup>111</sup> Like *comitatus*, it implies mobility, and both are used interchangeably in a 'king parable' from 1 Ke. In order to explain the progressive actions in the cosmic drama taken by the kingdom of light, Mani compares it to the king's vast retinue, which does not move from city to city

105 Given this focus, I do not analyze all the evidence for Mani's interaction with Shapur; for more on this topic see Gardner, chapter 4 in this volume, which discusses chronological implications of the new evidence in 2 Ke; and Dilley, chapter 8, on the evolving relationship between Shapur and Mani in the context of his rivalry with Kartir. For Hormizd and Bahram, see Gardner, chapter 7.

106 The conversion of princes at court is one of the three methods identified in a recent overview of Mani's missionary strategy, Sundermann 2009. The other two methods are preaching in the diaspora congregations of Mani's former Baptist community; and conducting public disputes, which he associates especially with the Roman empire.

107 Sundermann cites a Parthian text in which Mani treats the chief singer of the king (Sundermann 1981: 58–59). According to some biographical traditions, the apostle was of aristocratic lineage, a claim that many scholars have doubted; if true, it would help to account for his access to courts, cf. Panaino 2004.

108 For introductions to the Sasanian court, see Gignoux 1993 and Wiesehöfer 2007. The most in-depth study is de Jong 2004(a), who uses important Arabic sources such as the *Kitāb al-tāj* of al-Jāhīz, while cautioning that this evidence is relevant to the later Sasanian period rather than the early dynasty.

109 For an overview of the late Roman *comitatus*, see Jones 1964: I, 366–410.

110 1 Ke 15, 34, tr. Gardner 1995: 21.

111 1 Ke 201, 7, 11, 13, 15, and 17. It is also used in the story of Chasro in 2 Ke 299–302 / G131 + 132 + 129 + 130.



as a single unit; some dependents precede him, while others follow. Finally, the Coptic Manichaica also mention the ‘palace’ (παλάτιον), the physical location of Shapur’s court.<sup>112</sup> Unless otherwise indicated, this was presumably the palace located at Seleucia-Ctesiphon; as opposed to other known early Sasanian palaces such as at Estakr, Bīšāpūr, and Gondēšāpūr (Bēlapat).

Coptic Manichaean sources describe the Iranian court in some detail, both naming specific officers and employing a terminology which reflects its aristocratic composition, as reflected in Middle Iranian texts. The description in Hom of Mani’s arrival at Bēlapat records details of court protocol: the *mōbed* report it to Kartīr, who informs the συγκάθεδρος, who notifies the μαγιστωρ (from the Latin *magister*), who tells King Bahram.<sup>113</sup> In the Manichaean historical text, Shapur the ὕπαρχος, perhaps equivalent to Shapur the *hargbed* known from the king’s trilingual inscription, is mentioned.<sup>114</sup> The precise equivalents of these terms are obscure, both because they do not have a known technical meaning in the Greek or Latin, and because they appear only once in extant texts.<sup>115</sup> In contrast, I argue that the references to various Sasanian elites in the Coptic Manichaica, all of them Greek loanwords, reflect a consistent distinction between the three types of noble, all of which are also attested in Manichaean Middle Iranian.<sup>116</sup>

The *wispuhr*(*ān*), members of the royal family, are denoted by εὐγενής;<sup>117</sup> the *wuzurg*(*an*), ‘great ones’, apparently ministers, by μεγιστάνος;<sup>118</sup> and the *āzād*, or ‘free nobles’, by ἐλεύθερος, an identification already suggested by Iris Colditz.<sup>119</sup> *Megistanoi* is a relatively literal translation of *wuzurg*(*an*), just as ἐλεύθερος is of *āzād*.<sup>120</sup> While the etymology of *wispuhr* is uncertain, and the meaning of εὐ-

112 2 Ke 353 / G227, in the chapter heading, which he refers to the king of Touran’s palace.

113 Hom 45, 8–18; for attempts to explain these titles, see the notes in Pedersen 2006.

114 Pedersen 1997: 200.

115 For attempts to identify these Greek terms with known Sasanian offices, see the notes in Pedersen 2006. Wiesehöfer makes no attempt to do so (Wiesehöfer 2007: 73).

116 For an overview of the Middle Iranian sources, see Colditz 2000: 53–107.

117 For this type of noble in Middle Iranian sources, including Manichaean ones, see Colditz 2000: 328–356. Although in the trilingual inscription of Shapur there is a distinction between rulers (*šahryār*) and princes (*wispuhr*), by the end of the third century the two terms seem to be equivalents; earlier, Shapur’s brother Pērōz, a supported of Mani, is described in sources as a *wispuhr*, yet also became Kušān-shah (p. 335).

118 Colditz 2000: 241–327.

119 Colditz 2000: 161; for an overview of the Middle Iranian sources, including Manichaean examples, pp. 53–107. For more on the Semitic and Iranian terms for ‘free nobles’, see de Blois 1985.

120 This term is also found in the CMC: see Clackson, Hunter, and Lieu, s.v.

γενής in Greek is broad, both are applied to the First Man, son of the Father of Greatness, in Middle Persian and Coptic texts respectively, further suggesting the meaning 'prince'.<sup>121</sup> All three groups of nobles (εὐγενής, μεγιστάνος, and ἐλευθέρος) appear in a lengthy parable comparing the seduction of the archons to a beautiful free woman (ἐλευθέρα), who, in an effort to save her brother, appears unveiled in public, attracting the lustful gaze of 'princes and great ones and servants'.<sup>122</sup>

What appears to be Mani's first interaction with a ruler is described near the end of the CMC, in which he travels to a distant land, where he meets a king and his nobles (μεγιστάνες) in the middle of a hunt.<sup>123</sup> Mani gets up, approaches the king, and, after doing *proskynesis*, teaches him wisdom (σοφία) and all the commandments. His instruction includes the 'two natures' and the 'beginning, middle, and end'; precisely the cosmological and eschatological topics covered in the *Šābuhragān*. The CMC notes that the king and his nobles gladly received these commandments, and allowed Mani to teach them in his realm; according to a damaged passage, his initial audience with Shapur takes place in 241 or 242 C.E.<sup>124</sup> In 1 Ke, Mani states that he was honored and given free passage throughout the empire, also noting that he spent 'some years' in Shapur's retinue.<sup>125</sup> One or more powerful sponsors must have facilitated this meeting: According to Ibn al-Nadīm, it was Pērōz, a brother of the king;<sup>126</sup> in 2 Ke, Kardel son of Artaban introduces Mani to Shapur after he has defeated Iodasphes.<sup>127</sup>

The exact nature of Mani's interactions with Shapur are impossible to reconstruct. As I argue elsewhere in this volume, the king probably functioned as a patron, providing meals for the elect. While this support was typical of catechumens, we need not assume that Shapur 'converted'; or that Mani wrote

121 For the Middle Iranian texts, see Colditz 2000: 348–351; for the Coptic, see 1 Ke 51,14 and 20. On the other hand, at least one nobleman (εὐγενής) speaks with Mani at the king of Touran's court (cf. BeDuhn, chapter 3 in this volume), suggesting the term may have also been employed in a more generic sense.

122 1 Ke 134. Elsewhere Mani mentions 'free men' together with 'leaders' (1 Ke 200, 26). The 'servants' probably correspond to *bandag*, part of the royal household (Colditz 2000: 108–165). Also note that 'eunuchs' are mentioned in the Coptic *Acts* codex; see Pedersen 1997 (pl. 100, 28).

123 CMC 130, 1–135, 6.

124 CMC 163–164.

125 1 Ke 15, 31–33.

126 Ibn al-Nadīm's statement that this occurred after Mani travelled for forty years is untenable; but Pērōz is attested as a brother of the shah in Shapur's inscription at the Ka'ba-ye Zardošt, and as a supporter of Mani in M267b + M314.

127 For a discussion of this passage, see Gardner, chapter 4 in this volume.

the *Šābuhragān* at the beginning of their relationship in order to achieve this. Indeed, he could have received advice and instruction from Mani without an exclusive commitment to his system. In κ75, Mani complains that the king often calls on him; and, in κ345, he appears to teach Shapur, as well as others in the palace.<sup>128</sup> But Mani's interactions at court were not limited to the king. In the prologue of the *Kephalaia*, he notes his preaching activities to the 'free men and free women', who are juxtaposed with 'elect and catechumens', suggesting that many of these nobles listened to him without declaring their allegiance.<sup>129</sup> Mani also speaks with anonymous princes (εὐγενής) in 2 Ke; for example in κ342, which takes place in a 'church (ἐκκλησία)'.<sup>130</sup> In κ343, the catechumen Pabakos announces his intention to proclaim Mani's wisdom before 'princes (εὐγενής)'.<sup>131</sup> The implication is that he will recommend Mani to a relatively small group of elites, members of the royal family, most of whom would have only been at court occasionally because of their positions as regional rulers. It is precisely to this group that Shapur directed his letters of recommendation on behalf of Mani:<sup>132</sup>

King Shapur took care of me [well]. He wrote letters on my behalf to [all] the princes (εὐγενής) saying: "Take care of him and assist him well so that no one may stumble and sin against him". [Still], the testimonies are in your midst that King Shapur took care of me well, and (so are) the [letters] which he wrote on my behalf to every [land] [to the] princes that [they] might take care of me.

These princes to whom Shapur addressed his letter would have included kinsmen of the king serving as provincial rulers, including well-known figures from Manichaean hagiography: Mihršāh; and the Turan-shah.<sup>133</sup> Although Mani's encounters with these princes cannot be dated precisely, it is possible that he was granted an initial audience on the strength of their brother's letters. Indeed, Mihršāh displays an initial suspicion, even hostility towards Mani, questioning whether the gardens of paradise are comparable to his own gar-

128 Unfortunately, the passage is highly fragmentary. Shapur is mentioned in 2 Ke 436, 25 / G320; and, again, as a speaker in 2 Ke 437, 5–6 / G317.

129 1 Ke 6, 23.

130 2 Ke 420, 31 / G304.

131 1 Ke 296, 1–9.

132 Hom 48, 2–9, ed. Pedersen 2006. See also the Parthian text M267b + M314.

133 The Parthian text M47.

den; much like Iuzanes's challenge to Chasro in 2 Ke.<sup>134</sup> Mani responds by granting him a vision of paradise, after which Mihršāh becomes his follower. Mani's meeting with the shah of Turan is recorded in both Middle Iranian sources and 2 Ke.<sup>135</sup> The two complementary versions report that on this occasion he leads a 'righteous one', apparently a Buddhist sage, through the heavens, at the end of which the Turan-shah declares that *Mani* is Buddha. Mani then teaches the ruler concerning 'paradise and hell, the [purification] of the [worlds], sun [and moon, soul and] body, the apostles that had come into the lands, righteous ones and sinners, and the work of the elect and [the auditors].'<sup>136</sup> After this, he tells the king a parable, and the text breaks off.

The 2 Ke text provides a fuller picture of the content of Mani's court debates. The account of the shah of Turan suggests that he taught rulers basic teachings about cosmology, eschatology and soteriology; precisely the topics requested by later kings such as Kavad or Khusro. Mani's debate with Iodasphe in 2 Ke concerns the question of whether the world will end. On the other hand, Mani's dialogues with Goundesh cover an impressive variety of topics, such as the earliest script.<sup>137</sup> And their discussion of cosmology, a more frequently visited topic, is enhanced through vivid parables: Mani compares the world to a 'stack of wheat', and a 'pitcher full of wine', perhaps in response to a challenge of Goundesh. Similar 'riddling' competitions, in which a parable must be explained, are attested in later debates between Christians and *mōbed*.<sup>138</sup> Goundesh is 'vanquished and amazed', leading Mani to return to another stock theme, cosmogony: "If you are wise, then teach me from where the foundation of this world came".

This acknowledgement and praise of Mani's teaching by Goundesh is a special case of a formal component found in both volumes of the *Kephalaia*: At the end of most chapters, the original questioner (whether a catechumen or sage) accepts Mani's response and glorifies him. While some level of initial doubt is thus acceptable, such uncertainty is always resolved by the authoritative teach-

134 2 Ke 301, 20–24 / G129.

135 See BeDuhn, chapter 3 in this volume.

136 Sundermann 1981: 19–24, text 2.2.

137 For the Parthian Gundesh episodes, see Sundermann 1981: 85–86, texts 4b.1 and 4b.2 (M6040 and M6041).

138 *Chronicle of Seert* 2, 29. The patriarch Mar Aba challenges a Mazdayasnian *mōbed* at the court of Khusro to a riddle explaining the revolt of the Christian prince Anoshazad, asking him to interpret the image of a pot with water inside, fire underneath, and the wood burned by the fire (discussed in Wood 2013: 110).

ing of Mani. A similar ideology undergirds the third-century bishop Dionysius of Alexandria's procedure for holding colloquy with a group of Egyptian millenarian Christians following the teachings of Nepos, which he opposed. He notes how they first brought him Nepos's book, as if it were 'a weapon and invincible rampart', echoing the metaphor of debate as battle found in contemporary Manichaean sources discussed above. Yet Dionysius reports how he convinced them to abandon this false doctrine (δόγμα):<sup>139</sup>

On that occasion I conceived the greatest admiration for the brothers and sisters, their steadfastness, love of truth, studious attention, and intelligence, as we went over in order and with fairness the questions (ἔρωτήσεις), the difficult points, and the points of agreement. On the one hand refusing to cling contentiously and at all costs to their former beliefs, even if they were clearly wrong; and on the other hand not avoiding the refutations, but to the extent possible attempting to engage with, and master, the proposed questions. Nor, if reason took hold, were we ashamed to change opinions and give assent; but conscientiously and without dissimulation and with hearts laid open to God we accepted whatever was established by proofs and by the teachings of the holy scriptures.

Dionysius's description is notable both for its acceptance of questioning and its firm but implicit insistence on the eventual consensus of the audience. The bishop also praises his audience for their efforts 'to engage with, and master, the proposed questions'; and, having understood the argument, 'to change opinions and give assent'.

Precisely the same expectations underlie both 1 Ke and 2 Ke, in which the catechumens offer questions which are sometimes pointed, but always answered satisfactorily. In the first volume, the interlocutors are mostly unnamed catechumens who quickly give their assent and praise; in 2 Ke, one of the catechumens, Pabakos, glorifies Mani and makes obeisance to him after a comparison of the sayings of Jesus and Zarades.<sup>140</sup> Pabakos also highlights the supremacy of Mani's wisdom, proclaiming: "Very great is your wisdom and good, (it being) more than all the wisdoms that are in the world".<sup>141</sup> Similarly, Mani's opponents are expected either to be silent in the face of his arguments,

139 Eusebius, *History of the Church* 7, 24.8, ed. Oulton 2: 194.

140 2 Ke 420, 24–28 / G304. On this important chapter see my contribution in chapter 5 of this volume.

141 2 Ke 430, 26–27 / G294.

such as the Nasorean in κ89, or Bahram in Hom;<sup>142</sup> or, like the sages in 2 Ke, to acknowledge his superiority to them. In the case of Goundesh, this apparently involved following Mani after his explanation of a parable: "From now on [I will be your] disciple, because there is no wiser man ...".<sup>143</sup> Whether this meant as a catechumen or an elect is unclear.

Mani's pre-eminence in court debates is also expressed through his personal beauty and radiance. Thus, when Iodasphees sees Mani before their debate, he is impressed by his physical appearance: 'great in his likeness', with a face that is 'beautiful (and) transformed'.<sup>144</sup> In a Turkish fragment on Mani's interaction with Shapur's successor Hormizd, the shah extravagantly praises the beauty of Mani, specifically his face, inferring that he is powerful; Mani then convinces him that it would not be in either's interest to engage in a contest of strength.<sup>145</sup> In the unpublished Berlin chapter κ191, which mentions the 'beauty of his [Mani's] image', this sublime physical appearance is described as 'my light-wisdom', a physical manifestation of his message and its ultimate goal, the kingdom of light.<sup>146</sup>

Mani's changing fortunes at the royal court are reflected in accounts of his increasingly troubled exchanges there. A Sogdian fragment suggests that Mani had to struggle to gain an audience with the shah Hormizd.<sup>147</sup> He tells three successive parables to a *mōbed*, who in turn agrees to grant him access, first, to the chief *mōbed*; second, to a certain lord Ptaw (probably Baat); and third, to the king himself. Mani's wisdom is presented as a series of profound parables with diverse topics, from a deaf boy and his stepmother to animal fables, which sufficiently impress the otherwise hostile *mōbed* to allow him to enter the court. Later in the episode, however, Mani reverts to the same policy of silence he pursued in the Baptist sect, 'like that boy who, by a cunning strategem, was silent'.<sup>148</sup>

The events surrounding Mani's last days and his final encounter with Bahram, despite their centrality to his later followers, are preserved only in

142 Hom 47, 30 and 49, 31.

143 2 Ke 369, 11–12 / G243.

144 From 2 Ke 402, 6–9 / G276.

145 See Shimin, Klimkeit and Laut 1987.

146 1 Ke 488, 5; English translation, based on Wolf-Peter Funk's unpublished Coptic text, in Pettipiece 2009: 220. The chapter's title is: *There are Five Properties in the Image of our Apostle Symbolizing the Five Light Fathers*.

147 As plausibly identified by the editor, Sims-Williams 1990.

148 Sims-Williams 1990: 285.

fragments and short polemical accounts.<sup>149</sup> There are hints of a court dispute with Kartīr.<sup>150</sup> According to Manichaean tradition, their founder is said to have refuted the ‘error’ of the *magousaeans*.<sup>151</sup> But Arabic authors record the opposite outcome: Ya‘qūbī, for instance, asserts that Mani had converted Shapur for ten years, until a certain *mōbed* (presumably Kartīr) challenges him to a debate, which Mani loses, causing the shah to convert to Mazdayasnanism.<sup>152</sup> According to al-İṣfahānī, Bahram convenes a group of scholars who defeat Mani in debate before his execution.<sup>153</sup> Finally, Tha‘ālibī describes this exchange in more detail, with a polemical survey of Mani’s doctrines culminating in the king’s sarcastic response: “Then it is incumbent that we put you to death to bring about the destruction of your body and the prosperity of your spirit!”<sup>154</sup> These Islamic reports, presumably based on lost Iranian sources, echo the triumphalism of Kartīr’s inscriptions.

Mani’s eventual condemnation by Bahram I, and the ensuing persecutions, led to a marked ambivalence towards worldly authorities in the writings of his followers. While they continued to celebrate their founder’s early successes with Shapur and various princes, they also commemorated his ultimate condemnation and death. In κ76, for example, Mani complains that his wisdom has been rejected in every region of Iran, despite Shapur’s continual requests for his presence in Ctesiphon.<sup>155</sup> In the section of Hom concerning Mani’s last days, Bahram I ignorantly asserts his own royal prerogative to revelation over that of the apostle, who decisively responds that God has the power to choose his messengers.<sup>156</sup> This exchange alludes to the prediction of Jesus in the Markan apocalypse: ‘And you will stand before governors (ἡγεμόνων) and kings (βασιλέων) because of me, as a testimony to them.’<sup>157</sup> After Mani’s death, his followers faced further persecution, in which his successor, Sisinnios, was killed by king Bahram II.<sup>158</sup> In one of his rock inscriptions, Kartīr boasts about his victory over

149 See the new construction offered in Gardner, chapter 7 in this volume.

150 As speculated in Hinz 1971: 492.

151 2 Ps 43, 24.

152 Reeves 2011: 31–32. The Manichaeans were in agreement, however, that the *magoi* were responsible for his death; cf. 2 Ps 15, 9–10; 16, 20–22; further Hom 26, 1–2.

153 Reeves 2011: 35.

154 Reeves 2011: 41–42.

155 1 Ke 183, 10–188, 29.

156 Hom 47, 21–25.

157 Mark 13:9 NRSV. As Koenen 1986: 295 has sensibly noted about the CMC: ‘... the motif of the confrontation with the kings carries also an allusion to the *synoptic apocalypse*’.

158 Hom 79, 1–85, 34.

various other religions, claiming that Jews, Śramanas, Brahmanas, Nazareans, Christians, Baptists, and Manichaeans, were 'smitten'.<sup>159</sup>

And yet Mani's early followers seem to have maintained a sense of optimism, even in the face of persecution, re-inscribing previous worldly success into an imminent apocalyptic future. In the *Sermon on the Great War*, Kustaios describes a period of peace after the great war, during which the great king reigns.<sup>160</sup> Mani's followers will take the place of the *magousaeans*, and meet in the 'palaces of kings'.<sup>161</sup> Moreover, the preacher claims: "Behold, the sects have been smitten and eliminated".<sup>162</sup> This is a striking echo of Kartīr's claim to have smitten Jews, Śramanas, Brahmanas, Nazareans, Christians, Baptists, and Manichaeans; suggesting that the Manichaeans were imagining retribution for their current circumstances. Yet the extent to which such belligerent language corresponded to actual physical violence is uncertain: Kartīr may also be using the traditional Iranian vocabulary of 'eliminating evil', as well as the Avestan imagery of cosmic struggle, to convey his attempt to be recognized by the kings as the sole mediator of authentic teaching.<sup>163</sup>

There is a similar redeployment of the language of cosmic struggle in the depiction of Addā's missionary activities in the Roman empire, where he:<sup>164</sup>

... saw many doctrinal disputes with the religions ... composed writings and made wisdom his weapon. He opposed the dogmas with these (writings), (and) in everything he acquitted himself well. He subdued and enchained the dogmas.

Here, Addā is said to combat the 'dogmas' by the wisdom of his writings, echoing the use of wisdom in the struggle with darkness found in Manichaean cosmological literature, as discussed in Part II. Debates with other religions were surely understood in the same way, and Mani's disciples imitated his efforts at winning royal converts even after his death, whether spurred on by apocalyptic rhetoric or by their founder's earlier successes.

159 Transcription in MacKenzie 1989: 54, who translates *kēš* as 'heresy'.

160 Hom 32, 20.

161 Hom 26, 1 and 13–14.

162 Hom 29, 2–3.

163 Skjaervø 2011, who also notes its similarities to the Addā fragment: 'The verb *zad* is a traditional, epic term for eliminating evil and does not necessarily refer to killing (which is *ōzad*)'. See also the dialogue between Zoroaster and Ohrmazd in which prayers such as the Ashem Vohu are compared to weapons: *Pahlavi Rivāyat*, 13a1–2.

164 M2, tr. Asmussen 1975: 21.



Various borderland principalities between the Roman and Iranian empires seem to have been the focus of these missionary efforts. Mani or one of his disciples visited the court of Habza, shah of Varuch, identified as an area of Bactria by Henning, but by later scholars as the kingdom of Georgia.<sup>165</sup> The first fragmentary account of this episode to be published, M216b, notes that the missionary ‘overcame the teachings of the (other) religions by their own evil,’ evidently a reference to court dispute.<sup>166</sup> In Armenia, Mar Gabryab is said to have converted the king of *ryb’n* (either Erevan or Arebanos), which is accomplished both by healing his daughter, and debating Christians at their church.<sup>167</sup> Similarly, several reports relate how Addā converted the queen of Thadmor, perhaps to be identified with Zenobia of Palmyra, after healing her sister Nafšā.<sup>168</sup> And according to the Coptic Manichaean church history, the Manichaeans gained the support of Amaro, possibly the Arab Lakhmid king ‘Amr b. ‘Adi, whose advocacy before King Narseh won a temporary reprieve from persecution.<sup>169</sup> While none of these accounts have extended debates, the Sogdian version of Addā’s missionary work in the Roman empire includes a dialogue between himself and certain ‘ministers’ about such topics as the nature of the soul.<sup>170</sup>

This Sogdian text is the only evidence of Manichaeans debating in front of Roman officials for several centuries, presumably because they were outlawed by Diocletian’s edict in 297.<sup>171</sup> And yet they continued to debate in other venues, an activity with which they are strongly associated in Graeco-Roman sources, as noted by Richard Lim in his influential study of late Roman pub-

165 See Henning 1941: 85–90; Sundermann 1981: 24–25; and Mgaloblishvili and Rapp 2010.

166 M216, tr. Henning 1941: 86–87. Precisely which religions he overcame is not stated; but the Middle Persian text M2 contains an interesting hagiographic episode in which Mar Ammo is prevented from entering Bactria by a certain Bag Ard, apparently Ard-oxsho, a popular Bactrian goddess, until he reads a chapter from the *Treasure of Life*. This scene recalls the portrait of Addā ‘doing battle’ with scriptures as part of the Roman mission; Bag Ard is said to have her own ‘wisdom’ in another text from this cycle. For a recent overview of the eastern missions of Mani and his followers, see Scott 2007.

167 So 18224 in Sundermann 1981: 45–49, text 3.4. For the identification with Erevan, see Sundermann 1981: 45; for Arebanos, Russell 1998: 22–23.

168 The incident is related in So 18223 + So 18222 and alluded to in M2; for translations, see Gardner and Lieu 2004: 111–114.

169 *Acts* codex (pl. 99, 28–33 ed. Pedersen 1997: 195). It is also possible that the patron was Amarū, from the Abgarid dynasty of Edessa, as argued in de Blois 1995.

170 So 18220, in Sundermann 1981: 36–41, text 3.2; tr. Lieu in Gardner and Lieu 2004: 112.

171 *Collatio Mosaicarum* 15.3.

lic disputation.<sup>172</sup> In contrast to Iranian debates, the opponents were mostly Christians, who composed our only extant accounts of these events, adopting the same hagiographic conventions as in 2 Ke but with opposing sympathies. The most influential work of anti-Manichaean propaganda in the west, the *Acts of Archelaus*, is itself cast as a public dispute between Mani and Archelaus, the bishop of an unidentified border town, Carchar. Mani, of course, is defeated and expelled.<sup>173</sup> Later texts in various genres relate similar encounters with Manichaean elect. According to the Arian church historian Philostorgius, Aphthonius the Manichaean, widely known for his wisdom and rhetorical skill, is bested by Aetius, who travels from Asia Minor to Alexandria for the debate; the vanquished sage is deeply ashamed and dies soon thereafter.<sup>174</sup> Even the transcripts of Augustine's public debates with Fortunatus and Felix, though not hagiographic, are still probably tendentious: The former is silenced, while the latter is led to admit his error and anathematizes Mani in front of the crowd.<sup>175</sup> Thus, Christians of the Roman empire used the same literary *topoi* deployed in 2 Ke, namely the silencing and conversion of his opponents, to assert the folly of that wisdom as revealed in public disputes across the Roman empire.

## Conclusion

A programmatic statement about the importance of Mani's dialogues, and by extension *Kephalaia* literature more generally, is given in the parable of the king's gemstone, as recounted by Goundesh and interpreted by Mani.<sup>176</sup> According to Goundesh, the king's gemstone assures him of safety and victory in seven different dangerous situations, including enemy attacks and revolts from his own children. Mani asserts that *he* is the king, and compares his

172 Lim 1995: 70–108.

173 On the location and identity of Carchar, see Gardner, chapter 7 in this volume. Gardner also suggests that Mani's debate with Archelaus may hold an allusion to his final debate against Kartir.

174 Philostorgius, *History of the Church* 3, 15. Similarly, according to the *Life of Porphyry of Gaza*, Julia, an *electa* from Antioch, engages the bishop in public debate in 402 C.E. She holds her own until Porphyry prays that she be silenced, which immediately occurs in miraculous fashion, and she dies soon thereafter (John the Deacon, *Life of Porphyry of Gaza*, 85–91).

175 On the debates, see, e.g., Decret and van Oort 2004, van Oort 2008, van Oort 2010: 532–534, and Iricinschi 2012.

176 The chapter concerns Mani's *Treasure of Life*, which he apparently has just finished writing. Presumably the 'gemstone' belongs to the metaphor of wisdom as treasure; the discussion of Goundesh's parable is in 2 Ke 375–380 / G249–254. See BeDuhn, ch. 3 in this volume.

wisdom to the gemstone, which he likewise employs to overcome challenges. He thus adopts the image of wisdom as a tool for combat found frequently in Manichaean (and Mazdayasnian) literature, simultaneously connecting it to a potent symbol of royal power, the jeweled diadem. As Matthew Canepa notes regarding the rock reliefs of Ardashir and Shapur, for both Roman and Sasanian cultures ‘this divine re-crowning was a potent and cross-culturally intelligible statement of divine favor and supernatural power’.<sup>177</sup> No image is more appropriate for Mani’s claim as supreme interpreter of cross-cultural wisdom, which is especially displayed through his triumph against other sages at royal court.

Mani’s explanation of the parable about the king’s gemstone also reveals much about the assumed context and intended audience of the *Kephalaia*. First, Mani directs his wisdom internally, when his disciples are quarreling with one another, suggesting that the *Kephalaia* are intended to respond to doctrinal disputes among the elect and are meant to achieve consensus, as in Origen’s *Dialogues* with the bishop Heracleides.<sup>178</sup> Mani also notes that his wisdom is directed externally, towards the ‘wicked’, who at first speak out against him, but are soon convinced so that they will ‘proclaim good words through the good which has been planted in them’.<sup>179</sup> Examples of adversaries turned into allies feature prominently in 2 Ke, including Goundesh himself. Finally, Mani states that he preaches to the ‘free men, free women, and catechumens of the faith’; that is, both non-Manichaean sponsors and catechumens, who all offer him charity with which to administer his church.<sup>180</sup> Mani’s discussions with Pabakos and unaffiliated nobles were thus associated with maintaining and extending access to patronage. While the hagiographic perspective of 2 Ke suggests that its audience was primarily internal, its example of engaging other sages in debate and seeking support from the wealthy was certainly followed by the Manichaean elect, in the Roman and Sasanian empires, and beyond.

The 2 Ke text suggests that the first generations of Mani’s disciples returned from Rome, Iran, and beyond to a base of operations in Sasanian Mesopotamia, mixing and re-circulating traditions in either direction as they again pressed their missionary activities abroad.<sup>181</sup> The multiple interacting cultural and political forces evident in the *Kephalaia* are intimately connected to the anchor

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177 Canepa 2009: 199.

178 This is related to the *Kephalaia*’s role in systematizing doctrine, as explored in Pettipiece 2009.

179 2 Ke 379, 8–9 / G253.

180 2 Ke 379, 28–380, 1 / G253–254.

181 On this point, see BeDuhn at chapter 3 and Dilley at chapter 5 in this volume.

of early Manichaeism in the Syro-Mesopotamian borderland. While scholars have recognized the importance of this position for Manichaean identity, there have been no efforts at sketching its nature and scope.<sup>182</sup> The Syro-Mesopotamian borderland was not the periphery of an imperial center, but a complex region located between two conflicting states. Nor was it defined by a specific frontier between the Roman and Sasanian empires, which in any case shifted frequently; instead, it encompassed an extensive desert region, punctuated by agricultural development and urban settlements. In effect, it was a *contact zone*, as elaborated by Marie Louis Pratt: “social spaces where disparate cultures meet, clash, and grapple with one another, often in highly asymmetrical relations of domination and subordination.”<sup>183</sup>

At either end of the Syro-Mesopotamian borderland were Antioch and Seleucia-Ctesiphon, which in late antiquity became important bases for the mobile imperial courts of Rome and Iran. These two major cities also represent the furthest major sites of conquest for the early wars between the two empires.<sup>184</sup> The twin courts, as they traversed the border regions, sought to achieve both military and cultural dominance over a complex mixture of peoples, languages, and cultures. Scribes left numerous Middle Persian inscriptions at the synagogue of Dura Europos, possibly during a period of occupation.<sup>185</sup> Exchanges of diplomats, embassies, and hostages transformed the court itself into a contact zone, as did the patronage of sages. Plotinus, hoping for an encounter with Persian and Indian philosophers, accompanied Gordian III on his campaign against Shapur, whom Mani himself is said to have accompanied on his expeditions against the Roman empire.<sup>186</sup> Although Mani's universalizing message is often assumed to have appealed to Shapur as a tool for uniting his vast empire, it also resonates closely with the shah's claim to sovereignty over both Iran and 'non-Iran'.

We have also observed the pursuit of wisdom within imperial courts, no longer on military campaign, at either end of Syro-Mesopotamia: Origen's interview with Julia Domna in Antioch, and Mani's encounters with Shapur at Seleucia-Ctesiphon. In Sasanian Mesopotamia as elsewhere in the border region, Aramaic was the primary language, leading to a certain discontinuity with the dominant imperial literatures, both written and oral. At the same time, various forms of bilingualism and cultural exchange between Greek, on the

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182 See e.g. Panaino 2004; BeDuhn and Mirecki 2007.

183 Pratt 1992: 4.

184 Sources for the Roman-Sasanian frontier through 363 are in Dodgeon and Lieu 1992.

185 These inscriptions are analyzed most recently in Daryaei 2010.

186 Alexander of Lycopolis, *Against the Teachings of Mani* 2, 4.21–22.

one hand, and Middle Persian, on the other, made Aramaic speakers natural intermediaries between Roman and Iranian traditions. Elsewhere in this volume I explore Mani's understanding of Zarades in relation to Graeco-Roman and Iranian literature in order to contextualize his discussion of the 'law of Zarades', which brought him into conflict with Kartīr. Yet Seleucia-Ctesiphon also hosted sages of regions far removed from Syro-Mesopotamia, as is suggested the episode in 2 Ke featuring Iodasphe, the 'wise man from the east'. Mani surely interacted with Buddhists, and his works are useful for identifying discourses emerging in late antiquity from Rome to India. One such discourse, concerning otherworldly realms, is discussed in my final chapter in this volume, in which I explore its connection to court patronage.

The Manichaeans were the only diaspora group with its center in the Syro-Mesopotamian borderland region; and as such acted as the primary transmitters of Iranian traditions to the Mediterranean, and of Judaeo-Christian, and to some extent Graeco-Roman traditions, to Iran and beyond.<sup>187</sup> This location gave rise to the generic polymorphy of the *Kephalaia*; and thus it is not surprising that the Chester Beatty volume contains early examples of the prose disputation, which flourished in both the Mediterranean world and Iran at the end of late antiquity and into the early Islamic period.<sup>188</sup> Averil Cameron has suggested that this genre should be studied in conjunction with earlier *erōtapokriseis* literature, one of the Graeco-Roman genres to which our volume is related.<sup>189</sup> Most of the early examples are Christian, and they feature debates with other religions, including Jews, Samaritans, Manichaeans, and Muslims. Some are staged at the imperial court, especially during the reign of Justinian, including the debate between Paul the Persian and Photeinos the Manichaean in Constantinople.<sup>190</sup> There are also early Islamic examples of this genre, reaching a peak in ninth-century Abbasid Baghdad. In the Mazdayasnian context, in addition to the passages from the *Dēnkard* discussed in Part I, the *Gizistag*

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187 While Jews also traveled between the land of Israel and Mesopotamia (see e.g. Kalmin 2006), the center of their Mediterranean diaspora was in Roman Palestine rather in Iran, in contrast to the Manichaean mission. For the question of the 'split' Jewish diaspora, see Edrei and Mendels 2007 and Gafni 2014. The degree of connectedness between the Manichaeans of Rome and Iran is also a central, if largely unanswered, question.

188 Cameron 1991 offers a wide-ranging analysis of this genre (see now Cameron 2014).

189 Cameron 1991: 106.

190 Cameron 1991: 102–103. On the debate between Paul and Photeinos, see Lieu 1986: 215–216, including further information on the Manichaeans in early Byzantine polemics; and Bennett 2003. On the *Conversation of John the Orthodox with a Manichaean*, see Bennett 2007.

*Abāliš* records a dispute between the theologian Ādurfarnbag and the apostate Abāliš before the caliph al-Ma'mūn, who declares the former victorious.<sup>191</sup>

While the Manichaeans are usually absent from later texts, no doubt reflecting their dwindling numbers and outlaw status, some of the same themes found in 2 Ke repeat themselves in subsequent literary controversies. For example, the discussion between Mani and Iodasphes concerning whether the world is created or eternal is echoed by the Syriac *Acta* of the Iranian martyr Mar Qardagh, probably written in the sixth century. According to this text, Qardagh, an Iranian aristocrat from northern Iraq, becomes a Christian after the monk Abdišo convinces him that the sun, moon, and stars are created, not eternal.<sup>192</sup> Similar cosmological topics were the subject of two Christian polemical treatises against Proclus and Aristotle by John Philoponus, a sixth-century Alexandrian philosopher; significantly, Mani was remembered by Bīrūnī as a peer of Aristotle and John Philoponus, all of them philosophers who 'acknowledge the existence of jinn'.<sup>193</sup> Despite the Arab polymath's remark, Mani was far closer to post-Hellenistic philosophy's pursuit of truth through the reformulation of ancient wisdom traditions than to the reception of Aristotle and Plato by Muslim intellectuals. And yet the negotiation of religious difference through court disputations, real and imaginary, enjoyed a long afterlife in Mesopotamia, Iran, and the Mediterranean.

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191 Tafazzoli 1982. There is also polemical material in the *Škand-gumānīg wizār*, which I discuss in chapter 5 with reference to 2 Ke.

192 For a translation and study of this text, see Walker 2006.

193 Reeves 2011: 183.

## Parallels between Coptic and Iranian Kephalaia: Goundesh and the King of Touran

*Jason BeDuhn*

The discovery, in the first half of the twentieth century, of two caches of original Manichaean texts thousands of miles apart, opened a new era of research, but at the same time set the stage for a debate over the historical unity of Manichaeism. The ninth- to tenth-century Middle Iranian and Turkic text fragments of Turfan and the fourth- to fifth-century Coptic codices of Medinet Madi provide plenty of continuities and discontinuities to suit either side of the debate. Although the ‘canon’ of Mani’s own writings is largely absent from the recovered texts, it is at least presupposed in references found in both the Coptic and Iranian remains, and well beyond. These compositions of the founder anchored a common Manichaean tradition, as it moved out through missionaries sent both west and east in the third century.<sup>1</sup> Yet the question remains: How long following Mani’s death did a unified Manichaean movement last, and missions to the Roman west and Asian east continue to receive instruction from the religion’s Mesopotamian headquarters? Had second and third generation Manichaeans in both mission areas participated in a single process of forming an institutionalized Manichaean Church with a common orthodoxy and orthopraxy? Or had western and eastern Manichaeans followed entirely separate developmental trajectories? The answer depends on finding evidence of a common post-Mani literary tradition in the Coptic and Iranian texts. In continuity with a number of recent studies that have devoted attention to literary connections across the Manichaean world,<sup>2</sup> the Chester Beatty *Kephalaia* (hereafter 2 Ke) now supplies a fresh opportunity to explore this issue.<sup>3</sup>

As soon as readings from the Medinet Madi codices started to become available, researchers scoured them for parallels to the Turfan material. Basing themselves on the fascicles of the Berlin *Kephalaia* (hereafter 1 Ke) that had

1 On Mani’s *Epistles* as an example of the founder’s work preserved in both the Iranian and Coptic material, see Sundermann 2009(b) and Gardner 2013(c).

2 See, e.g. Gardner 2011.

3 See also Gardner, ‘Mani’s Last Days’, chapter 7 in this volume.

appeared before the second world war, Walter Henning and Mary Boyce identified a number of Turfan fragments as belonging to the same genre, and perhaps the same composition, as 1 Ke. In 1945, Henning published eight pages from a manuscript designated M135,<sup>4</sup> four pages of which (Text B) contained material which Henning accurately characterized as 'a text in the style of the *Kephalaia*'. It evidences two distinct kephalaia, the second of which retains its title: *To Divide the Day into Three Parts*. The other four pages contain the parable of the pearl-borer; and, given the latter's presence in the same manuscript, Henning concluded that this too 'formed part of a *kephalaion*, or in other words that it was supposed that Mani had narrated the story to his disciples'.<sup>5</sup> Based on consultation with Henning, Boyce listed ten other fragments as belonging to the kephalaia-genre in her *Catalogue*: 149.II, 1346, 1964, 5671, 6005, 6030, 6032, 6040, 6041 and 8180.<sup>6</sup> The entry for M6032 indicates that its content (on the question of the limitation of foreknowledge to apostles, not given also to the elect) matches that of a then unpublished kephalaion from 1 Ke, given as 'Ch. 147'. This was subsequently corrected by Werner Sundermann to K102.<sup>7</sup>

Sundermann identified several other Iranian texts from Turfan that bore the hallmarks of the kephalaia-genre, in that Mani was presented as giving a certain teaching to an individual or an audience, rather than being quoted from his own written compositions. He could match some of these Turfan texts with specific passages from 1 Ke.<sup>8</sup> Yet, based on his thorough study of all the Iranian texts in which Mani featured as a character and not an author, Sundermann sounded a cautionary note in his 'Studien zur kirchengeschichtlichen Literatur der iranische Manichäer I' published in 1986.<sup>9</sup> He observed that no certain *literary* connection could be demonstrated between Coptic and Middle Iranian texts in which Mani engages in the question-and-answer exchange typical of

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4 Henning 1945.

5 Henning 1945: 466.

6 Boyce 1960: 147. M5671, 6032, and M6040 + 6041 were subsequently published in Sundermann 1981 along with additional related fragments. M6005 + 6030 were published (as text 38) in Sundermann 1973.

7 Sundermann 1986(c): 88; but when K147 was finally published by Funk in 1999 it was shown indeed to cover some of the same content.

8 E.g. M 4578, Sundermann 1981: 63–66, text 4a.5; which closely parallels content in K6 (1 Ke 30, 12–34, 12). For duplication of content see also K27. The relationship between the Parthian *Sermon on the Light-Nous* and K38 falls into a separate category, since the Parthian text, unlike the Coptic version (and Chinese *Tractate*), is not framed as an oral instruction by Mani, despite bearing the same *wifrās* designation as other kephalaion-like Iranian texts.

9 Sundermann 1986(c).



the episodes considered 'kephalaia-like'. Some overlap of the teachings he communicates in such exchanges was to be expected, but neither word-for-word parallels within episodes, nor a common sequence of episodes, was attested between the two collections of Manichaean remains. M6032, for example, which Henning had matched in content to K102, belongs to a manuscript whose other fragments contain stories that do not correspond with other kephalaia in 1 Ke, and are not even typical kephalaia in the sense of question-and-answer exchanges. Sundermann regarded these stories as more hagiographical than didactic, and so belonging to a genre of Manichaean literature distinct from kephalaia. This hagiographic genre 'contains discussions of Mani with various persons who are not disciples, and it names many more names and events than holds true for the Coptic *Kephalaia*',<sup>10</sup> while the latter were sparing on the setting of exchanges that were mostly questions from generic disciples, followed by long monologues by Mani. For this reason, Sundermann concluded that there was as yet no conclusive evidence of an Iranian version of the same composition as that found in 1 Ke. Rather, individual, free-floating oral traditions worked up for paraenesis in similar fashion came to be combined in different collections, utilizing distinct literary genres, in western and eastern Manichaeism.

No sooner had Sundermann's conclusions been published, when the facsimile edition of 2 Ke appeared, prompting Sundermann to modify his former position. Based on the facsimile, Michel Tardieu published a ground-breaking preliminary analysis of the content of 2 Ke, noting several differences with the Berlin codex similar to those Sundermann had noted in the Iranian hagiographical material. Not only did the new volume of kephalaia show similar interest (unlike 1 Ke) in historical and geographic setting, the missionary advance of Mani's church, and extended dialogue with named figures; it even named several specific figures known from the Turfan texts, including the sage figure Gundēsh (*gwndyš*) and the Turan-shah (*twr'nš'ḥ*), known from Sundermann's own previous publication of the historiographic and hagiographic texts.<sup>11</sup> Making use of Tardieu's study, Sundermann delivered a paper to the Second International Congress on Manichaean Studies in 1989 entitled 'Iranische Kephalaia-texte?',<sup>12</sup> in which he recognized a deeper level of literary connection than had been evident previously. Besides M6040 + 6041 and its correspondence at

10 Thus Sundermann 1986(c): 88 ('enthält aber auch Unterredungen Manis mit verschiedenen Personen, die keine Jünger sind, und es nennt viel mehr Namen und Geschehnisse, als dies für die kopt. *Kephalaia* zutrifft').

11 Tardieu 1988.

12 Sundermann 1992(b).

least in general character to the Goundesh passages from 2 Ke, Sundermann brought forward further parallels even to 1 Ke; such as M149 + M5750, containing a kephalaion *On the Three Great Days* to which he compared κ39,<sup>13</sup> as well as a discussion of *The Fifteen Ways* that he compared to κ90.

With our new detailed readings of the pertinent passages of 2 Ke, unavailable to either Tardieu or Sundermann, we may revisit the parallel traditions regarding Mani's encounter with the king of Touran and his extensive dialogues with the sage named Goundesh (here using the names as they are given in Coptic). The material we will consider below derives from a major section of 2 Ke stretching across four quires, labeled by the conservators, Hugo and Rolf Ibscher, as C, D, E, and X (plus a single leaf labeled F which actually belongs to the beginning of quire X). These contain the remains of seventeen chapters (κ323–339), as follows:

Page	Chapter	Title
353	323	<i>(This Chapter?) ... Palace of the King (of Touran?).</i>
356	324	<i>This Chapter Tells [that] ... Limb is this ...</i>
357	325	<i>(This Chapter?) ... before him ... the Country of Touran.</i>
358	326	<i>The Enlightener Tells ... (Adourbat) the Judge ... City.</i>
364	327	<i>(The Homilies?) that Goundesh the Holy ... Proclaimed with the Apostle from Time to Time.</i>
368	328	<i>This Chapter Talks about (Goundesh), who Questions the Apostle.</i>
369	329	<i>This Chapter Tells ... about Gou&lt;nde&gt;sh, (the Time he Asks) the Apostle: Who is the First [Righteous one] ... the First Sinner ... the Woe.</i>
371	330	<i>This Chapter Talks about Goundesh, as the Apostle has ...</i>
372	331	<i>It Talks about Goundesh ... he Asks (the Apostle?) ...</i>
374	332	<i>It Talks again about Goundesh, who Sits (in front of) the Apostle as they Read from the [Great] Treasury of Life.</i>
381	333	<i>This Chapter Tells about the Apostle: How he makes the Scribes Write Letters, which he Sends to Different Places.</i>
384	334	...
387	335	<i>It Tells that the Apostle Said: "This Thought of Insatiety Exists in every Person, except not in my Disciples".</i>

13 He publishes only the comparable passage, merely summarizing the rest of the substantial text.

(cont.)

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Page	Chapter	Title
389	336	<i>It Tells again about Goundesh, that he Comes in before my Lord; my Lord Asked him: "How are you?"; He said: "I am Robbed".</i>
390	337	<i>This Chapter Talks about Goundesh, when he Asks the Apostle: "These Twelve Persons that you Selected, you Selected them by what Mystery? (These) Seventy-Two, (also), you Selected them by what Mystery?".</i>
400	338	<i>This Chapter Talks (about a Wise Man), Iodasphe is his Name, who is Greater than Masoukeos and Goundesh. He Came before Shapur the King.</i>
409	339	... <sup>14</sup>

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The king or country of Touran features in the first three of these chapters; while Goundesh appears in thirteen, making his last appearance in K339. In between these two sets there is found K326 in which neither of the characters are to be found. By way of these new parallels to figures and narrative material known from the Iranian texts of Turfan, we have an opportunity to consider the transmission of biographical and doctrinal material connected to Mani in the first centuries following his death, to examine its possible oral or written nature, and to begin to ascertain when and where different aspects of the tradition entered normative Manichaean literary compositions.

### Mani and the King of Touran

Commenting on references in 1 Ke to Mani's journey to India, Walter Henning noted in 1936 the existence of an Parthian text from Turfan, M48, published several decades earlier by F.W.K. Müller, that spoke of Mani encountering the 'Turan-shah' (*twr'ns'h*).<sup>15</sup> Henning thought that this passage related to Mani's journey to India referred to elsewhere, and served to localize that journey in the region of India controlled by the Sasanians at the time. Turan was a small

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14 For the contents of 2 Ke and the kephalaion headings that follow from this point, see the following chapter 4 by Gardner.

15 Henning 1936: 6–7; cf. Müller 1904: 86–87.

kingdom centered at Kuzdar (Quzdār, Qusdār), controlling the Mula Pass and neighboring Sind in the western upper reaches of the Indus watershed, in what is today the Baluchistan province of Pakistan. It is reported by Tabarī to have submitted to Ardashir I,<sup>16</sup> and it appears in the geographical catalog of the Sasanian empire in Shapur I's Naqš-e Rostam inscription. Werner Sundermann concurred with Henning's association of Mani's visits to Turan and to 'India', and has provided the possible routes Mani could have taken to Turan from Dēb (*dyb*), the principal port at the mouth of the Indus, mentioned in another Manichaean text (M4575) as the place to which Mani sent disciples on a mission to 'India'.<sup>17</sup> Nonetheless, we cannot be sure that Mani's encounter with the Turan-shah occurred during his own famous mission to India at the beginning of his public career, and nothing in either the Iranian or Coptic versions of the episode allow us to fix a date for it.<sup>18</sup>

Sundermann reconstructed the entire surviving Parthian account of Mani's encounters with the Turan-shah from two manuscripts, but had reservations about the relative sequence of the material found in them.<sup>19</sup> Mary Boyce placed M48 and its connected fragments first, followed by M8286;<sup>20</sup> but Asmussen had arranged them in the reverse order.<sup>21</sup> No doubt Boyce expected the preserved narrative to be centered around some sort of 'conversion' experience, as found in other stories known to her of Mani impressing kings and dignitaries;<sup>22</sup> with such expectations, Mani's dramatic ascent into the sky, followed by a statement about the Turan-shah 'accepting the faith', in M48 would seem to provide a suitable background for his reverential acknowledgment of Mani as 'Buddha' at the beginning of M8286. A further reference at the beginning of M8286 to Mani having 'risen' certainly can give the impression that it might refer to the levitation described in M48; but the original Parthian word quite ordinarily means to get up from being seated, so too much weight cannot be placed upon it for determining the sequence of passages. The sequence found in 2 Ke supports Asmussen's order, and so that order will be followed here.

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16 Bosworth 1999: 15.

17 (1) along the coast to Armabil, then inland to Kiz, then Pancpur (capital of Makuran), then to Kuzdar; or (2) to al-Mansura / Brahmanabad (capital of Sind), then across the western Indus valley north to Qandabil, then southwest through the Mula pass to Kuzdar (Sundermann 1975: 155).

18 Although the identity of the Turan-shah now supplied by 2 Ke probably rules out a time late in Mani's life; see further below.

19 Sundermann 1981: 101.

20 Boyce 1975: 34–37. The same order is followed in Klimkeit 1993: 206–208.

21 Asmussen 1975: 18–19.

22 Cf. Dilley, chapter 8 in this volume.

M8286 relates an encounter between Mani and the Turan-shah, in which the latter already recognizes Mani's Buddhahood, and wishes to revere him properly.<sup>23</sup>

And when the Turan-shah saw that the beneficent one (*qyrbkr*) had risen, then he got to his knees at a distance. He entreated him, speaking to the beneficent one and saying: "Do not come here before us". But the beneficent one came there. He (the Turan-shah) stood up and went forward and kissed him. Then he said to the beneficent one: "You are Buddha and we are sinful men. It is not fitting that you should come to us. We shall attain so much merit (*pwn*) and ... salvation as (the number of) steps by which we approach you ... And we shall have so much lack of merit (*'pwn*) and sin as (the number of) steps by which you approach us". Then the beneficent one blessed him and said to him: "May you be blessed. As you are now glorious and honored in the world among men, so will you also be glorious and honored in soul (*pd 'rw'n*) on the last day in the eyes of the gods. And you will be eternally immortal among the gods and the beneficent righteous ones." Then ... he took his hand ...

A similar, though highly fragmentary, verbal exchange with the king of Touran (πρρο ντογραν) over the propriety of approaching and sitting with Mani appears at the beginning of the two men's encounter in κ323.<sup>24</sup> Oktor Skjaervø has found discussion of the idea of merit connected to the steps a king makes towards a Buddhist monk preaching the dharma in the *Suvarnabhāsottama-sūtra* (i.e. Sutra of Golden Light).<sup>25</sup> The idea undoubtedly had wide circulation in regional discussions about the relative rank of political and spiritual leaders.

As in the Iranian version, κ323 represents the king affirming Mani's identity as 'Bouddas' (followed by the elaboration 'the apostle of God'), as well speaking of 'the wisdom of Bouddas'. By such references in both the Parthian and

23 For the text, see Sundermann 1971(a): 103–104; Sundermann 1981: 101, text 9; Boyce 1975: 36–37. The translation is my own; for a prior English translation, see Asmussen 1975: 18–19.

24 2 Ke 353, 28–354, 15 / G227–228. The same episode appears to be involved in the tiny scrap of a Turkic version of the story, preserved in Uygur script on the back of a Chinese book-roll, designated MİK 028481[v] = Ch/U 8129[v] (formerly T II S 26 52): '... who rescues ... At <that> time, the King of Turan (*turan ellig*) took the divine ... seat. He ... that Baykuš, and sent him forward' (Clark, forthcoming; cf. Wilkens 2000: 66, nr. 40).

25 Skjaervø 1994: 245–247.

Coptic passages, the king appears to indicate his own Buddhist background.<sup>26</sup> Discussion of this figure in secondary scholarship has assumed him to have been a local Saka dynast of the region immersed in its Buddhist culture. But that assumption requires rethinking in light of the name of the king, newly read at the start of the episode as [c]απωρηc. While other possibilities remain,<sup>27</sup> the most likely identification of this figure is Shapur, son of King Shapur I, and brother of the latter's successors Hormizd, Bahram I, and Narseh. In Shapur I's Naqš-e Rostam inscription, his son Shapur appears as king of Mesene (Mešūn); while the latter's brother Narseh rules as king of Sind, Seistan, and Turan, i.e. as 'king of the Sakas'. The arrangements reflected in the inscription date to the 260s C.E., whereas Mani's journey to Turan perhaps belongs two decades earlier. We know from the Parthian text M47 that an earlier 'lord of Mesene' (Mēšūn-xwadāy) had been a brother of Shapur I named Mihr or Mihršāh.<sup>28</sup> A reasonable scenario would have the prince Shapur transferred from Turan to Mesene at the time when the Saka realms were consolidated under the administration of the prince Narseh, now come of age.<sup>29</sup> Evidently, this transfer entailed an ele-

26 Thus Sundermann 1981: 101, echoing Boyce 1975: 34 note e.

27 Such as, that a local Saka client of the Sasanians had named his heir Shapur in honor of Ardashir's son, as many local rulers of the previous generation had borne Ardashir's name. The relevant contextual question regards just who would have been serving as king of Turan in the first decades of Shapur's rule (before it was incorporated into the domain of Narseh): A local Saka dynast or a scion of the Sasanian family? The evidence of Shapur's Naqš-e Rostam inscription appears to suggest a consolidation of administration under members of the Sasanian family and its close Persian and Parthian allies, with the local dynasts named under his father now displaced.

28 Sundermann 1981: 101–103, text 10; cf. Asmussen 1975: 20.

29 Given Narseh's seizure of the empire from his grand-nephew Bahram III in 293, and reign until 302, he scarcely could have been more than a child in the 240s C.E. It remains possible that the Shapur who appears here as king of Turan is someone other than the son of Shapur I. The Naqš-e Rostam inscription shows that a number of figures named Shapur were involved in the administration of the empire. It also remains unsettled whether Shapur the king of Mesene (= Shapur the king of Turan?) was the same individual who, in the office of *hargbed*, helped engineer the overthrow of Bahram III and the enthronement of Narseh, as mentioned in the latter's inscription at Paikuli (Humbach and Skjaervø 1983: 3.1, 44; 3.2, 39, 44). It fits the character of the office that it would be held by the most senior member of the royal family not eligible for the throne (see Herzfeld 1924: 192–194), as evidently was true of Shapur I's son Shapur. Schaeder 1933: 345 suggested that Shapur *hargbed* of the Paikuli inscription was the same figure called Shapur *hyparchos* in the Manichaean church history fragment from Medinet Madi, who appears to be characterized by the Manichaean author as 'our protector and our great patron' (Pedersen 1997: 197–198).

vation of the office of administrator of Mesene from 'lord' to 'king', reflecting either a maintenance of the rank Shapur had already enjoyed as king of Turan, or the increased importance accorded Mesene as an international trade center, or both. Given the newly discovered probable identity of the king of Turan as a member of the Sasanian royal family, therefore, we must consider the possibility that the Buddhist rhetoric placed in his mouth may have been superimposed by the Manichaean author, rather than accurately reflecting Shapur's religious commitments. We will return to this question further below.

The second Parthian manuscript featuring the Turan-shah consists of eight fragments of a bifolio, and speaks of a kind of demonstration comparing levels of attainment between Mani and a 'righteous one' (*'rd'w*) in the presence of the king.<sup>30</sup>

[... so that] I may bring [you to] a ... righteous one. He went to a ... where that righteous one (*'rd'w*) was. And he made [that righteous one] known. The righteous one said: "...". The apostle (*fryštg*) led the righteous one into the air, and he said: "What is higher?". The righteous one said: "My sphere". The apostle said: "And [what] is greater [than that]?". He said: "The earth that bears everything". And he said: "What is greater than these (things)?" The righteous one said: "The sky (?) ...". "What is greater?". He said: "The sun and the moon". "And what is brighter?". He said: "The wisdom of Buddha". Whereupon the Turan-shah said: "Of all these you are the greatest and the brightest; therefore in truth you are yourself Buddha".

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30 Sundermann 1981: 19–24, text 2.2, from M48, 566, 871b, 1306, 1307, 2231, 2401, and 5911; the translation is my own. Cf. Sundermann 1971b and Sundermann 1974 for earlier treatments of these fragments; in the latter article, he identifies as additional fragments of the same manuscript M216a, b, c, 270a, 320, 344a, 805b, 869, 1343, 1344, 1345, 1750, 2230, 2309, 3848, 4912, 5569, and 5910. Of these, M1344 + 5910 (text 2.1) speaks of Mani leaving the Elchasaites to begin his religious activity in the year 539 of the Seleucid era; M216b (text 2.3) and M2230 (text 2.4) the conversion of the Waruzan-shah; M216c + 1750 (text 2.5) involves Addā sent out by Mani from Vēh-Ardašīr; M216a (text 2.6) Ammo sent out by Mani from Hulwan; M1343 (text 2.7) refers to Pērōz-Šāh (the brother of Shapur and for a time the Kušān-šāh); M805b (text 2.8) an exchange between Mani and a king; M270a + 869 (text 2.9) a continuation of the exchange, now clearly that with Bahram I near the end of Mani's life; M5569 (text 2.10) describes Mani's ascent at death; M2309 (text 2.11) and M4912 (text 2.12) belong to an unplaceable cosmogonic text, perhaps spoken by Mani; M 3848 (text 2.13), M320 (text 2.14), M344a (text 2.15), M1345 (text 2.16), M1514 (text 2.17) are other uncertainly placed pieces. The overall impression of these fragments is that they belong to a mission history with a high concentration of episodes involving Mani's encounters with various kings, both Sasanian and non-Sasanian.

Then the devout one (*dyn'br*) [said] to the Turan-shah: "Even so shall you do (as) ... you are". [Whereupon the Turan-shah] said [to] the apostle: "...". Whereupon the lord Mani taught the Turan-shah much [insight] and wisdom. And [he showed] (him) paradise and hell, the [puri]fication of the [worlds], sun [and moon, soul and] body, the apostles that had come into the lands, righteous ones and sinners, and the work of the elect and [the audi]tors. Whereupon, when the Turan[-shah and] the nobles heard this word, they became glad, accepted the faith and became well-disposed towards the apostle and the religion (*dyn*).

And when the Turan-shah was ... And he met brethren being led up. Then the brethren paid their homage to the beneficent one (*qyrbkr*), and the apostle told the Turan-shah a parable: "There was a man and he had seven sons. When the hour of [death] came, he called the seven (sons) ... seven ... original ... and ... sticks ... bound. He said: 'Break [all of them] together'. None of them [could do so]. Then he loosened ..."

In K323, the same 'righteous one' (ΠΔΙΚΑΙΟΣ) appears in an identical joint ascent with Mani, marked by progressive stages where Mani inquires of him what is the next higher stage. The characterizations of each level here are very poorly preserved, but the passage culminates in a confessional statement declaring Mani as the greatest, as 'the apostle' who imparts 'the wisdom of God'; just as Mani's identification with the 'wisdom of Buddha' completes the Parthian version of the ascent.

Sundermann originally had suggested that the righteous one raised in the air with Mani could be either a ghost, a Buddhist monk, or some sort of local shaman or wonder-worker.<sup>31</sup> But, following the publication of portions of the *Cologne Mani Codex*, he compared the heavenly ascents inventoried in the latter text, and suggested that the righteous one in Turan might represent some sort of ascended forebear of Mani, such as Enoch who is expressly called δίκαιος in the CMC.<sup>32</sup> In K323, the episode is prefaced by the king hearing some sort of disembodied voice giving him instructions.<sup>33</sup> Nevertheless, Mani leads the king to a real flesh-and-blood 'righteous one', who is either the source of the magical voice or the one to which the voice had directed the king. Oktor Skjaervø has brought forth parallels from Buddhist literature reinforcing the

31 Sundermann 1974: 130.

32 Sundermann 1981: 20.

33 If pages 130–135 of the *Cologne Mani-Codex* contain another version of this story (which is possible, but not certain), then the disembodied voice of our text would probably belong to Mani's *syzygos*, who is involved in Mani's encounter with a king in the CMC passage.



conjecture that the ‘righteous one’ who accompanies Mani in his ascent into the sky is indeed a Buddhist monk or *arhat*.<sup>34</sup> Some of Skjaervø’s examples, however, come from the more fantastical cosmic scenery of Mahayana texts, which is quite different than the more mundane miraculous, so to speak, of the Manichaeon passages. For this reason, I would point to the possible relevance of the following regional tradition of Sind reported by Hsüan-tsang, traveling in the seventh century:<sup>35</sup>

The old reports state that formerly these people were extremely hasty, and only practised violence and cruelty. At this time there was an arhat who, pitying their perversity, and desiring to convert them, mounted in the air and came amongst them. He exhibited his miraculous powers and displayed his wonderful capabilities. Thus he led the people to believe and accept the doctrine, and gradually he taught them in words; all of them joyfully accepted his teaching and respectfully prayed him to direct them in their religious life. The arhat, perceiving that the hearts of the people had become submissive, delivered to them the three refuges and restrained their cruel tendencies; they entirely gave up taking life, they shaved their heads, and assumed the soiled robes of a bhikshu, and obediently walked according to the doctrine of religion.

If we take this as a foundation-legend of the Buddhists of the region, then the story of Mani’s ascent takes on new meaning as a contest of superiority, in which Mani surpasses the level of ascent to which the legendary arhat attained. In any case, Hsüan-tsang’s legend reflects the regional valuation of the sort of miraculous display featured in the Manichaeon account. The language of ‘my sphere’ used by the righteous one—not preserved in 2 Ke—may reflect Buddhist notions of the cosmic levels which the *śrāvaka* may attain through advancement in practice.<sup>36</sup>

Both the Parthian and Coptic accounts remain somewhat ambiguous about exactly how the king participates in the ascent of Mani and the ‘righteous one’. Is he merely a spectator from the ground? But Mani and his companion seem to go beyond mere levitation, and appear to traverse celestial realms. How, then, does the king speak his culminating declaration of Mani’s superiority in their hearing? Could it be that he has been taken along on their *mi’rāj*? The

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34 Skjaervø 1994: 247–249.

35 Beal 1884, vol. 2: 273.

36 See Kloetzli 1983.

fragmentary texts do not permit any certainty on this proposal. Yet, a remark by Bīrūnī offers an intriguing parallel. He says:<sup>37</sup>

... king Sābūr came to believe in him the time when he (Mani) raised him with himself to heaven and they both stood in the air between heaven and earth. He displayed marvels to him during this (feat).

No other Manichaean or non-Manichaean text reports such an ascent of Shapur I at the hands of Mani. However, now that 2 Ke reveals that the king of Turan also bore the name Shapur, it just may be that Bīrūnī's report refers to this episode, with an understandable confusion over the two Shapurs. Improved readings of the passage may yet confirm the king of Turan's inclusion in the ascent.<sup>38</sup>

At its close, κ323 contains a reference to Mani instructing the king following the ascent demonstration, comparable to the sequence of events in the Parthian text: He 'preached a great homily (οὐρανῶς ἡγεμονίας)'. Whether this reference has in mind the parable of the seven sons found in the Parthian cannot be known, since the passage does not detail the homily, but brings the kephalaion to a close with remarks about the benefit of Mani's teaching to the king's city. Mani does appear to be delivering a parable of some kind to the king in the following kephalaion (κ324), but the poorly preserved details find no clear correspondence with the parable of the seven sons in the Parthian account (itself fragmentary). This lack of correspondence suggests two independent redactions, where separate editors appended some instructional material considered appropriate to the general scenario of Mani giving lessons to the king. The passage in 2 Ke similarly appears to lack the 'brethren' who turn up toward the end of the Parthian version. Although others have proposed these brethren to be Mani's traveling companions,<sup>39</sup> my impression is that they represent Buddhist monks, whose homage to Mani reinforces the spiritual conquest theme of the narrative.

Sundermann speculates that the parable of the seven sons probably was meant to be an analogy to seven successive messengers of light in Manichaean

37 Reeves 2011: 182; see Shapira 2001: 177–178, who notes the resemblance to the Turan-shah episode.

38 On Mani's use of visionary ascents as proof of his spiritual status, including the similar episode involving Mihršāh, the Sasanian governor of Mesene, see Dilley, chapter 8 in this volume.

39 E.g. Sundermann 1981: 22 n. 14.

sooteriology; arriving at the number seven within this system, however, requires some forcing of the standard Manichaean accounts of the so-called prior prophets.<sup>40</sup> On the other hand, the number seven fits well within a Buddhist context, with the idea of seven successive Buddhas culminating with Shakyamuni. Conceivably, then, the parable reported in the Parthian version went on—in the portion of the passage no longer preserved—to compare the seven bundled sticks to the seven sons, and the religious epimythion of the parable, in turn, would have compared the seven sons to the seven Buddhas. Sundermann correctly surmised the ultimate point of the parable, regardless of its Buddhist or Manichaean setting: The teachings of the individual apostles or Buddhas may be broken, but when held together in unity, they are unbreakable. Remarkably, the doctrine of the seven Buddhas appears in 2 Ke, in a passage well removed from the one we are now considering in κ323–324.<sup>41</sup> It is one of the distinctive features of 2 Ke that it preserves such elements from a relatively remote Asian cultural context. In κ323, also, the king repeatedly addresses Mani as ‘Bouddas’.

The presence of Buddhist terms and themes in 2 Ke, a Coptic text produced for an audience far removed from a Buddhist setting, provides important clues to the redactional history of the material incorporated into the kephalaia-genre of Manichaean literature. The Coptic version of the stories of Mani and the king of Touran must have drawn upon an *Vorlage* containing these Buddhist elements. For that reason, we can rule out the possibility that such Buddhist elements had been introduced into the Parthian version as a cultural adaptation, as part of the well-known presence of Buddhist terminology in Parthian Manichaean sources, even those arguably produced in or shortly following Mani’s lifetime. Until now, it has not been possible to differentiate distinct historical layers of such terminology in the Parthian material, or to determine whether a Buddhist element found in such material is ‘original’ or a matter of translation. The Coptic parallel version to the Turan-shah episodes now permits us to see that references in this story to Mani as ‘Buddha’ belong to the common *Vorlage* on which both the Coptic and Parthian versions depend.

Does that make this and other details of the narrative historical? Not necessarily. As we have seen, the newly discovered identity of the Turan-shah as a likely member of the Sasanian royal family raises some doubts about the authenticity of the Buddhist background he displays in the narrative. Perhaps,

40 Sundermann 1971(a): 105, basing himself on 1 Ke 12, 9–20.

41 See my comments in chapter 9, elsewhere in this volume.

as an astute governor, Shapur had schooled himself in the local tradition and took care to show respect for its institutions. His Buddhist piety may have been freshly acquired in connection with his position. On the other hand, the accident, as it were, of Shapur's posting to the orient may have invited adaptation of the story to a kind of religious geography the compilers of Mani traditions wished to impose upon their material, as part of a master narrative by which Mani laid claim to the authority of the full set of religious traditions he recognized in the world around him. The compilers may have had considerably less of such narrative material related to the Buddhist tradition than they did of that connected to traditions more prevalent in the Mesopotamian heartland of Mani's missionary activities; and so they may have been motivated to take advantage of any opportunity to make a suitable story demonstrate Mani's claim on Buddhism.

Any future research into the historical reality of Mani's engagement with Buddhism in Turan, and certainly in Sind, must take into account the kind of community prevalent there. Buddhism apparently thrived in the region up to the Islamic conquest. Hsüan-tsang gives detailed information on the different Buddhist schools and their numbers in the seventh century C.E., which may be used with caution as reflecting long-standing regional traditions. His report attests the overwhelming dominance in Sind and surrounding areas of the Sāmmītiya school,<sup>42</sup> which represented the so-called *pudgalavadin* wing of Buddhism, affirming a relatively stable entity (*pudgala*) transmigrating from one life to the next as the bearer of karma. This doctrine, at least, is what the school's opponents emphasized as its 'heresy'. In his trip to 'India', Mani himself would have been exposed primarily to this variety of 'Hinayana' or more properly Nikaya Buddhism, rather than to Mahayana Buddhism, a fact typically overlooked by those who have discussed Mani's possible Buddhist connections. As the research of Gregory Schopen has shown, the Mahayana movement remained small and marginal in the first few centuries C.E.<sup>43</sup> The Mahayana concepts found in Manichaean texts from Turfan and Dunhuang would appear to involve some secondary supplementation by Buddhist culture in the central

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42 He reports 10,000 Sāmmītiya monks in Sind, 5,000 in the Aviddhakarna region at the mouth of Indus, 3,000 in Pitasila north of the Indus delta, and 2,000 northeast of Pitasila in Avanda, or middle Sind; in the Langla region along the coast west of the Indus (Makran) he reports 6,000 monks 'of both vehicles' (i.e. Hinayana and Mahayana). While the Sāmmītiya school had other centers, and was the largest Buddhist school by the seventh century (see Châu 1999: 11–15), it is its near monopoly in the lower Indus valley that is relevant here.

43 See especially Schopen 2005.

Asian environment, obscuring to some degree Mani's earlier engagement with the third-century Buddhism of the Sind region. The evidence of the Chester Beatty *Kephalaia* for the first time provides a starting point for distinguishing these two historical layers of Manichaean-Buddhist contact.

### Mani and Goundesh

In 1981 Werner Sundermann published two leaves with a Parthian text featuring a dialogue between Mani and a figure named Gundēsh (*gwndyš*).<sup>44</sup> Both leaves, M6040 and 6041, bore the header, *The Wīfrās of the Paths* (*r'h'n wyfr's*). The same header appears on the fragment M4571, which belongs to a different Parthian manuscript collecting kephalaia-genre material, but without any overlap of content with M6040–6041.<sup>45</sup> The consistent use of the genre name *wīfrās* with texts containing kephalaia-like content suggests that this term functions correspondingly to Greek κερφάλαιον as it is employed in the Coptic Manichaean codices. Sundermann has highlighted the implication of orality intrinsic to the Iranian term, meaning 'lecture', 'sermon', 'discourse', 'homily'; and this characteristic of the *wīfrās* corresponds closely to the supposed origin of the kephalaia as the oral tradition about Mani supplied by his disciples.<sup>46</sup> The Gundēsh passage reads as follows:

#### M6040 Recto

... greeted him. And he sat himself near him. And he began to preach (*wyfr'stn*) before him a divine discourse (*wyfr's*). Thereupon Gundēsh asked the beneficent one: "Which script (*dbryft*) is it that is the foremost, and of all scripts of the whole world has precedence?". And the beneficent one said to him: "There are three scripts that are earlier than all: The Indian (*hyndwg'ng*), Syrian (*swryg*), and Greek (*ywnyg*)". Gundēsh <replied>: "Of [these three], which [script is the fir]st and [of the others] has precedence?". The beneficent one [said]: "... script not ... foremost ... by Alef ... God ... shows ..."

44 Sundermann 1981: 85–86, texts 4b.1 and 4b.2.

45 Sundermann 1981: 62–63, text 4a.4.

46 Sundermann 1984: 232–236, employing such translations as Verkündigung, Sermon, Predigt and Homilie.

## M6040 Verso

And its waste would empty out at the place where it is passing. And the world with all things therein is comparable to a stack of wheat, which somebody from two sides with two bushels began to measure out and bring forth from there. And those two bushels are capable of removing something of that stack from its place and depositing it at [another] place. [And in such a manner] comparable ... as often ... in ... which self ... then ... and light ... extract ...

## M6041 Recto

... time completed. And the whole world is comparable to a pitcher that is full of wine, so that in its quantity, as someone partakes from it, that pitcher would be emptied. And <that person> partook the purity in it, and poured out the dregs. Even so will the whole world be emptied and not partaken of. Then Gundēsh stood there vanquished and amazed. And the beneficent one said to him: "If you are wise, then teach me from where the foundation of this world came and ... and ... which all this ... has made. Or ... one from ... sin ...".

## M6041 Verso

... [and many] were [the questions] that he asked Gundēsh, and he could give him no answer. And he acted like an ignorant person who does not understand. Thereupon Gundēsh said: "My god (*yzd*), the <whole> province has hearkened to you, young man. But now that I have seen you and have heard your teaching, I know that your wisdom is superior to mine. And now I know in truth that you are the Buddha (*bwt*) and apostle (*fryštḡ*)". And from that time on Gundēsh went with Mar Mani here and there. And he asked him about many things. And the beneficent one gave him [answers] to all [questions]. Thereupon, on ... day ... to the palace (*š'hyg'n*) ...

Because the exchange contains references to 'India' and 'Buddha', Sundermann suggested a setting for the episode in India or eastern Iran, where a Buddhist religious environment could be presupposed.<sup>47</sup> Even though he remained

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47 Sundermann 1981: 86.

unconvinced by possible Indian etymologies of the name Gundēsh,<sup>48</sup> this figure came to be treated as a ‘sage from the east’ in subsequent discussions in the field.

Following the publication of the facsimile edition of 2 Ke, Michel Tardieu announced the presence of Goundesh (ΓΟΥΝΔΗΘ) in an extensive series of its chapters, noting that at least some of them were set apparently not in the orient, but in the court of Shapur I.<sup>49</sup> Based on our team’s work, we can now say definitively that Goundesh first appears in κ327 (beginning 2 Ke 364, 10) where he is a denizen of the *palatium* of ‘Shapur the king’<sup>50</sup> and undefeated champion of philosophical debate. Mani’s disciples observe this, and inform their master about it, whereupon Mani goes himself to the king’s palace to meet and debate Goundesh. This scenario suggests that Mani had followers among Shapur’s courtiers or at least servants of the royal household. At several points in the Goundesh chapters, Mani exchanges words with various figures identified as a ‘nobleman (εΥΓΕΝΗΣ)’.<sup>51</sup> In their initial encounters in κ327 and κ328, Mani and Goundesh trade questions and answers on fundamental questions of good and evil and human conduct. Already in the first chapter, Goundesh is pulled up short by Mani’s knowledge and ability in debate; by the end of κ328 he is ready to submit to him:<sup>52</sup>

When Goundesh heard these words, he made obeisance [before] the apostle. He said to him: “From now on [I will be your] disciple, because there is no wiser man”.

Later, in κ332, Goundesh compares himself to a champion wrestler, who had vanquished twelve opponents before finally another is found who is stronger. Thus, he says, he has debated with the sages and been victorious over them by

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48 Sundermann 1981: 87 n. 3.

49 Tardieu 1988: 160–162.

50 A lacuna following ‘king’, however, leaves open the possibility that this is ‘Shapur the king [of Touran]’. Note that the suite of Goundesh *kephalaia* is separated from those related to Touran by a single intervening *kephalaion*, κ326. This relates an exchange between Mani and a judge named (with variant spellings) Adourbat, involving a Manichaean interpretation of certain Mazdayasnian ideas regarding the sacred fire.

51 Reck 1995 published several pages of a Sogdian codex from Turfan containing *kephalaia*-like episodes, including one where a noble says to Mani: “Now ... I believe in your divine glory and Buddhahood (*pwt[y]’k*)” (200).

52 2 Ke 369, 10–12 / G243.

the wisdom of philosophy; but now 'you (i.e. Mani) have been victorious over me'.<sup>53</sup>

Goundesh stories continue over a remarkably large portion of the codex, from κ327 to κ339, as he asks Mani to instruct him about a number of questions on a wide variety of subjects. The discussions call to mind the remarks near the end of the Parthian Gundēsh fragment: 'And from that time on Gundēsh went with Mar Mani here and there. And he asked him about many things. And the beneficent one gave him [answers] to all [questions]'. The series in 2 Ke demonstrates in detail the variety of topics suggested in the more succinct Parthian account, and has the overall effect of portraying Mani as omniscient, able to explain anything, however spiritual or mundane; just as in the Parthian version of this material he is asked about the relative antiquity of regional writing systems. The exchanges are quite expansive in their details, with Goundesh at times setting up questions at great length, and the redactor of the *Kephalaia* showing no urgency to get to Mani's answers or to direct everything to a 'spiritual' lesson. Mani simply knows how everything in the universe works, down to matters as small as how the soul of a sparrow chick escapes from inside an egg if it dies there (κ331).

But we also find important information about the initial organization and operation of Mani's church. One particularly significant episode at the start of κ332 depicts Goundesh present at a meeting where the group is reading aloud from Mani's *Treasury of Life* (πῆνσαγρος ἱπῶνῆ), which appears to be described as 'a new book', perhaps indicating that it has just been composed by Mani and is being read out for the first time. Goundesh compares its 'fourteen great *logoi*' to a parable he knows about a king who possesses a gemstone with seven magical properties. Do these fourteen *logoi* indicate the sections of the *Treasury*? We know from reports on Mani's *Gospel*, as well as Ibn al-Nadīm's discussion of Mani's other books, that he divided them into such sections; and Augustine of Hippo quotes from what he calls the seventh chapter of the *Treasury of Life*.<sup>54</sup> The new passage from 2 Ke can be read to suggest that it had a total of fourteen such chapters, although the fragmentary state of the text makes its full sense less than certain. Mani proceeds to expound Goundesh's parable in terms of himself and the ability he has, among other things, to win over opponents and resolve disputes within his community, apparently by composing new works as occasion demands. In another episode, κ337, Goundesh inquires into the significance of the hierarchical structure of Mani's

53 2 Ke 380, 25–29 / G254.

54 *De natura boni* 44.



church, with its twelve and seventy-two leaders. In his answer, Mani connects these ranks both with the two groups of disciples that Jesus selected (in Luke and the Diatessaron), and with hierarchies of angels.<sup>55</sup>

κ337 continues at length, well beyond Mani's answer to the main question, and eventually introduces another sage figure named Masoukeos. This sizable kephalaion, in fact, appears to be a piece of continuous narrative that has been rather arbitrarily fit into the kephalaia-genre thanks to its initial question. Masoukeos comes forward as a new wise man on the scene, whom Mani must overcome, just as he did Goundesh before. These two rivals of Mani will be displaced, in turn, by the arrival of yet another sage, a 'man from the east', Iodasphe, 'who is greater than Masoukeos and Goundesh', in κ338. With this series of rival intellectual authorities, the redactor of the *Kephalaia* seems to be creating a narrative climax. But the climax evidently has been stitched together from various pieces, since Mani's status and renown in the court varies widely from episode to episode, as if stories from different periods have been juxtaposed in an artificial manner. In κ338, Mani is recommended to Shapur I as someone able to rescue the pride of the Sasanian state against the oriental challenger Iodasphe, as if Shapur had no prior familiarity with Mani. Victorious in his debate with the oriental interloper, Mani receives the endorsement of Shapur himself for the dissemination of his teaching throughout the empire. Yet in the very next chapter, κ339, Goundesh makes his final appearance in an episode where he questions Mani's resolve to depart the world at a time which must be set towards the end of Mani's life. Gardner discusses such redactional anomalies elsewhere in this volume.

This extensive cycle of Goundesh stories in 2 Ke probably belonged to an originally free-standing literary collection, later incorporated into the *Kephalaia*. The title of κ327 appears to point towards such a prior independent composition, and perhaps preserves its title: (*The Homilies?*) *that Goundesh the Holy ... Proclaimed with the Apostle from Time to Time*. Notably, the format of this title is a marked contrast to the usual pattern. Individual episodes may have been re-ordered to make it serve the larger work's design and intention. Yet, even in its original form, it belonged to a hagiographic genre to which many other of the chapters of 2 Ke also belonged. Mani's demonstration of superiority to Goundesh functions in exactly the same way as his exchanges with other prominent figures in the larger work, be they kings or priests or judges. In episode after episode, Mani displays his vast knowledge and deep wisdom, overawing and converting initial opponents into followers.

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55 Cf. the discussion of this subject in Leurini 2009.

Unfortunately, we do not see much overlap in surviving content between the rather limited Parthian fragments featuring Gundēsh and the extensive Coptic passages, other than a common characterization of Mani as ‘Buddha’. The individual questions and answers do not match, no doubt due to the sheer accidental nature of preservation. Other leaves found with M6040 and M6041 may belong to the Gundēsh cycle, and simply do not preserve his name. M5965–5967 and M6066 belong to the same manuscript, according to Sundermann.<sup>56</sup> M4571 bears the same header, *The Wifrās of the Paths*. Yet none of these tiny fragments show any evident parallel with the Goundesh passages from 2 Ke.<sup>57</sup> M4571, however, belongs to an extensively preserved manuscript containing a number of episodes from Mani’s career, with specific place names and identified individuals, culminating in the story of Mani’s last days.<sup>58</sup> This juxtaposition of *The Wifrās of the Paths*, incorporating Gundēsh content, with other similar stories, including a chronicle of the end of Mani’s life, suggests a very similar overall compositional design between the hagiographic collection(s) preserved in Turfan fragments and the 2 Ke codex from Medinet Madi.<sup>59</sup>

Can we say anything, then, about the ‘historical’ Goundesh / Gundēsh? He seems to find his place among the various philosophers, physicians, astrologers, and other members of the intelligentsia of the Sasanian court in the third century C.E. 2 Ke portrays him as possessing a certain preeminence in philosophy, at least until challenged by various outsiders, including Mani himself. Based on the Parthian fragments, he appears to have been elder to Mani, not only in rank but in age, as he refers to the latter as ‘young man’ (Parthian *sr’wg*). He is clearly contrasted to a wise man ‘from the east’ (Iodasphes), and so is treated as native to greater Iran. In light of the more detailed information from 2 Ke, we need to reconsider previous suggestions as to his origin and the locale of his interaction with Mani. In addition to possible Indian sources of the name Gundēsh, Sundermann considered potential Iranian derivations.<sup>60</sup> I would like to mention another possibility, involving the common practice of personal names taken from place names, perhaps the closest famous comparable case being the sage Bardaisan, ‘son of the Daisan (river)’.<sup>61</sup> D.T. Potts has noted, from Greek inscrip-

56 Sundermann 1981: 90–91, texts 4b.3–5.

57 Sundermann 1981: 90, text 4b.2, compares the content of M5965 with κ6 (1 Ke 33, 29 ff.).

58 Sundermann 1981: text 4a.

59 Sundermann also identified ink impressions on M6040 and 6041 as deriving from M6032. The latter’s content shows close parallelism to κ102 from the Berlin *Kephalaia* (Sundermann 1981: 112–116, text 13).

60 Sundermann 1992(b): 308 n. 19.

61 For Iranian examples of this practice, see Justi 1895.

tions of Parthian-period Susa, the existence of a regional water channel (river or canal) called the *Gondeisos*, whose flow was restored around the late first century B.C.E. by the local Parthian governor.<sup>62</sup> Potts suggests that an existing fortification near this channel, called *Gund-dēz* ('troop-fort' in Parthian), was later rebuilt by Shapur, becoming *Gondēšāpūr* / *Bēt Lapaṭ*; and that the underlying nomenclature contributed to later confusion about the form and meaning of the city's Persian name. Regardless of the hypothetical nature of Potts's identification of the location with the later *Gondēšāpūr*, the factual existence of a waterway named (in Greek) *Gondeisos* in the Susiana / *Kūzestān* region, and the likely derivation of the name from a Parthian fort called *Gund-dēz* that would have protected and overseen settlements along the waterway, suggests to me that *Gundēsh* bears a name identifying him with this location, as so-to-speak the 'sage of *Gund-dēz*' or 'of the *Gundeisos* (region)'.

### Conclusions

The episodes placing Mani in the company of Goundesh and the king of Touran share one common reference point: The authority of the Buddha. Both narratives, in their Coptic and Iranian versions, affirm Mani's rank and status as a Buddha, and in this way lay claim on the Buddhist tradition as fulfilled in the Manichaean religion. We now know that this is not a terminological overlay imposed by translation of the narratives in a Parthian Buddhist context, but rhetoric employed in Mesopotamia in initial official recountings of these stories. It certainly found a ready recognition among Parthian believers, but it was also preserved intact in contexts (Syriac, Greek, Coptic)<sup>63</sup> where it would have been less readily understood or considered particularly informative. In such western contexts, characterizations of Mani as a Buddha supported more programmatic statements of Manichaean supersession of prior religious traditions, such as the one found at the beginning of the two-volume *Kephalaia* collection from Medinet Madi.

How much more would have been understood of the particular resonances of this title? What did it mean to Manichaeans to call Mani 'Bouddas'? The sense that Mani is *a* Buddha, in a succession of Buddhas—perhaps even expressly the Buddha Maitreya as successor to Shakyamuni—may have been lost

62 Potts 1989. The author suggests that the name refers to a canal that connected *Bēt Lapaṭ* to the *Āb-i-Diz* river 15 km away at Dizful.

63 See Dilley, chapter 2 in this volume, for a review of the problem of the languages involved in the composition and transmission of the material collected in the Coptic *Kephalaia*.

on readers of the Coptic rendering of the *Kephalaia*,<sup>64</sup> even though elsewhere in 2 Ke the idea of such a succession is explicitly expounded, with the implicit understanding that 'Bouddas' is a kind of title rather than a personal name. Or does the use of the term for Mani suggest that the Manichaeans believed Mani to be 'Buddha' reincarnated, along the lines of the idea of the 'True Prophet' reborn time and again in the *Clementine Homilies*? The idea has been suggested in previous scholarship. But Mani is never called 'Zarathustra' or 'Christ', and so we should dismiss such a notion. Instead, the potential confusion for readers of the *Kephalaia* entailed in calling Mani 'Buddha' should probably be taken as a relic of an accident of translation, with no large ideological implication. Its reference to a kind of spiritual rank probably would have been evident from its use in parallel to other titles, such as 'apostle'. Issues of explication such as this would have arisen for readers among the Egyptian Manichaean community, and serve to illustrate for us the remarkable degree of cultural exchange the Manichaean mission entailed.

The new information provided by the Chester Beatty *Kephalaia* does not altogether settle the questions that have plagued Manichaean studies about the literary unity of the tradition. Certainly, as Tardieu and Sundermann realized following the publication of the facsimile edition, the Chester Beatty codex ties western Manichaean literature significantly more closely to the Iranian literary tradition than any previously known western text has. Of course, both literary traditions shared roots in Mani's own compositions, known to have been distributed in the earliest Manichaean missions. The main example of material not composed by Mani shared by western and eastern Manichaeans alike is the narrative of Mani's martyrdom, directly linked to the institution of the annual *Bēma* festival, the primary post-Mani ritual innovation of the Manichaean community, which likely was introduced very quickly. Other narratives regarding Mani's life, especially his youth and spiritual experiences, could be assumed to derive secondarily from his own compositions. The content found in the two-volume Coptic *Kephalaia*, on the other hand, has been considered—I think rightly—the product of various motives and efforts following Mani's death, and perhaps not so immediately as the impulse to recount his death. It has been suspected as apocryphal, as well as possibly the product of a particular regional environment, such as Egypt itself. We are in a better position to address some of these suggestions, now that the evidence of the Chester Beatty *Kephalaia* is gradually being unlocked from its dark papyrus prison.

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64 The same may not be true of the Parthian version of these stories, since Parthian dispenses with articles, and definiteness or indefiniteness is determined by context.

The *Kephalaia of the Wisdom of My Lord Mani* belongs to the same hagiographic literary tradition extensively attested among the Iranian Manichaean texts from Turfan. It therefore proves that this hagiographic tradition dates to the first century following Mani's death, and cannot be dismissed as the product of later legendary fantasy related to other medieval narrative developments, such as the refashioning of Zarathustra as a 'prophet' in the Islamic mode. The Coptic codex further demonstrates that this hagiographic tradition did not originate within Iranian Manichaeism, but came forth from the center of Manichaean authority and literary production in Sasanian Mesopotamia, and was subsequently transmitted along both western and eastern missionary channels. At the same time, we would probably be right to conclude that it did not come forth as the full-length, two-volume edition of kephalaia discovered at Medinet Madi. Close comparison of the surviving parallels does not support the idea that we have merely translations of a common original composition in the Coptic and Iranian manuscripts. At the very least, we are dealing with different recensions of this material. Moreover, the very different character of the contents found respectively in the Berlin and Chester Beatty *Kephalaia* codices suggests a somewhat artificial composite edition combining originally distinct collections serving divergent purposes. Superficially, the individual kephalaia in both codices belong to a common literary genre; but that does not mean they always belonged to a single composition. Moreover, the kephalaia-genre appears somewhat forced upon the narrative pieces of the Chester Beatty codex, as the Goundesh chapters illustrate so well.

We can only speculate on the relative chronology of the collection and dissemination of these lessons and stories. As long as Manichaean missionaries traversed back and forth between the religion's Mesopotamian heartland and the cells established in both the Roman west and the Iranian east, they could continue to bring new fascicles of narrative and teaching. Perhaps each of these new resources carried a kind of *imprimatur* from the Manichaean pope in 'Babylon'. Or were missionary activities that centralized and coordinated? There appears to be a common overall scheme or at least impetus shared by the Coptic and Iranian kephalaia collections; and yet redactional differences between them and the somewhat patchwork quality of their internal structure suggest a complex and not wholly coordinated compositional history. The new evidence on these questions gained from the Chester Beatty *Kephalaia* provides the basis for three distinct further investigations: (1) the circumstances and aims of the final compilations and redactions of kephalaia collections; (2) the generation, circulation, and function of discrete sets of narratives, such as those involving Goundesh and the king of Touran; and (3) the historical traces embedded in these materials regarding the events of Mani's life, including the actual role of various cultural contexts in shaping his religious system.

## The Final Ten Chapters

*Iain Gardner*

Two codices of *Kephalaia* were recovered as part of the so-called ‘Medinet Madi Library’. Each has a somewhat different title, and they are now (primarily) housed one in Berlin and the other in Dublin; but, nevertheless, it is most probable that they form in some way two parts (successive volumes?) of a single work. They are certainly not two versions of the same text. The available evidence<sup>1</sup> from the editors, W.-P. Funk for the Berlin codex and ourselves for that in Dublin, is that the highest chapter number read in the former codex precedes by a suitable amount the lowest chapter number that can be read in the latter; and thus they may be designated in sequence 1 Ke (in Berlin, *The Chapters of the Teacher*) and 2 Ke (in the Chester Beatty Library, *The Chapters of the Wisdom of My Lord Manichaios*). Still, there remains a real problem with accounting for or detailing both the final quire of the Berlin codex and the sequence of earlier quires that must have belonged to the Dublin manuscript, and thus there is a substantial gap where we lack adequate information or continuity.

Any final solution to the question of the relationship between the two codices and the unity of the whole work can only be a hypothesis for the present; but one can certainly speculate about various options. For instance, perhaps we have recovered the first and second volumes of two quite different redactions of *Kephalaia*? There are some distinct differences in style and content between the published parts of 1 Ke and the more readable sections of 2 Ke.<sup>2</sup> Still, as we shall see, there are significant shifts of this kind within each volume as well. Thus, it remains to be determined whether the real difference is between the two ‘volumes’ as individual material productions, or otherwise between multiple sections brought together within the corpus as a whole. The former thesis is especially associated with the influential early

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1 The best published discussion of the matter remains that of Funk 1997. Obviously, the article is somewhat outdated due to on-going work on both codices. For a succinct summary of the scholarship and relevant issues see also Pettipiece 2009(a): 7–13.

2 Note that, according to Funk 1997: 143: ‘The bulk of the two manuscripts was copied, it seems, by one and the same scribe ...’. Our project has not yet undertaken a systematic palaeographic analysis of the Chester Beatty codex.

study of the 2 Ke contents by M. Tardieu.<sup>3</sup> However, my own research increasingly favours the second approach, with the focus on the redactional joins and breaks evident within the entire constructed work, and regarding the production of these two codices with their apparent differences (especially the matter of the titles) as a lesser issue. In what follows I will utilise this argument that the corpus evidences an extended redaction history, with material drawn from diverse sources.

With that brief summary in mind, the primary purpose of the following discussion is to outline the structure and content of the final ten chapters of 2 Ke. These would appear to bring the entire massive work to a conclusion, finishing at K347, and it may be hoped that a study of them will be both illustrative of the style and characteristic themes of the Dublin manuscript, and illuminating about the process by which the *Kephalaia* as a text developed. The codicology for the final quires of the Dublin codex is securely established, with only some relatively minor issues in question. The pages are in a reasonable state of preservation, by the standards of the manuscript as a whole (which in general it must be said is extremely challenging). Consequently, my own editorial work started with these final chapters, and they mark the first drafts that our project completed. The chapters contain some enormously interesting material that underpins much of the discussion elsewhere in this volume.

It is necessary to clarify that our purpose here is not to publish any edition of the Coptic text in advance of the text edition as a whole. Therefore, I shall generally paraphrase or summarise the apparent meaning of the text, and only quote mostly rather short passages in free English translation. Whilst this may be somewhat frustrating, it is preferable to publishing draft material that is not finalised and may subsequently be revised.<sup>4</sup> Equally, I am not going to discuss the codicology in any detail, nor other technical matters to do with the script or the readings or the language. Rather, what is intended is to provide as much information in advance about the content of these chapters for a broader interested readership, without compromising the necessarily laborious and exacting process of preparing the *editio princeps*. This may, therefore,

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3 Tardieu 1988, based upon his study of the facsimile edition then recently made available by Giversen (1986). This thesis is discussed further by Dilley in chapter 2 of this volume.

4 We are well aware that this decision is likely to be critiqued by reviewers, and it is not a choice that we have made easily. The simple fact is that to finalise the Coptic text to a point where it could be published would delay the publication of this volume to a date beyond its avowed purpose as an interim report on the project.

be characterised as a kind of interim and provisional report, intended as a service and a spur to further scholarly debate.

One technical matter that has been (mostly) finalised is the page numbering for much of the latter part of 2 Ke. As has already been discussed by Funk, there is a quire number apparent at the top left hand corner of the final page of the quire numbered 'B' by Rolf Ibscher; and following this there are eight further quires that can be reconstructed with a high degree of certainty (barring a couple of issues) and which reach close to the end of the codex.<sup>5</sup> This quire number is 22, and the matter is confirmed as quire number 30 can be clearly read at the upper left hand corner of the first page of the very final quire (numbered 'VI') in this sequence of eight. This completes the remnants of the codex as now found in Dublin. However, there are a number of leaves to be found in Berlin, including the very final page of the work, and in consequence it seems that we must count at least one more quire to make a total of thirty-one for the original book. Since the quires are quaternios (i.e. 4 bifolia and thus 16 pages), the total codex would have been 496 pages in length. We use this reconstruction as the basis for the page numbers provided throughout this volume.

The final ten chapters are numbered 338–347. κ338 starts at the bottom of the very last page of the twenty-fifth quire (quire 'E'), and thus on the 400th page of the original manuscript. κ347 ends part-way through the twenty-eighth quire (quire 'VIII') on page 442.<sup>6</sup> For discussion of the character and content of the text that follows this final kephalaion in the codex see my contribution on 'Mani's Last Days' elsewhere in this volume. Here are the titles of the final ten chapters insofar as we have been able to read them:

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5 Cf. Funk 1997: 146.

6 The relevant plate numbers in Giversen's 1986 facsimile edition are 274–306 and 313–322. However, it will be apparent that we have not followed Giversen's sequence. Our codicological reconstruction for the latter part of the codex is based on principles established in Funk 1990. However, this enormously valuable preliminary account has been further refined in the years since then both by Funk and ourselves (often in informal consultation).



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Page	Chapter	Title
400	338	<i>This Chapter Talks (about a Wise Man), Iodasphes is his Name, who is Greater than Masoukeos and Goundesh. He Came before Shapur the King.</i>
409	339	...
413	340	<i>(This Chapter Talks about the Time) Kardel the Son of Artaban Went in to ...</i>
415	341	<i>This Chapter Talks about a Faithful Catechumen, Pabakos; the one who (Comes and) Asks the Apostle a Question.</i>
420– 421	342	<i>This Chapter Tells that, while the Apostle was Sitting in the Church, a Nobleman Entered in front of him. He (Mani) Spoke with him in Divine Wisdom.</i>
427	343	<i>It Talks again about Pabakos the Catechumen, who Asks the Apostle about a Lesson.</i>
433	344	...
436	345	<i>This Chapter (Talks about) ...</i>
439	346	<i>This Chapter Tells that ... about Shapur the King in ...</i>
441	347	<i>This Chapter Talks about the Apostle in a City ...</i>

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### **Kephalaion 338: Kirdīr Son of Ardavān and Mani's Audience with Shapur the King**

At first sight κ338<sup>7</sup> would appear to mark a new beginning in the text, as it recounts Mani's introduction at the court of King Shapur (Šābūr) by a certain Kardel son of Artaban. This is Kirdīr Ardavān,<sup>8</sup> a high-ranking noble known also

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7 There has been some previous discussion of material in this chapter, as read by scholars from S. Giversen's facsimile edition. Cf. Böhlig 1989 (at p. 251) and 1992 (at p. 67); Funk 1990 (at p. 529). Of particular interest is the draft translation by W.-P. Funk of certain passages and utilised by U. Weber for her Sasanian prosopography project, which can be accessed on-line at [http://www.klassaltz.uni-kiel.de/projekte/sasaniden/Kerdir\\_Sohn.pdf](http://www.klassaltz.uni-kiel.de/projekte/sasaniden/Kerdir_Sohn.pdf). This file also includes the relevant Middle Iranian texts and useful references to the secondary literature. My own reading of the text differs in certain important respects from that of Funk, no doubt due to the fact that I have been able to autopsy the original and also have access to much better digital photographs.

8 We utilise this spelling for Kirdīr the nobleman, in distinction to Kartīr the mōbed, following

from the Shapur inscription at Naqš-e Rostam<sup>9</sup> (ca. 262 C.E.) and the Middle Persian Manichaean text M3. Mani wins a debate with Iodasphes, a wise man from the east; and this sequence of material ends at the conclusion of κ340 with Kardel / Kirdīr's acceptance of Mani as his master. Before we look at the details preserved by this fascinating section, it is worthwhile to consider some broader issues about the construction of the *Kephalaia* as a whole.

It appears odd to find Mani's introduction to the court at such a late point in the work; and, of course, he has been there before. One should compare the various traditions about Mani's first audience with King Shapur.<sup>10</sup> In κ1,<sup>11</sup> which sets the scene at the very start (i.e. at the beginning of 1 Ke), it is stated that in the year Ardashir (αρταζσοο, i.e. Ardašīr) died his son Shapur (σαπωρηc) became king. Mani returned from the land of India to Persia, and came to Babylon, Mesene and Susiana. Then:

I appeared before Shapur the king. He received me with great honour. He gave me permission to journey in ... preaching the word of life. I even spent some years ... him in the retinue; many years in Persia, in the country of the Parthians, up to Adiabene, and the borders of the provinces of the kingdom of the Romans.

There follows from κ2 onwards a long series of chapters that are primarily cosmological and theogonic in content, or at least in a broad sense doctrinal and concerned with what is often termed the Manichaean 'myth'. Especially in the earlier parts of this there are clear signs of coherent structure and sequencing. This block of material continues until a new sequence, more concerned with ethics and praxis, is introduced in κ76. Here Mani is explicitly placed in Ctesiphon (κτησιφων, Ṭisfūn), where Shapur keeps asking for him and the apostle must go back and forth between the demands of the king at court and his own community in the city. This vignette leads Mani to recount his past travels to India, then back to Persia, Mesene, Babylon and so on. It provides a new framing sequence for what follows, and is one of the clearest examples of a redactional 'join' in the work.

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Skjærvø 2011 sect. ii; see that authoritative discussion for further detail of the diverse language sources and this problematic question in general. The Coptic sources from Medinet Madi consistently use καρΔελ for both men.

9 Amongst the substantial literature on the inscription (usually abbreviated as šKZ) see: Sprengling 1953; Maricq 1958; Back 1978; Huyse 1999.

10 For background on the elaborate protocol of the Sasanian court see De Jong 2004(b).

11 See 1 Ke 15, 24–16, 2.

The apostle's relationship to the king was an abiding theme both in Manichaean historical sources and ancient accounts of the religion, whether polemical or otherwise. It was inevitably associated with issues of legitimacy; and the account in K1, which directly states that Mani was given authorisation by Shapur to travel and preach throughout the empire from the start of his rule, must be compared to that in Ibn al-Nadīm's *Fihrist*. Again, the timing of the start of Mani's mission in Iran is linked to the king's coronation; but then a tradition is cited that Mani travelled the land for about forty years before meeting Shapur. Finally he was taken into the latter's presence by the king's brother Fīrūz (Pērōz), whereupon:<sup>12</sup>

... when (Mānī) came into his presence, there were on his shoulders two lights resembling lamps. And when (Sābūr) saw him he was impressed and (Mānī) grew in his estimation. (Indeed) he had been resolved to having (Mānī) slain, yet when he met him he was overcome by admiration and delight ... So Mānī made a number of requests ...

Mani's requests were granted, and Ibn al-Nadīm says he spread his message in India, China and Khorasan.

The tradition about forty years of travel prior to meeting King Shapur has commonly been rejected by scholars as some kind of textual corruption, perhaps for four years or forty months; and indeed Shapur I reigned for only a little more than thirty years. One way of attempting to reconcile the traditions is to distinguish between the king's coronation, probably in 240 C.E., and then his sole rulership from perhaps 242 C.E. after Ardashir's death and a period of co-regency.<sup>13</sup> Mani's journey to India would then be placed between these dates, and the crucial audience with the king would come after it and some time later than Shapur's actual accession to the throne. Sources that appear to compress the events could then be understood as abbreviated, or else driven by a hagiographic impulse to align the events in Mani's life with renowned turning-points in the wider world.

12 Cf. al-Nadīm, *Fihrist*, ed. Flügel 1871: 328; adapted from the translation by Laffan in Gardner and Lieu 2004: 75–76.

13 There is a long scholarly debate about the dates of Shapur's accession to the throne, coronation, regnal years and death, for which the Manichaean sources provide vital but somewhat contradictory evidence. It is not necessary to enter into all the details of this issue here, but see especially Taqizadeh 1957; Richter-Bernburg 1993; Sundermann 2009(a).

After this brief summary of relevant sources we can return to  $\kappa 338$ . However it is that we understand the chronological matters, it does appear that here we have another example of this characteristic theme concerning Mani's first audience at court, the impression he made, and the subsequent approval given to him by King Shapur.<sup>14</sup> The inevitable tendency towards exaggerating the positive aspects of this, whereby Shapur's permission becomes his conversion, and towards the inclusion of miraculous elements, is to be found in our new text. This is notable in the striking first description of Mani where 'his face is beautiful (and) transformed';<sup>15</sup> and also in the king's response to the apostle after his victory in the debate (see below).

However, what does this tell us about the redaction of the *Kephalaia* as a whole? The inclusion at this late point of material that duplicates a crucial episode, used at the start to frame the entire work, suggests an on-going and only partly-achieved redactional process. It is as if the compiler of the work as we now have it had come upon a new cycle of material relating to Mani, Shapur and the court; and so added it on at the end of the work with scant regard for any inconsistencies that might be generated. But is it linked in any way to what has gone before? The title of  $\kappa 338$  reads:<sup>16</sup>

*This Chapter Talks (about a Wise Man), Iodasphe is his Name, who is Greater than Masoukeos and Goundesh. He Came before Shapur the King.*

In fact, prior to  $\kappa 338$  the codex contains a long series of chapters in which Goundesh (Goundēsh, ΓΟΥΝΔΗΣ, i.e. Gwndyš) and Mani debate with each other,<sup>17</sup> vying in their interpretations of problems and as purveyors of wisdom. Towards the end of this series a new sage is introduced, Masoukeos (ΜΑΣΟΥΚΕΟC), and then now one who is greater still, i.e. Iodasphe (Iōdasphēs, ἸΩΔΑΣΦΗΣ).

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14 Of course, it might be argued that what we have here are three separate audiences with the king, related in *Kephalaia* 1, 76 and 338. Thus, at different stages of Mani's career. However, whilst it is true that the second episode (in *Kephalaion* 76) might better reflect a mature apostle at the height of his career, rather than at the start, I do not believe that these three occurrences relate to a deliberate construction of the *Kephalaia* text upon the chronology of Mani's life. Rather, it is my argument that they reflect different blocks of textual material as incorporated by the redactional process; and this despite the historical problems introduced as a consequence.

15 2 Ke 402, 9 / G276 (at Kirdīr's house before the debate with Iodasphe begins).

16 2 Ke 400, 24–28 / G274.

17 On this cycle, and the question of Middle Iranian parallels to the Goundesh material, see the chapter by Jason BeDuhn elsewhere in this volume.

This debate in κ338 becomes a kind of culmination of all the ones that have gone before. It is situated at the court of Shapur where Mani can demonstrate that he is the wisest of all the wise ones in the empire, as he overcomes the conundrum set him by Iodasphes, whether the universe is eternal or fashioned by God.<sup>18</sup>

The redactional problem can thus be viewed in various ways. On the one hand, in terms of the *Kephalaia* as a whole, we find what appears as a duplicate tradition here near the end; i.e. in that it recounts Mani's first introduction to King Shapur in a manner at odds to the conception of the work established right at the start (κ1). On the other hand, it works as the culmination of a distinct sequence of material that is primarily focused on the figure of Goundesh. However, thinking about this problem, one can also begin to envisage further redactional layers. κ338 also introduces Kardel son of Artaban (Kirdīr Ardavān), which is a discrete sub-section of material itself appended to the Goundesh cycle. A careful archaeology of the text will be required to begin to answer these problems satisfactorily, but a first hypothesis would be that the Goundesh cycle existed independently from the *Kephalaia*, to which was then added the Masoukeos and Iodasphes debates, the latter bringing with it the other Kardel / Kirdīr material.<sup>19</sup> Then, when the whole Goundesh cycle was attached to the *Kephalaia* it necessarily added to the composite text a duplicate first audience with King Shapur. With this hypothesis in mind we can now turn to the content of κ338 in some more detail.

Iodasphes appears before Shapur and praises him as the greatest of kings and lord of a multitude of countries. There is no other kingdom equal to his kingdom. Yet, Shapur lacks this one thing: There is no one in his kingdom able to defeat Iodasphes in debate. At this point Kirdīr is introduced. He tells Shapur that there is indeed one person who could debate and triumph against Iodasphes, that is 'the righteous Manichaios'. Consequently, King Shapur asks for the debate to be held and promises 'whatever you want' as the reward if

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18 2 Ke 402, 21–25 / G276. Interestingly, there is other evidence that Sasanian court disputes favoured set themes of this kind. In the sixth-century Christian martyr legend of Mar Qardagh, the handsome Mazdayasnian noble (who is *marzbān* of northern Iraq) converts after the hermit Abdišo convinces him in a debate that the sun, moon, and stars are created, not eternal. See the discussion in Walker 2006: 164–205.

19 A point of interest to note in *Kephalaion* 338 is the way in which Goundesh is repeatedly introduced into the debate between Mani and Iodasphes. This seems to me like a redactional layer added in an attempt to make the Iodasphes debate part of the larger Goundesh cycle, to which I suspect it did not originally belong.

Mani is indeed victorious.<sup>20</sup> The actual debate appears to take place in Kirdīr's house, at the end of which the king is informed of Mani's success and the apostle receives his audience with Shapur.

This set of characters are fascinating, and it is worthwhile to look at them in some detail as we attempt to disentangle fact from fiction in this classic literary scene. Iodasphes is 'the wise man from the east'.<sup>21</sup> He is an intruder from beyond the Sasanian kingdom who challenges the king. The etymology of his name (Ἰωδασφῆς) is the same as in the famous medieval romance *Barlaam and Joasaph* which circulated a Christianised version of the story of Shakyamuni Buddha in the west, mediated indeed via Manichaean sources. The tradition is well known and has been widely discussed,<sup>22</sup> but our setting here is several centuries earlier than that development. In the romance, it is commonly agreed that the name Iodasaph / Ioasaph is to be derived from the Sanskrit *bodhisattva* (thus Parthian Bōdisadf to Greek Ἰωάσαφ),<sup>23</sup> and we need to consider what exactly is the import of such a presence in our text. The notable change to the first consonant is generally explained as due to corruption in the Arabic manuscript tradition, as the letter bā' in its initial form differs only by one diacritical point from yā';<sup>24</sup> but obviously this is not a satisfactory explanation for Iodasphes in the 2 Ke Coptic text dated ca. 400 C.E.

20 This summary is a paraphrase of 2 Ke 401, 4–24 / G275.

21 2 Ke 400, 29–30 / G274. Note that in the *Synaxeis* codex the 'land of the east' is explicitly equated with India; cf. Funk 2009 (at p. 121).

22 See the discussion and further references in Asmussen 1988; further, e.g. Pettipiece 2009(b) (at p. 141). One might note that Mani himself was sometimes praised as bwdysdf in the community's hymns (thus M5933). For Būdāsaf in early Islamic sources see especially Crone 2012(a). Note that for writers such as Ḥamza al-Iṣfahānī (10th century C.E.) this figure was the leader of a generic group of ancient pagans called variously Sumaniyyūn (i.e. Buddhists) or Kaldāniyyūn (Chaldaeans, a term he takes to be synonymous with the Sabaeans). Many of such sources (e.g. Khwārizmī, also 10th century) identified belief in the eternity of the world as a particular characteristic of the Sumaniyya / Buddhists; and it is notable that this question is precisely the topic of the debate in our text between Mani and Iodasphes. For details and references cf. Crone 2012(a): 25–26 + ff.

23 For technical discussion of the forms of the name see Sundermann 2001(b). Clearly, knowledge of the 2 Ke text might have caused Sundermann to have revised his argument about the historical development and transmission of the various forms cited in his argument and tabulated on p. 174.

24 See Lang 1957: 391 n. 1 ('... Yūdāsaf is a common corruption of Būdāsaf, arising from confusion in Arabic script ...'). The argument is that it was taken over into Georgian, thence into Greek and ultimately Latin and the vernaculars of western Europe.

What our example shows is that this ‘corruption’ occurred approximately five centuries earlier than previously evidenced, although the cause for it becomes more difficult to determine. The opposing argument, that Iodasphes as a name in this present manuscript is unrelated to those later instances, seems to me difficult to maintain. The name is not found, to my knowledge, in the relevant prosopographical compendia.<sup>25</sup> But, rather more to the point, as well as Iodasphes’ introduction as a wise man from the east (which could perhaps be dismissed as a standard trope), the debate culminates with his declaration that Mani is the Buddha.<sup>26</sup> Further, and to my mind most telling, the content of the debate in many ways mirrors the medieval traditions about Būdāsaf (on which see further below). But here, it is surely not intended as an entirely legendary meeting between Mani and Shakyamuni. We should look rather at the development of the Bodhisattva ideal commonly associated with Mahayana Buddhism, whereby multiple figures carry the status of ‘a Buddha-to-be’ or ‘enlightenment-being’. In 2 Ke Iodasphes is presented as a specific person in a very particular and physical arena.<sup>27</sup>

This historical setting at the court of Shapur I (ΣΑΠΩΡΗΣ ΠΡΩ) is given in considerable detail and grounded in externally verifiable facts by the description of Kirdīr. When the latter is introduced we learn three important things about him: He is the son of Artaban (ΚΑΡΔΕΛ ΠΩΡΕ ΝΑΡΤΑΒΑΝ), he belongs to the country of the Salanōn (ΤΧΩΡΑ ΝΗΣΑΛΑΝΩΝ), and he is favoured by the king.<sup>28</sup>

25 Thus e.g. Justi 1895: 150a s.v. Yūdāsaf refers to Būdāsp.

26 2 Ke 406, 9 / G288. This assertion is also made by Goundesh according to the Parthian text M6041, see Sundermann 1981: 89; and indeed also by the King of Touran. The narrative of Mani’s conversion of the latter (easily accessed in Klimkeit 1993: 206–208, but discussed further by BeDuhn at chapter 3 in this volume) features a contest between the apostle and a ‘righteous one’ (*rd’w*), a term sometimes used for the Manichaean elect but in this instance probably a Buddhist arhat. This provides another important literary parallel to the debate with Iodasphes which it is worth consulting.

27 One might note here the strange tradition that the final Parthian king (i.e. Ardavān IV) was the son of Būdāsaf, which is found in the 12th century *Mojmal al-Tawāriḳ* (Abstract of the Histories) where it is quoted from the 11th century *Sīar al-Moluk* (Manners of the Kings). However, as the king is otherwise known as the son of Vologoses (Balāš) v this source may be supposed corrupted.

28 2 Ke 401, 12–14 / G275. The word that I have here translated as ‘favoured’ appears to be (τ)καῖῖῖτ ‘made beautiful’, rather than τᾶῖῖτ ‘honoured’. Whilst it is tempting to suppose a form of καῖτ ‘famous’ and thus ‘well-reputed’, this can not be justified. On the question of such a reading compare 1 Ke 39, 24 (apparently accepted by Crum 1939: 359a). In any case, all these options render a meaning with the same broad lexical range of ‘favour’.

To help us to understand these points we can compare the two other sources about this person, which yield a remarkable congruence of information.

The first of these is the great inscription of Shapur I at Naqš-e Rostam, preserved in three languages, where Kirdir is listed in the sixty-first place amongst the dignitaries of the king's reign (Middle Persian *kltyl 'rtw'n*, Parthian *krtyr 'rtbnw*, Greek Κιρδεϊρ Ἰρδουαν). Although the list provides no further details of his status or function, it is vital epigraphic confirmation of the historical setting. Also, the text corresponds to Manichaean sources that clearly distinguish between this Kirdir the son of Ardavān and Kartir the *mōbed* or magus; the latter being the chief priest who plays such a central role in narratives about Mani's death.<sup>29</sup>

The other source for Kirdir is an historical fragment in Manichaean Middle Persian known as M<sub>3</sub>, and here we do learn more about this figure:<sup>30</sup>

And (the king) stood up from his meal; and, putting one arm around the Queen of the Sakas and the other around Kirdir the son of Ardavān, he came towards the lord (i.e. Mani). And his first words to the lord were: "You are not welcome!"

Ever since the ground-breaking studies of W.B. Henning, the unnamed king in the text has been identified as Bahram I, and the setting for the episode associated with Mani's last days and final audiences before his imprisonment. If this is true, and if we were to take *Kephalaia* 338–340 as having an historical basis in its account of Mani's relationship to Kirdir, then one would have to suppose that this dignitary at some point changed from a supporter to an opponent of the apostle. That may be to give too much credence to the *Kephalaia* narrative; but, nevertheless, one does wonder why Mani's audience here with Shapur is so closely linked to Kirdir. I would also counsel caution about the setting of the M<sub>3</sub> fragment during the reign of Bahram, as no real parallel to the episode occurs in the Coptic narratives about Mani's last days. There are texts that suggest persecution and trouble for the apostle at times

29 The Shapur inscription lists Kartir the *mōbed* in the fifty-first place. Nevertheless, some (especially older) discussions confuse the two figures.

30 M<sub>3</sub>, text and translation (here adapted) in Henning 1942(b) (at pp. 949–952); see also Gardner and Lieu 2004: 84. The account purports to be that of an eye-witness, Nūhzādag (i.e. the 'son of Noah'). Note that Henning in this seminal article identified Kartir the *mōbed* with the son of Ardavān, and also misidentified the Queen of the Sakas as the wife of the future Bahram III (cf. pp. 952–953). These matters would later be clarified; for further discussion see especially Hinz 1971.



during Shapur's reign; and there are other possibilities as well, such as that the episode takes place not at the residence of the 'king of kings' but rather in the presence of one of his sub-rulers.<sup>31</sup>

For the moment, our concern here is with Kirdīr, and the information about him in these texts. In the first place, the naming of Artaban / Ardavān as his father is both intriguing and problematic. Naturally one thinks of the last Parthian kings, who bore this name; but such an identification could be difficult to reconcile with Kirdīr's prominent role at the court of Shapur.<sup>32</sup> The name is common in Iranian history, and one can note that (for example) according to the Middle Persian text *m2* Mani sent his disciple Mar Ammo together with a prince Ardavān and other persons to Abaršahr.

Secondly, Kirdīr is stated to belong to the country of the Salanōn. The identification is problematic, but two tentative suggestions can be offered. The first is with Zarang / Drangiana. Various spellings are recorded for the territory and its inhabitants, including Sarangai (Herodotus) and Zarangae (Pliny).<sup>33</sup> The name is first attested as Old Persian *z-r-k*, and it is true that one must expect a final guttural letter which is absent in the spelling *σαλανων* (i.e. to read Egyptian *srng*). Further, one must suppose that the term betrays a 'frozen' Greek genitive plural (-ων),<sup>34</sup> unnoticed by the translator, and thus a Greek *Vorlage* to the text.<sup>35</sup> Nevertheless, the identification is appealing because it corresponds to

31 I return to this matter in the chapter on 'Mani's Last Days'.

32 Although the details are often dismissed as legendary, the Middle Persian romance *Kār-nāmag ī Ardašīr ī Pābagān* (Book of the Deeds of Ardašīr) states that Shapur's mother (and possibly also his wife) was the daughter of the last Parthian king Ardavān IV; i.e. that Ardašīr took her as a wife. Versions of the story are found in the *Shahnameh* (*Šāhnāma*) and Ṭabarī. Further, note that Ibn al-Nadīm records a tradition that Mani was of Arsacid descent through his mother, see the text in Gardner and Lieu 2004: 46. Although this may also very well be a pious fabrication, one could concoct an elaborate thesis that linked Mani to Kirdīr and thus helped to explain his access to the court of Shapur I. I do not believe this; but, nevertheless, the politics of dynastic change from the Arsacids to the Sasanians are not well understood. It may be plausible that it was politically expedient for Ardašīr to incorporate some members of the Parthian royal family (Kirdīr?) into his court.

33 Thus Σαρράγγαι, Herodotus 3.93; 7.67. See further Schmitt 2011. The use of -l- for -r- in Coptic is very well-attested, notably evident in the form of the name Kardel (Kirdīr) itself.

34 I.e. I am presuming that the Coptic τχωρα ἱνσαλανων is a direct translation of the Greek: 'The country of the Saran(g)ai / Saran(g)ians'. Herodotus, for instance, gives the form Σαρραγγέων. For a somewhat analogous example compare the Coptic Manichaean psalms entitled φαλλμοι σαρακωτε (note that σαρακωτε 'wanderer' is itself an Egyptian word), cf. the comments of Allberry 1938: XXI–XXII; further discussion in Blanchard 2007.

35 The whole issue of the original language of the text, and its transmission into Coptic,

Sistān (Sakastān); or indeed the central territory of the ‘kingdom of the Sakas’ at this period of early Sasanian history. The text M<sub>3</sub> indicates a remarkably close relationship between Kirdir and the Queen of the Sakas. We know that this queen was Shapurduxt, ‘daughter of Shapur’ and wife of his son Narseh. The latter was the king of the Sakas during the reign of Shapur I, later the king of Armenia under Bahram II and finally King of Kings in his own right (293–302 C.E.).<sup>36</sup> In our text K338 we read that Kirdir was favoured by Shapur.

The second suggestion for ΤΧΩΡΑ ΝΗΝΣΑΛΛΑΝΩΝ is prompted by the use of the distinctive phrase ‘up to ... the gates of the Alans’ (reading πύλων Ἀλανῶν) in both the great inscription of Shapur and that of the *mōbed* Kartir from Naqš-e Rostam. It is not inconceivable that ΝΣΑΛΛΑΝΩΝ was a corruption of the Coptic ḥ̄cā- + (n)λλανων, the first element having a well-known geographical usage to mean here ‘beside’ or even ‘to the parts of’ (the Alans). The advantage of this identification is that the form of the name is preserved perfectly just as it is attested in the two major contemporary inscriptions. The disadvantages are that this reading requires the corruption of a hybrid Greek and Coptic form; also that Kirdir has no other known association with that region (unlike Sakastān).

To return to the narrative: The identification of Kirdir the son of Ardavān was important to the author of our text, as it is he who introduces Mani to King Shapur as a worthy opponent to Iodasphes. After the debate has been concluded<sup>37</sup> and Iodasphes has made obeisance before the apostle, Kirdir con-

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will require detailed discussion at a later stage. This has been a problematic issue for scholarship on the Medinet Madi library, and is still unresolved. It is noticeable that the 2 Ke codex evidences both obvious Greek forms such as Πάβακος for the name Pābag; and yet also those that appear unmediated, such as Ἀρταφάξαρ for Ardašir. For these names, see further below on Kephalaion 341.

36 See Weber 2012. The earlier identification of the Queen of the Sakas in the text M<sub>3</sub> as the wife of the later Bahram III (e.g. Henning 1942(b): 953) was based on an error, as shown by Lukonin 1983: 729–730. See also Hinz 1971.

37 I have deliberately omitted discussion of the details of the debate at this time, as the textual remains are difficult and the editing needs further work. However, one feature must be remarked. As already noted, the primary question posed by Iodasphes to Mani is the question of the eternity of the world. The ensuing discussion turns at the end to matters of astrology, the role of the stars and the planets that can convey an especial authority upon a person by their birth at an auspicious moment. This very much recalls the teachings ascribed to Būdhāsaf by Mas‘ūdī in the 10th century C.E. (!), cf. Barbier de Meynard and Pavet de Courteille 1861–1877, vol. 2, pp. 111f. This source is discussed briefly by Crone 2012(a): 27–28, who regards such teachings as ‘Sabianism in the sense of Harranian religion’ rather than anything to do with Buddhism. On this latter problematic

veys the news of the victory to King Shapur who rejoices in it.<sup>38</sup> Unfortunately, the next page is very poorly preserved, but certainly Mani must have been presented to the king because when readable text resumes he is speaking to him about what he would do in the kingdom, and of the good that can come about for Shapur through God. The king gives Mani authorisation to proceed and the apostle blesses him.<sup>39</sup> This then is the critical moment that lies at the heart of the various traditions about Mani's audience with Shapur, although how one can reconcile both the chronology of κ1 and the role of Firūz in Ibn al-Nadīm's account with this remains problematic. In κ338 there is no indication about when the audience occurred during the rule of Shapur, whereas in κ1 the linkage with the king's accession to the throne and the inauguration of his reign is clearly important. And, then, in the account relayed by Ibn al-Nadīm, it is Firūz (rather than Kirdīr) who facilitates Mani's access to the king. How and why these apparent variants developed is at present unknown.

### Kephalaia 339–340: Closure to the Goundesh Cycle and the Kirdīr Sequence

κ338 is followed by two chapters that may have become attached to it through a certain commonality of actors and themes rather than any continuity of narrative. In κ339 we find further discussion between Mani and Goundesh, but it is probable that it is the references to 'buddha/s' and the 'east' near the start that have linked the material to the preceding chapter. There is a particularly interesting section where Goundesh seems to be asking the apostle how it is that he could depart and leave behind his community and churches and all that he has planted in the world. This chapter brings the long Goundesh cycle to its final end, and perhaps the intimations of Mani's death here are intended as a kind of closure. There is one image that is especially striking as it echoes and confirms the much-discussed meaning of the title of the famous 'Cologne' *Mani-Codex*: *περὶ τῆς γέννησος τοῦ σώματος αὐτοῦ* (*On the Birth of His Body*). It reads:<sup>40</sup>

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issue see further the discussion by Van Bladel 2009: 115–118 on 'The Ḥarrānians and India'. This is not the place to deal with such a complex topic, but rather to note another remarkable instance where our Chester Beatty codex appears to anticipate traditions otherwise only evidenced in texts from many centuries later.

38 Thus 2 Ke 406, 10–27 / G288.

39 Paraphrase of the evident sense of 2 Ke 408, 5–10 / G290.

40 2 Ke 411, 6–9 / G281.

Why would you leave behind this body that you have begotten (πισωμα ετακκπαϛ), which is the writings and the new revelations and this great glorious wisdom that you have ... in the church.

Thus the ‘body’ is not so much the enfleshment of Mani or his own life-history, but rather the incarnation of the divine mind made present in his teachings and the community that he has established. What is at stake is not a biography of the apostle but the birth and growth to maturity of the holy church.

Then in κ340 Kirdīr the son of Ardavān is again the central character and interlocutor of Mani. The chapter indeed finishes with the apostle teaching about the ‘Light Mind’ and its role in the church, one of the most important themes in Manichaean literature and with numerous parallels in both western and eastern texts.<sup>41</sup> What is interesting about this presentation here is that Mani is addressing Kirdīr, someone who is set fast ‘in the world’, teaching him about the faithful servants of God; that is, the church that the Light Mind indwells. Mani asks Kirdīr neither to impede nor restrain them. This helps us to situate Kirdīr in terms of Mani and his mission, and also connects to κ338 and the audience with Shapur. The chapter ends, and in a sense this whole sequence, with Kirdīr’s acceptance of Mani as ‘our father and our master’.<sup>42</sup> But this conclusion is formulaic and out of place, and it is clear that historically Kirdīr’s role in Mani’s life (like Shapur’s) was more problematic and ambivalent.

### **Kephalaion 341: Pabakos the Catechumen and the Law of Zarades**

There is no discernable link from the previous sequence to κ341. Here there is not found any mention of Goundesh or Kirdīr, nor King Shapur (though the latter will return in κ345 for the very last three chapters of the codex). Instead, the attention turns to what may very broadly be termed eschatology, and the linking term from κ341 to κ342 is probably ‘the land of light (τχωρα ἡπογαίνε)’. Further, both κ341 and κ343 are presented in terms of questions asked by a certain Pabakos; whilst Kephalaion κ341 and κ345 feature discussion of connected series of sayings attributed to Zarades and Jesus. Thus one can identify a number of ordering rationales in these final chapters. But the long Goundesh cycle is finished, and what we have here are essentially miscellaneous materials added

41 See, for example Kephalaion 38; also Sundermann 1992(a).

42 Paraphrase selected from 2 Ke 415, 1–24 / G277.

to the very end of what must be regarded as an evolving kephalaic corpus. Nevertheless, both κ341 and κ342 are lengthy and extremely interesting in different ways, and will be treated separately in the following discussion which focuses upon their contents.

κ341 begins with a question posed by a catechumen named as Pabakos the son of Artashahar (?) the son of Mousar.<sup>43</sup> The name παβακος is clearly Iranian, indeed the same as that of the father (Pāpak, Pābag) of Ardašīr, the first Sasanian king.<sup>44</sup> The reading of the patronymic is not entirely certain, but ἀρταγωαε[αρ] is most probable and must be supposed to represent the name Ardašīr; although obviously we should not suppose royal heritage for this catechumen, but rather a commonality of names. Interestingly, King Ardašīr appears elsewhere in the Coptic Manichaica as ἀρταζωοc;<sup>45</sup> in comparison the form in 2 Ke is notably not mediated through Greek. The origins of the name μοϋσαρ are unclear.

Pabakos the catechumen was presumably a Mazdayasnian convert (for want of a better term) to Mani's teachings, as he begins his question by quoting three sayings said to be written in the 'law of Zarades' (σηε απνομοc ηζαραδηc). This important passage deserves to be quoted, even if in provisional translation:<sup>46</sup>

... I am asking you about what is written in the law of Zarades (*The Law of Zarades?*) like this: 'Anyone who says that this law is not true [will (be excluded)] from the light'. And again, I (ask you about) the law of Zarades: 'Whoever says that the land of light does not exist, he is one who will not see the land of light'. And again he says: 'Whoever says that no end will come about, that is the one whom no end will befall'. So, these three sayings Zarades has proclaimed in the law.

What this may tell us about the nature of Mazdayasnianism and its scriptures in the third century C.E. is discussed by Paul Dilley elsewhere in the volume.

43 2 Ke 415, 29–30 / G277.

44 For a summary of the complicated traditions about the origins of the Sasanian dynasty and the parentage of Ardašīr see Frye 2011.

45 See 1 Ke 15, 24–28, and especially the note to l. 28 that remarks on this form rather than the expected ἀρταζαρηc.

46 2 Ke 416, 2–10 / G278. Attention was first drawn to this passage by Böhlig 1992: 68. Of course, it is arguable whether one should treat the 'law of Zarades' as a title, i.e., *The Law of Zarades* (or just *The Law?*).

Pabakos then continues: 'I have heard your children saying ...';<sup>47</sup> and proceeds to quote a series of logia ascribed to Jesus. This scenario provides a fascinating insight into a situation that must be supposed crucial to the development of the Manichaean community. That is, if one takes seriously Mani's self-identification as 'an apostle of Jesus Christ', then one must place the impetus for his mission within the broad Christian orbit. However, Mani's life situation within the religiously diverse early Sasanian empire, and his openness to a universal proclamation of the truth as mediated through prior apostles east and west, clearly attracted hearers from both the Buddhist and Mazdayasnian communities; as the stories in 2 Ke demonstrate. This process drove the trajectory of Manichaean development to become something very different to the Christianity that was already cohering into recognisable forms within the Roman empire.

The first saying of Jesus quoted by Pabakos is the famous one concerning blasphemy against the Holy Spirit:<sup>48</sup>

Whoever blasphemes against [the Father will be forgiven], (and) whoever blasphemes against the Son will be forgiven; but [whoever] blasphemes against the Holy Spirit will not be forgiven on earth nor in the heavens. Rather, [he will be] condemned ... forever.

What concerns the catechumen is that both Zarades (i.e. Zarathustra) and Jesus, according to the sayings that he has quoted, appear to have made categorical judgements to exclude certain persons from the life to come. For Zarades this includes deniers of the law, and those who say that the land of light does not exist; according to Jesus it is those who blaspheme against the Holy Spirit. Pabakos calls these 'exclusionary judgements' (ὡδωτ ἡξεν), and insists that their imposition is itself a cause of pain and contradictory to other gospel injunctions such as to turn the other cheek or to love one's enemies. He asks Mani to explain this contradiction and thus to set his mind at ease.<sup>49</sup>

In response, the apostle asserts that he is the one who can interpret the true meaning of Jesus' saying about the Holy Spirit; which he terms, interest-

47 2 Ke 416, 11 and ff. / G278.

48 Cf. Mt. 12:31–32 and parallels. Funk 2002: 79–85 has already demonstrated that the form of the logion found here in 2 Ke demonstrates the influence of Ev. Thom. log. 44. That article provides a paraphrase of the three quotes from 'the law of Zarades' as well as detailed discussion of the logion (and other useful comments on the surrounding Coptic text).

49 Paraphrase of the argument made by Pabakos in 2 Ke 416, 1–417, 6 / G278 + 305. Following this, Pabakos extends the series of quotations to the disciples and quotes Rom. 12:17.

ingly, a 'parable (παράβολη)'. The exegesis is replete with the traditional themes of Manichaean doctrine. For instance, the one who 'blasphemes against the Father' is the catechumen who harms the five light-elements; but who afterwards seeks forgiveness from the 'holy church'.<sup>50</sup> In conclusion, of course, Pabakos is satisfied by the answer and glorifies Mani. However, the great interest of the chapter lies not so much in the explanation but in the way in which Zarades and Jesus are jointly presented as 'fathers of light',<sup>51</sup> and the interplay between their sayings and scriptures on the one hand and Mani's authority on the other. Further, Kephalaion 341 will be of vital importance not just for determining the status of the book ('it is written ...') apparently ascribed to Zarades / Zarathustra, but also for the form and function of the various gospel sayings and passages from Paul that are scattered through the chapter.

### Kephalaion 342: The Chain of Apostles

Kephalaion 342 is a lengthy chapter<sup>52</sup> and may be a composite of different traditions relating to the 'land of light' (itself being the term that links the chapter to the previous one). It contains one of the very best preserved pages remaining from the codex, which has already attracted a certain amount of attention due to its evident and detailed rendering of the classic Manichaean teaching concerning the chain of apostles. Since previous articles and scholars have commented at some length on this passage,<sup>53</sup> I will here provide our translation of the Coptic text as it now stands. This is important because it improves on previous readings in a substantial number of details (and indeed corrects some things that were incorrect and should now be disregarded). The passage is also the basis for various other discussions in this present volume, so it is important to provide a considered text for these, even if still provisional in a few mostly minor details.

The chapter begins with a question to Mani by an unnamed nobleman (εὐγενής). It seems to concern whether the apostle's wisdom has been revealed

50 2 Ke 418, 6–12 (in summary) / G306.

51 2 Ke 419, 11–15 / G303.

52 2 Ke 420, 29–427, 28 / G304 + 301 + 302 + 299 + 300 + 297 + 298 + 295.

53 See in particular Tardieu 1988. His article formed the basis for a number of subsequent discussions (e.g. G. Gnoli 1990; Böhlig 1992: 69); but some of its readings were challenged by Gardner 2005. Further detailed study of the passage has confirmed my earlier corrections to Tardieu.

to him by the eyes.<sup>54</sup> Unfortunately, the first part of Mani's answer is poorly preserved, although it does contain an interesting enumeration of the countries of the world (the apostle's point seems to be that one knows that they exist even if you have not physically entered into each of them).<sup>55</sup> However, he then turns to the land of light itself, and the chain of the apostles who have seen it and come to this present realm and written about its truth (one can see here the link to the quotations from the law of Zarades in the previous chapter). The following passage is a classic rendition of this foundation stone of Mani's teaching, and deserves to be quoted in full:<sup>56</sup>

I will [tell] (423) you each one of the apostles by name, they who came and appeared in this world. Zarades was sent to Persia, to Hystaspes the king. He revealed the truly-founded law in all of Persia. Again, Bouddas the blessed, he came to the land of India and Kušān. He also revealed the truly-founded law in all of India and Kušān. And after him Aurentes came with Kebellos to the east. They also revealed the truly-founded law in the east. (N.N.) came to Parthia. He revealed the law of truth in all of Parthia. Jesus the Christ came to the west. He (revealed the law of) truth in all of the west.

(All?) these apostles ... and these busy merchants ... as they came from that place in ...-ness ... among them: For they were seized from this place, they were [taken] up, they went, they saw, they came (back), they bore witness (that truly?) the land of light exists and that we have come from it. Also, hell exists, and we have seen the place where it is. They (came forth and) dwelt (?) in the world. They made disciples of the people. They (taught them what is good?), they ... from them. They were taken to the land of light, this city of good fortune. Their witness exists till now in their writings, in all these countries ...

Also, Adam and Seth, Enosh and Sem and Enoch and Noah and Shem; all these men: The angels came from the land of light and seized them. They were taken up. They were taught about the land of light, how it is; and they were also taught about hell and the place where it exists.

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54 2 Ke 421, 11 / G301. Mani often stressed that the truth of what he taught was visible and thus demonstrable by the evidence of one's own sight; e.g. this promise to his followers: 'Look, you have seen everything by an eye-revelation. You do not lack anything from the mysteries of the wisdom of God' (P. Kellis VI Copt. 54, 8–11).

55 2 Ke 421, 24–29 / G301.

56 Provisional translation of 2 Ke 422, 28–424, 19 / G302 + 299 + 300. For further discussion of Bouddas, Aurentes and Kebellos see Gardner 2005.



They came back (?), they came to this place again. And when they came they spoke. They bore witness about the land of light and hell, that they (424) exist. They did that which was entrusted to them by God. Indeed, these who became disciples of them: They did good deeds, and they came forth from their body and they went to the land of light, the city of the well-favoured. Their testimony exists till now in their writings.

So, if, as I have told you, these people came from the land of light to this place, people have also gone from this place to the land of light. I, myself, whom you are looking at: I went to the land of light. Indeed, I have seen the land of light with my eyes, the way that it is. [Again], I have seen hell with my eyes, the way that it is. I have (been sent here) by God. I came; I have revealed this place (i.e. the land of light) [in this] world. I preached the word of God; and I ... of God in the world from the north to [the south. A] multitude of people have heard me. They have believed ... How many among them have done good deeds! They came forth [from their] body and they went to the land of light, they ... they are established, being there until today. Behold (?), I have told you about a multitude of witnesses who have come forth from the land of light.

In response to this testimony Mani's interlocutor asserts his belief in the land of light and the testimony of all the apostles who have been there and seen it. However, he then asks another question about what is the true 'sign (MEINE)' of the land of light? Mani asserts that he is 'the witness who is entrusted with the true sign of the land of light, the one that the apostles preached'.<sup>57</sup> The remainder of the chapter is taken up, firstly, with Mani's discussion of this sign; and, secondly, with an elaborate analogy by him of the way that the Father, the God of Truth, seeks to promulgate his law in the world through a single righteous person, i.e. the apostle.

κ342 is presented as a dialogue between the nobleman and Mani, with a series of questions and answers that present a kind of coherent rationale for Manichaean teachings about the coming of the apostles, culminating in Mani's own mission. In this purpose it can be compared to a number of other passages among the community's writings (notably one should read κ1), but probably the most striking feature in this rendering is Mani's assertion of his own rapture and vision of both heaven and hell. On the one hand this parallels the series of testimonies quoted in the *Mani-Codex*, recounting the raptures of prior apostles (or 'forefathers') from Adam to Paul, and of course culminating

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57 Thus 2 Ke 424, 21-425, 1 / G300 + 297.

in Mani himself.<sup>58</sup> On the other hand, and it is this Iranian dimension that is newly brought out in 2 Ke, it points to the tradition of visionary literature in Mazdayasnianism. Given that the conflict and competition between Mani and Kartīr the *mōbed* takes such a dominant place in the ‘epilogue’ to 2 Ke and the tragedy of the apostle’s death, one necessarily thinks of the famous vision of the great magus and his own assertions to have seen the other world:<sup>59</sup>

And when I prayed to the gods for help I indicated: “If it is possible for you gods, then show me the nature of heaven and hell!”

These matters are further discussed by Paul Dilley in another chapter in this volume.

### Kephalaia 343–344: Another Pabakos Question and Two Lists

Kephalaion 343 features another question by Pabakos the catechumen, and has obviously been attached to the tradition in succession to κ341. Again it features Mani’s exposition of a saying of Jesus, as well as elaborate parables by both the apostle and the catechumen. A particular point of interest is that what appears to have been an unconnected fragment of tradition has been attached to the end of the chapter, and provided with only a rudimentary link to the dialogue between Mani and Pabakos.<sup>60</sup> This new section is intriguing in that it is a highly patterned numerical listing of the ‘ten congregations’ or ‘churches’, each associated with one of the Manichaean divinities such as the Pillar of Glory, the First Man and the Keeper of Splendour. The material and format is much closer to that which is frequently found in 1 Ke, and a contrast to the narratives, parables and dialogues that characterise this latter part of 2 Ke. In Kephalaion 344 something similar is again found, with another numerical list of a series of ‘preservations’ (ΝΟΥΤΗΜΕ) that have occurred during the history of the conflict between the children of God and the ‘enmity’.

58 CMC 45, 1–72, 7. This lengthy section concludes: ‘For when each of them was seized, (everything he saw) and heard he wrote down and made known, and himself became a witness of his own revelation; while his disciples became the seal of his sending’.

59 Cf. Skjaervø 1983.

60 Thus at 2 Ke 432, 6 / G292 Pabakos sits down and the dialogue appears to be concluded; but then Mani suddenly addresses his ‘children’ and gives the teaching about the ten congregations, which continues to the end of Kephalaion 343 (433, 14 / G321).

### Kephalaia 345–347: Mani and King Shapur

The sequence of this *Kephalaia* codex concludes with three short chapters (436, 21–442, 6) in which King Shapur again features. Perhaps we can see in this a deliberate purpose of the redactor, to emphasise the apostle's connection with the king. It is of interest that neither Shapur's death, nor reference to his successors, forms any part of the work; at least, until the 'epilogue', if that is to be counted part of the overall design (on this see the separate study elsewhere in this volume).

The three chapters seem to be given specific contexts with reference to certain cities and events, as if to emphasise their historical basis; but unfortunately the preservation is poor and it is difficult to follow much in the way of connected narrative. However, one point to note is that κ345 again contains a sequence of sayings from both Zarades / Zarathustra and Jesus, just as was the case in κ341. Not only is such a format quite remarkable and of great interest, but detailed study of the wording of the texts promises important results as regards the sources utilised.

### An End to the Kephalaia?

In the Chester Beatty codex (2 Ke) Kephalaion 347 is the final chapter, although I think there is good reason to suppose that the situation in other recensions of the work may have been different. It has been argued that the work was an evolving corpus of material, to which traditions circulating in the community were added with little or no rationale (e.g. the list of 'ten congregations' appended to κ343); and even entire pre-existing cycles such as that concerning Goundesh and Mani could be included. I discuss elsewhere in this volume the question of what for the moment we can call the 'epilogue' concerning Mani's last days, which follows κ347 in our codex. But does the final actual kephalaion betray any sense of closure?

κ347 ends part-way through the twenty-eighth quire (quire 'VIII') at line 6 on page 442. This brief final chapter, which started only on the previous page, tells the story of Mani staying in a certain city where a festival was taking place. It seems that the apostle used the opportunity to give a teaching to his disciples based on the well-known images of trees and their fruit, vines and the wine they produce. In the very final lines this becomes an exhortation to his listeners to themselves generate such 'useful fruits, which are wisdom and prayer, virginity and purity'; and through these good deeds they will be able to rest in the 'kingdom of the living ones for ever and ever,

amen'.<sup>61</sup> This then is the end. In itself the teaching and the exhortation recall many similar passages from throughout the *Kephalaia*, but a certain extra element of closure may be indicated with the formulaic 'for ever and ever amen' which lifts the passage a little beyond the norm. But this is all, and there is no title nor colophon nor special design element used to draw a final line under the passage. Instead, there follows a vacant space corresponding to approximately seven lines of script, and then the 'epilogue' begins.

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61 Paraphrase and partial quotes from 2 Ke 442, 2–6 / G314.



PART 2

*New Sources from the Chester Beatty Codex*





## Also Schrieb Zarathustra? Mani As Interpreter of the ‘Law of Zarades’\*

*Paul Dilley*

At the beginning of Kephalaion 341, the ‘faithful catechumen’ Pabakos, apparently a well-connected member of King Shapur’s court, poses a question to Mani, quoting three sayings from a written source that he refers to as the ‘law of Zarades’ (ΠΝΟΜΟΣ ΝΖΑΡΑΔΗΣ):<sup>1</sup>

... I am asking you about what is written in the law of Zarades (*The Law of Zarades?*) like this: ‘Anyone who says that this law is not true [will (be excluded)] from the light’. And again, I (ask you about) the law of Zarades: ‘Whoever says that the land of light does not exist, he is one who will not see the land of light’. And again he says: ‘Whoever says that no end will come about, that is the one whom no end will befall’. So, these three sayings Zarades has proclaimed in the law.

This striking passage immediately raises questions about the nature of the ‘law of Zarades’. Was it an Iranian text recognized by Mani and his followers, perhaps in translation, analogous to their use of Jesus traditions? Is it a title (i.e., *The Law of Zarades*), or merely an interpretive gloss, based on the Manichaean understanding of *nomos*? The assertion that Zarades proclaimed the three sayings suggests that he was their original expounder; but when and how did they achieve written form? And what does the subsequent dialogue with Pabakos, as well as the role of the ‘law of Zarades’ in the decisive conflict with Kartīr and Bahram, contribute to our understanding of early Manichaeism?

After quoting from the ‘law of Zarades’, Pabakos next cites a saying of Jesus he has learned from Mani’s disciples, a warning that sins against the Spirit are

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\* Parts of this chapter were presented to the Turfanforschung group at the Berlin-Brandenburgische Akademie der Wissenschaften in June 2011. I am grateful for their feedback, and for the support of a Renewal Fellowship from the Alexander von Humboldt Stiftung, with special thanks to my host, Desmond Durkin-Meisterernst.

<sup>1</sup> 2 Ke 416, 2–10 / G278.



unforgiveable. This is closest in form to *Gospel of Thomas* logion 44.<sup>2</sup> In the ensuing discussion, Mani cites various other sayings of Jesus ('the savior'), all of them with clear gospel parallels.<sup>3</sup> He compares these to the 'law of Zarades', which, in contrast, is not readily identifiable with any surviving ancient literature. As I will argue in this chapter, although the Chester Beatty *Kephalaia* (hereafter 2 Ke) was produced in the Roman empire, there is no similarity in content with those Greek or Latin fragments attributed to Zoroaster, with whom Zarades is sometimes identified.<sup>4</sup> The 'law of Zarades' has closer affinities to, but is not identical with, the surviving Pahlavi Zand, which is often attributed to Zarathustra, from whose name Zarades derives.<sup>5</sup> The lack of an exact match is not surprising, as both the extant Avesta and its Zand were written down much later, in the fifth or sixth century. Mani's rival Kartīr drew upon oral traditions in his inscriptions that similarly reflect, but do not correspond exactly to, the later Zand.<sup>6</sup> The 'law of Zarades' is thus important evidence for a written compilation of Zarathustra-traditions predating the compilation of the Avestan canon by several centuries.

The quotation and subsequent discussion of the 'law of Zarades' in κ341, including the related material in the following four chapters (κ342–345), also reveals a great deal about the background and strategies of Mani and his early followers. It is not the only evidence for Manichaean adaption of Mazdayasnian tradition, which has generally been recognized by classicists, historians of religion, and Iranists alike, though with varying estimations of its importance.<sup>7</sup> There are even references to the *Nask* and the *Gāthās* in Manichaean literature, but only in Middle Persian and Parthian texts, (see below). The passage from 2 Ke suggests that this interaction with Zarathustra traditions can be traced back to the founder himself, or at least the early community in its Mesopotamian

2 2 Ke 416, 11–16 / G278. On the connection of the Jesus tradition quoted by Pabakos to the *Gospel of Thomas* see Funk 2002.

3 2 Ke 416, 11–12 / G278. There is a lacuna where '[law] of Jesus' is a possible restoration, but this phrase does not appear elsewhere in the Coptic Manichaica.

4 Agathias, *Histories* 2, 23–25 (Bidez and Cumont 1938: II 83–86, text D 11; Vasunia 2007: 48–51, text 5); see the discussion below, in Part II.

5 I use the term Zarathustra to refer generally to the Iranian sage first mentioned in the Avesta; Zarades when discussing the Coptic 'law of Zarades' and related literature; and Zoroaster when discussing Graeco-Roman pseudepigrapha. On the name Zarathustra and its various derivatives, see most recently discussion by Schmitt 2002.

6 Skjaervø 2011.

7 See e.g. Koenen 1986 and Merkelbach 1986 (Classics); Rudolph 1972 and Tardieu 1981 (History-of-Religions); and Skjaervø 1995(a) and Sundermann 2009(a) (Iranology).



consider whether the ‘law of Zarades’ is in fact from the Graeco-Roman world, despite the Iranian context of Mani and his first followers. Indeed, some of these pseudepigrapha were surely available within the Sasanian empire, either through diaspora groups, including Mani’s childhood community; or at the court of the shah, which sought to collect foreign wisdom, attributing it to an Iranian heritage shattered and dispersed by Alexander.<sup>10</sup>

The works of Hellenistic popular philosophy attributed to Zoroaster (and the other ‘Iranian’ sages Hystaspes and Ostanes), many of which are fragmentary, were collected by Cumont and Bidez in their fundamental study *Les Mages Hellenisés*.<sup>11</sup> They argued that these texts were Hellenized versions of Iranian teaching, tracing them back to the mysterious Magousaeans, an Iranian diaspora community in Asia Minor.<sup>12</sup> Roger Beck has effectively refuted this hypothesis, arguing instead that the Greek Zoroaster writings do not display any real familiarity with Mazdayasnian ideas, but only make a superficial appeal to ‘alien wisdom’ through pseudepigraphy.<sup>13</sup> Given this emerging scholarly consensus, the authenticity of texts attributed to Zarades discovered in any Mediterranean language—Greek, Latin, or Coptic—ought to be regarded with a healthy dose of skepticism.<sup>14</sup> And yet there is no overlap in content between the extant passages and reports on Graeco-Roman Zoroaster pseudepigrapha, which concern astrology and other aspects of natural philosophy, such as lapidary lore; and the ‘law of Zarades’, as quoted in 2 Ke.<sup>15</sup> Only the preface to *On Nature*, in which

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2007: 139; text 212); and Agathias, in the *Histories* 2, 24, of two principles (ἀρχαίς) (Bidez and Cumont 1938: II 83–86, text D 11; Vasunia 2007: 48–51, text 5). The combined evidence suggests terminological fluidity regarding dualism.

- 10 For the Pahlavi evidence, see Bailey 1943: 80–87. For the Arabic sources on this policy, see van Bladel 2009: 31–32. Given this endeavor, pseudo-scientific works attributed to Zoroaster would presumably have interested the Sasanian court.
- 11 Bidez and Cumont 1938. The second volume contains a still indispensable collection of sources, most of which are now translated in Vasunia 2007, which for its part includes materials on Iranian religion not related to Zoroaster. A few Coptic Manichaean sources on Zarades are included in their catalogue: 1 Ke 7, 27 ff.; Hom 11, 21; and Hom 70, 2 ff. (Bidez and Cumont 1938: II 95–97, text s 2a–c).
- 12 Bidez and Cumont 1938: I v–xi.
- 13 Beck 1991 and 2002.
- 14 In support of this consensus, I would add that the terms *Avesta* and *Zand* are not found in extant Greek and Latin literature, nor is there any known citation of the *Avesta* in Greek, Latin, or (for that matter) in Syriac. The term *Avesta* is found in several Syriac texts, of which the earliest is from the sixth century (Nau 1927).
- 15 The Greek and Latin texts attributed to Zoroaster, and relevant testimonies, are collected in Bidez and Cumont 1938: II 158–248.

Ps.-Zoroaster claims to repeat information revealed to him by the gods while in hades, has potential affinities, given the shared eschatological focus.<sup>16</sup> In fact, the prologue is based on the myth of Er in Plato's *Republic*, suggesting an affinity with the Nag Hammadi library text *Zostrianos*, another text featuring heavenly ascent.

This connection demands a revisit of Werner Sundermann's suggestion that Mani's understanding of Zoroaster is derived primarily from western 'gnostic' sources, although he does not name specific works.<sup>17</sup> Dylan Burns has recently argued that one 'gnostic' group, the Sethians, are closely related to the Manichaeans, positing 'a common background in ascetic, visionary baptismal cult' in the Syro-Mesopotamian region, as well as a common dependence on Judaeo-Christian apocalyptic tradition.<sup>18</sup> A group of these Sethians attended Plotinus's seminars in Rome, and Porphyry criticizes their disregard for the authority of Plato in favor of *Zostrianos* and Zoroaster.<sup>19</sup> Several extant Sethian texts appeal to precisely these sages: *Zostrianos*, which features a heavenly ascent by the eponymous seer, identified with Zoroaster in the colophon, but elsewhere with Zoroaster's grandfather;<sup>20</sup> and the *Apocryphon of John*, a popular revelation dialogue on cosmology, anthropology, and soteriology, the longer version of which contains a description of the heavenly powers presiding over different parts of the body (*a melothesia*), ascribed to the *Book of Zoroaster*. There is also a *melothesia* following the 'prophecy of Zardusht', a little-known passage cited in the *Scholion* of the eighth-century Nestorian bishop Theodore

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16 Only the prologue is extant, as cited by both Proclus and Clement of Alexandria (Bidez and Cumont 1938: II 158–161, texts O 12–13; Vasunia 2007: 78, 80–81, texts 80 and 86).

17 Sundermann 1986(a): 462, referring to M7 (discussed below), suggests that it recalls the 'Zarathustra der Gnosis oder einer apokryphen christlichen tradition'. Although the use of 'gnosis' and 'gnosticism' as umbrella-terms for describing diverse groups has rightly been criticized in recent scholarship, this examination proceeds by examining better defined communities, namely the Sethians.

18 Burns 2014: 144, with an overview of parallels between Manichaeism and Sethianism. Burns further speculates that the Sethian apocalypses, including *Zostrianos*, were produced 'in Apamea around the turn of the century' (p. 156), which would make it possible that Mani was familiar with *Zostrianos* or a related text. Reeves has also suggested 'an intellectual nexus, probably literary in nature', between the Sethians and Manichaeans (Reeves 1999: 169).

19 Porphyry, *Life of Plotinus* 16. In particular, Porphyry demonstrated that a work attributed to Zoroaster was composed only recently. See the discussion in Rasimus 2010: 103–108 and Burns 2014: 32–47.

20 Cf. Clement of Alexandria, *Miscellanies* 5, 14.103.2–4; and Arnobius, *Against the Nations* 1, 52.

bar Konai, and in two other Syriac texts, which John Reeves has related to the Sethian gnostics.<sup>21</sup>

Like the excerpts from the ‘law of Zarades’ in 2 Ke, both *Zostrianos* and the ‘prophecy of Zardusht’ concern individual eschatology. In the latter work, Zardusht reminds his followers of their heavenly origin, and the need for vigilance:<sup>22</sup>

Now, my sons, you (who) are the seed of life which came forth from the treasuries [of life and] of light and of spirit, and who were sown in a place of fire and water, it is necessary for you to watch and guard these things which I have told you so that you can look for his appointed time.

Reeves suggests that this passage recalls the Manichaean identification of Zarathustra as an apostle of light, relating this to the idea that *Zostrianos* is a manifestation of the heavenly Seth.<sup>23</sup> The apocalypse *Zostrianos* describes his ascent through the aeons, followed by a return descent to reveal this knowledge to the elect. It is mostly a description of the heavenly realms, in the form of a dialogue between *Zostrianos* and several different angels. One of them, Ephesech, speaks with *Zostrianos* about three different kinds of immortal souls, in a way that vaguely recalls Mani’s discussion in 2 Ke of the different fates awaiting sectarians and catechumens.<sup>24</sup> In a later section, Ephesech elaborates on their fate, using a sentence structure recalling the ‘law of Zarades’: ‘The man who is saved is that one who seeks himself and his mind (νοῦς) and finds each of them.’<sup>25</sup> This saying and several others are general statements about personal eschatology, but do not concern blasphemy, the central topic of κ341.

The suggestive points of connection with *Zostrianos* can be profitably expanded upon by comparing the ‘law of Zarades’ to various Greek and Latin accounts of Iranian religion, which, as Albert de Jong has demonstrated, con-

21 Reeves 1999. The other texts are in Isho’dad of Merv’s ninth-century commentary on Matthew, and Simon of Basra’s thirteenth-century compilation, the *Book of the Bee*. Theodore and Isho’dad quote the prophecy in their discussion of the Magi’s journey in Matthew 2:2.

22 Reeves 1999: 170–171. Isho’dad of Merv even claims that the passage he quotes is from ‘that vomit of Satan, their scripture which is called Avesta’ (p. 172)!

23 Reeves 1999: 169.

24 NHC VIII, 26–28. The corresponding passage is 2 Ke 417–419 / G305 + 304 + 303, discussed below in Part IV.

25 NHC VIII, 44, 1–4.

tain substantial information that corresponds with Iranian sources.<sup>26</sup> Points of overlap would not imply that Mani was dependent on these sources, but that various aspects of Mazdayasnianism, including written traditions, were available to non-Iranians. Indeed, of the several important Greek sources for Iranian religion, three of them describe Zarathustra as the author of a 'law' or 'oracles'. The first such reference is found in the *Library of History* by Diodorus Siculus, a Greek author who composed his universal history in the last half of the first century B.C.E. In book one, he writes:<sup>27</sup>

Among the Arians they relate that Zathraustes claimed that the Good Spirit gave laws (νόμους) to him; among the people called the Getae, who profess immortality, Zalmoxis claimed the same of their common goddess Hestia; and among the Jews Moses (claimed that) the god invoked as Iao gave laws to him.

De Jong evaluates the accuracy of this passage positively, noting that it 'suggests the canonical Mazdayasnian version of Zoroaster's revelation: in Airyana Vaējah, Zarathustra received his revelation through the mediation of Vohu Manah from Ahura Mazda'.<sup>28</sup> The testimony of Diodorus is relevant to the 'law of Zarades' in 2 Ke because it uses the term 'laws' to refer to the revelations of Zathraustes, who is mentioned in a catalogue of prophets, not unlike Mani's own lists, except that Moses is included.

The second reference is a short fragment by Diodorus's contemporary Nicolaus of Damascus, Herod the Great's court historian, who similarly mentions 'oracles of Zoroaster (Ζωροάστρου λογία)' as pertaining to legal / ritual regulations, in his account of Cyrus's famous attempt to burn Croesus. When these plans are thwarted by heavy rain, the oracles of Zoroaster are consulted (as well as those of the Ephesian Sybil!), after which the Achaemenid founder decides to spare the Lydian king. Nicolaus notes: 'Regarding Zoroaster, at least, the Persians interpreted him to forbid burning the dead, and polluting fire in any other way, and then confirmed this custom (νόμιμον), established long ago'.<sup>29</sup> The idea

26 De Jong 1997.

27 Diodorus Siculus, *Library of History*, 1, 94.2 (Bidez and Cumont 1938: II 30–31, text B 19; Vasunia 2007: 55, text 12). For more on the name Zathraustes, see de Jong 1997: 318; with references.

28 De Jong 1997: 267.

29 Nicolaus of Damascus, *Fragment 68* (Bidez and Cumont 1938: II 81–82, text D 9; Vasunia 2007: 204, text 371); see the discussion in Boyce and Grenet 1991: 372.

that the Persians interpreted Zoroaster's oracles recalls the portrayal in 2 Ke of Mani explicating the 'law of Zarades'.

A third reference to regulations of Zarathustra occurs in a much later source, the *Histories* of Agathias, who discussed Byzantine-Sasanian relations in the sixth century C.E., apparently with the aid of an Iranian informant. De Jong demonstrates that Agathias's descriptions of Sasanian culture are accurate in many respects, so his account of Zarathustra is of major interest:<sup>30</sup>

But it is not possible to clearly determine when this Zoroaster or Zarades —for he is doubly named—first flourished and established his laws ... But at whatever time he flourished, he was their leader and teacher of the Magian holy rites; having changed their original rites he established highly varied and elaborate doctrines.

Note the interesting assertion that Zoroaster / Zarades replaced older Iranian rites with his own: Although their content is not specified, Agathias clearly associates Zoroaster's new 'doctrines' (which presumably also included teaching about ritual) with his 'laws'. This seems to imply that the 'law of Zarades' was a body of teaching, whether oral or written is not specified.

Agathias's testimony is also important because it suggests a real confusion of names surrounding the Iranian founder-figure. Zoroaster is found almost exclusively in the extensive pseudepigraphic works, but different names are sometimes found in other genres, especially Zarades and related spellings, as well as less common forms such as Zostrianus and Zathraustes. Zoroaster can be traced back to Zarathustra etymologically, but it was also understood by Greeks to mean 'living star', which partially explains the propensity for Hellenistic astrological literature to claim him as its author.<sup>31</sup> While most modern scholars identify these two names, Agathias's testimony suggests that not all ancient Greeks would have done so, nor, for that matter, would have Mani and his followers. Thus it is surely significant that all of the pseudepigrapha studied by Beck and identified as Hellenistic forgeries are attributed to Zoroaster, not to Zarades. Zarades is the Greek form of the inscriptional Middle Persian form Zar(a)du(x)št, suggesting a derivation from Middle Persian sources of one kind

30 Agathias, *Histories* 2.24 (Bidez and Cumont 1938: II 83–86, text D 11; Vasunia 2007: 48–51, text 5); see the discussion in de Jong 1997: 244–246.

31 Schmitt 2002 notes that while Zarades and related forms are 'possibly contractions of the prophet's name, [they] are not relevant to the study of the name Zaraθuštra-'. References to Zarades are collected in Bidez and Cumont 1938: II 389b, to which may be added the Coptic Manichaean examples in Clackson, Hunter, and Lieu 1998: s.v.

or another. Manichaean Middle Persian Zrdrwšt and Manichaean Parthian Zrhwšt are related forms, from which the Syriac Zardušt and Z(a)rādušt are derived; Zoroaster is not found in the Syriac corpus.

In order to better contextualize the 'law of Zarades', I will offer a brief survey of references to Zarades in Graeco-Roman literature. The earliest attestation of the related name, Zaratas, is found in the *Refutation of All Heresies* by Hippolytus, bishop of Rome, composed sometime in the first half of the third century C.E., roughly contemporary to Mani. In his initial discussion of philosophy, to which he traces all Christian heresies, Hippolytus notes that a certain Zaratas 'the Chaldaean' taught Pythagoras cosmological and theological doctrines, including 'that there are two original causes of things, father and mother, and that father is light, but mother darkness'.<sup>32</sup> As de Jong has demonstrated, this passage has no connection with specifically Mazdayasnian teaching;<sup>33</sup> on the other hand, its content is much closer to Manichaean speculation than the Mazdayasnian pseudepigrapha studied by Beck.

Zarades is identified as the originator of teachings about Zurvan in a fourth-century Christian polemical treatise, Theodore of Mopsuestia's *On Magic in Persia*.<sup>34</sup> Zaehner has connected the sole surviving passage with Christian polemics against 'Zurvanism' originating in the Sasanian empire and its environs, including Armenian authors Yeznik of Kołb and Elišē Vardapet.<sup>35</sup> He traces all of these attacks back to a common source, 'probably Pahlavī but possibly Syriac'.<sup>36</sup> This suggests that Christian authors from the bilingual Greek / Syriac cultural sphere in the eastern Roman provinces had information of substantial quality on Iranian religion. Indeed, a heresiological work from this very milieu, Theodoret of Cyrhus's *Cure of Hellenic Maladies*, offers this striking description of Persian martyrs:<sup>37</sup>

32 Hippolytus, *Refutation of All Heresies* 1, 2.12–15 (Bidez and Cumont 1938: II 63–66, text D 1; Vasunia 2007: 139, text 212).

33 De Jong rejects the attempt to connect it to Zurvanism in Zaehner 1955: 72–76 (de Jong 1997: 315–316).

34 Theodore of Mopsuestia, *On Magic in Persia*, from Photius, *Bibliotheca* 81, 63 (Bidez and Cumont 1938: II 87–88, text D 14; Vasunia 2007: 140–141, text 216). The name Zarades is also found in anti-Manichaean abjuration formulas (Bidez and Cumont 1938: II 155–156, text O 10; Lieu 1994: 236–237; Vasunia 2007: 357–358, texts 647–649) and what looks like a quotation of one in Marius Victorinus, *To Justin the Manichaean*, PL 8.1003D (Bidez and Cumont 1938: II 156–157 O 10b; Vasunia 2007: 357, text 646).

35 Zaehner 1955: 419–428; the Armenian form is Zradašt (alternately Zradešt). For a critique of Zaehner's reconstruction of Zurvanism, see especially Shaked 1992.

36 Zaehner 1955: 421.

37 Theodoret, *Cure of Hellenic Maladies* 9, 33 (Bidez and Cumont 1938: II 82–83, text D 10;



But the Persians, formerly living according to the laws of Zarades and mixing fearlessly with mothers, sisters, and even daughters, and (now) considering the customary law to be lawless, because they heeded the laws of fishermen (i.e. Christians), they treated with contempt the laws of Zarades as lawless, and loved the gospel wisdom. Having learned from that man (i.e. Zarades) to offer corpses to dogs and birds, now those who believe do not continue to do this, but they hide them in the earth, and those who have given up this practice do not pay attention to the laws (i.e. of Zarades), nor have they shuddered at the cruelty of their punishers.

This passage understands becoming Christian as an abandonment of the laws of Zarades. Theodoret's passage includes a reasonably accurate, though polemical, discussion of next-of-kin-marriage and exposure of corpses, both practices that are discussed in multiple other Greek and Roman authors.<sup>38</sup> For Theodoret, then, the laws of Zarades refer to customs; other authors examined in this section link such law to revelation, doctrine, and ritual. Yet, in contrast to 2 Ke, none of the Graeco-Roman sources actually cite 'the law'.

Discussions of Iranian religion in Syriac sources also appeal to the concept of law, but generally associate it with the Magians / Magousaeans rather than Zarades. These accounts have many similarities with Graeco-Roman reports, though usually with the harsh edge of Christian polemic. The earliest reference is in the *Book of the Laws of Countries*, by the 'Aramaean philosopher' Bardaisan, who describes the laws of the Persians, focusing on next-of-kin marriage.<sup>39</sup> His account seems to equate the Persians with the Magousaeans (*magušāyā*), a Syriac form of *magos*.<sup>40</sup> In the Syriac *Martyrdom of Pethion, Adurhormizd, and Anahid*, set in Bišāpūr, Fars, under Yazdegird II (438–457), Adur Hormizd, once known for his chanting of the *yašt*, is said to have abandoned the 'law of the *magoi*', which is not further specified.<sup>41</sup>

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Vasunia 2007: 198–199, text 355). For an overview of this understudied work, see Canivet 1958.

38 See De Jong 1997: 428 and 442 (including translation of the second part of the passage).

39 Bardaisan, *Book of the Laws of Countries* 29.

40 The term is also found in fourth-century authors, including Balai and Ephrem, who employ it as both an adjective and a noun: cf. Sokoloff 2009, s.v. For more on its use in Syriac sources, see Gignoux 1983. For a collection of Greek and Roman sources on the 'Magousaeans', especially from Christian heresiology of the fourth century, see Vasunia 2007: 121–124, with further references. In Basil's *Letter* 258, a description of the community in Cappadocia, he identifies them with *magoi*.

41 *AMS* 2, 589; for a discussion of this important martyrdom, see Payne 2010: 27–91.

Like Bardaisan, Manichaean texts use the term Magousaeans, who are described as the ‘teachers of Persia, the servants of fire’.<sup>42</sup> While the power of these Magousaeans is recognized, they are generally disparaged, especially given their perceived role in Mani’s death.<sup>43</sup> In κ100, Mani is asked by an anonymous catechumen to explain the significance of a fourteen-headed dragon, which is mentioned in the ‘laws of the Magousaeans’.<sup>44</sup> Given that Zarades is never explicitly cited as a *magos*, it is possible that this ‘law of the Magousaeans’ is different from the ‘law of Zarades’. On the other hand, Mani suggests that the Magousaeans do not understand their own law, having erred in taking the dragon passage literally, and instead offers his own ‘spiritual’ interpretation.<sup>45</sup> While there are various dragons in Iranian tradition, some of them with multiple body parts, none of the extant passages correspond to the description in 1 Ke.<sup>46</sup> Is it possible, then, that the Manichaeans simply composed this passage to fit their own doctrinal schema? A similar question will be considered in the next section, on the various texts attributed to Zarathustra in Manichaeism.

## Part II: Zarathustra / Zardusht in Manichaean Tradition

It is possible the compiler of the 2 Ke composed the sayings attributed to the ‘law of Zarades’, which in this case would simply be an invented document, a figment of the Manichaean literary imagination. After all, the CMC contains a remarkable series of citations from purported works of antediluvian seers, with formula recalling the 2 Ke passage, such as: ‘Likewise also Sethel, his (i.e. Adam’s) son, has written thus in his *Apocalypse*, saying ...’.<sup>47</sup> David Frankfurter has suggested that these alleged citations may not be derived from actual texts, but ‘were invented for the purpose of locating Mani in the lineage of a particular type of revelatory hero’.<sup>48</sup> By analogy, the sayings from ‘law of Zarades’ would have been forged by Manichaean authors in order to provide extra

42 Hom 16, 19–22. There are only two certain usages of *magos* in the published Coptic Manichaica, from the same passage: 2 Ps 122, 28.31.

43 While there is no full survey, see Sundermann 1987: 46 and Lieu 1983: 210–213. Scott 1989: 435–457 emphasizes the antagonism between Mani and the Mazdayasnian establishment.

44 1 Ke 251, 1–2.

45 1 Ke 252, 5–10.

46 Skjaervø 1987, who also describes the reception of dragon killing in Manichaean literature.

47 CMC 46, 17–18. See also the discussion of the passage in my final contribution to this volume at chapter 8.

48 Frankfurter 1997: 61.

authority for Manichaean teachings on eschatology, especially in an Iranian context. At the same time, John Reeves has demonstrated that the apocalypses presented in the CMC, especially the one attributed to Enoch, represent one of several ‘creative adaptations of the traditional lore which had gathered about these primeval ancestors since the dawn of a scribal interest in their proleptic and homiletic value.’<sup>49</sup> In this section, I explore the figure of Zarathustra in Manichaean tradition, especially the Iranian sources, considering whether the ‘law of Zarades’ represents a Manichaean invention, or adaptation of Mazdayasnian tradition.

There are several references to Zarathustra in Iranian Manichaean literature. In one, the ritual fire declares itself ‘the fire that Zarathustra kindled’, and proceeds to offer a first person account, followed with a similar address by the ritual water.<sup>50</sup> While this text shows familiarity with Mazdayasnian ritual terminology, it does not contain sayings of Zarathustra. Another reference is found in the second Parthian *Hymn to the Living Soul*: M7, an abecedarian hymn of which the first ten verses are extant. It contains a dialogue of Zarathustra (one of the ‘ancient fathers’) with his soul,<sup>51</sup> in which he calls upon it to awaken from a drunken sleep, proclaiming its membership in the kingdom of light; the soul responds by requesting salvation from death. At the end of the fragment, Zarathustra addresses it thus:<sup>52</sup>

- (h) “Will you follow me, child of tenderness! Will you put a/the bright crown on your head!”  
 (t) “Child of the mighty who (they) have made poor/powerless so that you always beg in every place.”

The History-of-Religions scholar Richard Reitzenstein famously used this ‘Zarathustra fragment’ as the linchpin to his theory of the Iranian roots of gnosticism, especially the idea of a ‘redeemed redeemer’, which was transmitted to the Mediterranean world through the Mandaeans.<sup>53</sup> This bold thesis required understanding the hymn as a reworked Iranian text.<sup>54</sup>

49 Reeves 1996: 210.

50 M95 with M1876–1877 and M564. Parthian text in *Mir. Man.* II.318–321; English translation in Klimkeit 1993: 50–51.

51 It should be noted that the author of this hymn does not claim to be citing a book of Zarathustra, but employs his voice as an ancient yet timeless witness to Manichaean myth.

52 Parthian text and English translation in Durkin-Meisterernst 2006: 28–29.

53 Reitzenstein 1921: 2–10. See also Widengren 1983; Skjaervø 1995(a): 277–278.

54 Reitzenstein 1921: 4: ‘Wir haben nur ein Bruchstück einer Mani vorausliegenden per-

While Reitzenstein's work found prominent followers in both early Christian and Iranian / Manichaean studies (among the latter, especially Geo Widengren), it was also heavily criticized: Isidor Scheftelowitz argued soon after the publication of *Iranische Erlösungsmysterium* that the fragment's ideas are entirely Manichaean.<sup>55</sup> From this perspective, the 'citation' of Zarathustra in M7 is tendentious and basically unrelated to authentic Mazdayasnian texts or doctrine. More recently, however, Skjaervø has pointed to *Yasna* 60, 5 as a background text to a subsequent section (the third *Hymn to the Living Soul*), with its contrast between pure and evil speech:<sup>56</sup>

- (<sup>1</sup>) "Will you distinguish the pure word of your being which (alone) is the guide to the soul (*gyān*) which (is) in the body!"  
 (p) "By this, too, will you recognize completely the lying word that leads to dark hell, the hellish guide."

He also notes terminological parallels with Kartīr's inscription:<sup>57</sup>

And in the same way as it is revealed [in the *na*]sk that [when] people [pass on ... And he who] is just (*ardā*), his own [*dēn*] comes to meet him ... And he who is just, him his own *dēn* [leads] to paradise. And he who is wicked (*druwand*), him his own *dēn* leads to hell.

These parallels suggest that M7 is indeed related to Avestan tradition. This does not prove an Iranian origin for 'gnosticism', in Reitzenstein's broad sense; but rather demonstrates that the Manichaean *Hymns to the Living Soul*, like Kartīr, drew on contemporaneous forms of that tradition.

Another related Manichaean Zarathustra text, a Sogdian fragment from the British library edited by Nicholas Sims-Williams, also discusses lying in the context of personal eschatology.<sup>58</sup> It takes the form of a revelation delivered

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sischen Offenbarungsschrift aus den Kreisen der Zarathustra-Gläubigen, die in frühmanichäischer Zeit zum Hymnus umgearbeitet, bzw. unter die Hymnen der Setke aufgenommen ist'.

55 See Scheftelowitz 1927. This point is shared even by Widengren, who otherwise follows Reitzenstein's theory of the 'redeemed redeemer'; and is repeated for a more general audience in Klimkeit 1993: 47.

56 Parthian text in English translation in Durkin-Meisterernst 2006: 30–31; discussed in Skjaervø 1995(a): 277–278.

57 Skjaervø 1995(a): 275 and 278 n. 43, comparing Parthian *wāy-* and Middle Persian *naγ-*.

58 Sims-Williams 1985: 48–50 (frag. 5).

to Zarathustra by an unnamed figure (presumably Ohrmazd), in which the Manichaean doctrine of the five commandments for the elect is presented.<sup>59</sup> Breaking even one of them is punishable by hell, for example through deceit:<sup>60</sup>

Now, O righteous Zaraqūštra, the fifth serious sin is this—there is none greater than this—that one should be lying and deceitful-tongued; for the lying man is hateful to me in this life (?), and even after (his) death there is no deliverance (for) his soul from black, dark hell. Moreover, the man who has a deceitful tongue has done much evil on this earth, and even in paradise there has been havoc because of (his) lies ...

This assertion that there is ‘no deliverance’ for breaking the commandment against lying echoes the discussion of unforgiveable sins in the ‘law of Zarades’. In fact, it is likely that the Sogdian fragment constitutes a reworking of Mazdayasnian tradition, an *Interpretatio Manichaica* relating it, in this case, to the five commandments for the electi.<sup>61</sup> Similarly, M7 is a liturgical re-interpretation describing the fate of the light particles trapped in humans, and the world.

In addition to these literary expansions, there is evidence that the Manichaeans transmitted Avestan passages. The first two lines of Sogdian fragment 4 from the British Library are an Old Sogdian version of the *Ašəm vohū* prayer, as demonstrated by Ilya Gershevitch.<sup>62</sup> The subsequent text is a revelation dialogue between Zarathustra and the ‘supreme God’, a literary form found in the Avesta itself. Another Sogdian revelation dialogue, published by Yutaka Yoshida, contains eschatological reflections:<sup>63</sup>

Righteous Zoroaster asked the Father, the good supreme God: “Please explain to me thus: Whether it is fated that for these souls which die upon earth it is fated that they may be able to come to their own home or not. And after having died, might the father see the son or not, the son the father, the mother the daughter, the daughter the mother, the sister the

59 For an exploration of the five commandments for the elect, see Sims-Williams 1985 and BeDuhn 2000, 40–45.

60 Sims-Williams 1985: 50.

61 The punishment for lying in hell is perhaps already described in the *Gāthās* (Stausberg 2009: 220–223). The liar is punished by hanging from the tongue, according to the *Book of Ardā Wirāz* 33.

62 Sims-Williams 1976: 75–83.

63 English translation in Yoshida 1979: 187 (incorporating the suggestion by Sims-Williams at p. 195).

brother, the brother the sister, and moreover the family the family, the relative the friend? And if the son is good, is there contentment for his father's soul?"

Scholars have long identified Sogdian fragment 4 as Manichaean or Mazdayasnian, though there is no extant parallel in either tradition.<sup>64</sup> The uncertainty is telling: It is not always possible to distinguish between 'real' and 'alleged' Mazdayasnian documents (to adopt the terms of Frankfurter's study of the CMC), suggesting that the Manichaeans used both. Was the 'law of Zarades' excerpted from an expanded dialogue, such as in the Sogdian fragments; or are these fragments an *Interpretatio Manichaica* of the law? And was this close engagement with Mazdayasnian tradition confined to the community as it later developed in Iran, Parthia, and central Asia; or does it go back to Mani and his first followers in the Mesopotamian heartland?

### Part III: The 'Law of Zarades' and the Avestan Tradition

Perhaps the simplest hypothesis regarding the 'law of Zarades' is to identify it with Iranian Zarathustra-traditions. Mani's willingness to use such writings is explicitly noted in κ154:<sup>65</sup>

Just as water is added to water and becomes much water, so also were the ancient books added to my writings; they have become a great wisdom, such as was not proclaimed in all ancient generations.

Although 2 Ke is hardly a precise historical record, it does offer a plausible scenario for Mani's initial encounter with the 'law of Zarades' through the Iranian catechumen Pabakos, a well-connected member of Shapur's court who intends to proclaim Mani's wisdom before other nobles (εὐγενής).<sup>66</sup> At least in the later Sasanian period, elites might receive training in both the Avesta

64 Sims-Williams 1976: 47. There are also Arabic excerpts of a dialogue between Ohrmazd and Zarathustra on the basic tenets of Mazdayasnianism preserved in Shahrastānī, which Shaked 1994(b): 69 suggests is a translation of a lost Zand.

65 1 Ke 372, 10–20. See also M5794: 'Fifth: All writings, all wisdom and all parables of the previous religions when they to this [religion of mine came ...]'. English translation, with further discussion, in Lieu 2006: 526; original text in Andreas and Henning 1933: 295–296.

66 2 Ke 428, 1–9 / G296.

and Zand as part of their education in the frahangestān.<sup>67</sup> But can we identify Pabakos more precisely?

The Coptic Pabakos (παβακος) is a Hellenized form of Pāpak, a name widely attested for Iranian nobility throughout the Sasanian period.<sup>68</sup> Several high-ranking officials at the court of Shapur I, mentioned in his trilingual inscription on the Ka'ba-ye Zardošt, bore this name: Pāpak the *hazāruft* (no patronymic given); Pāpak son of Šambīd (no office named); and Pāpak son of Vispur (no office named).<sup>69</sup> Any of the three might be identified with Pabakos the catechumen, except that his patronymic and papponymic are apparently given in a fragmentary line as 'son of Ardashir (αρταωαζ[αρ]), the son of Mousar (μουσαρ)', which would exclude the last two individuals.<sup>70</sup> A silver bowl excavated at a tomb from Armazi, capital of the ancient Georgian kingdom, contains an inscription with the name of the owner as 'Pāpak the *bitaxš*, the son of Artaxšaer the *bitaxš*'.<sup>71</sup> Henning dates the office of Artaxšaer to 266–283, and of Pāpak to 284–300; these dates seem rather late to identify this Pāpak with Mani's interlocutor, but they are not entirely incompatible.<sup>72</sup> Although precise identification remains elusive, it is likely that Pabakos the catechumen was one of the several important courtiers with that name.

67 For instance, a young page declares in *Khosro and the Youth*: 'I memorized the *Yašt*, the *Hādōxt*, the *Bagān*, and the *Vidēvdād* like a *hērbed* and passage by passage heard the Zand'. Text and translation following Monchi-Zadeh 1982: 51/64; see discussion in Payne 2010: 60–61.

68 See Gignoux 1986: 141–142. Most famous, perhaps, is the father of Ardashir I. For attestations in the later Sasanian period, including Greek sources such as Agathias, see Justi 1895: 241–242. The Greek forms in šKZ (Huysse 1999: 155) vary, but include Παβακ and Παβάρης, which are reflected in the spelling found in 2 Ke.

69 šKZ 31 (Huysse 1999: 57); 32–33 (p. 59).

70 2 Ke 277, 30. Elsewhere in the Coptic Manichaica Ardashir is referred to as αρταζωοκ (1 Ke 14, 29.31; 15, 24.27), while the Greek form in Shapur's trilingual inscription is Ἀρταξαρ or Ἀρταξάρης (Huysse 1999: s.v.); but note the toponym ζορμηςδακωαζαρ (Hom 44, 10–11.14), which corresponds to the form in 2 Ke. The name Mousar is otherwise unattested. At the beginning of K343, Pabakos is simply referred to as 'Pabakos the catechumen, the son of [Artashahar]'; with no papponymic (2 Ke 295, 31–296, 1 / G295 + 296).

71 Henning 1961: 354. He further restores the papponymic 'son of Šāpuhr the *bitaxš*', which would preclude the identification with Pabakos the catechumen; but only one letter is extant in the lacuna.

72 The encounter between Mani and Pabakos might conceivably be dated to any time during the reign of Shapur, i.e. 240/242–270/272 C.E. For an analysis of the extant sources on Mani's relationship to Shapur, see my contribution in chapter 8, with references.

Pabakos the catechumen is one of the earliest attested followers of Mani with an Iranian name; his first disciples all have Aramaic names, reflecting their recruitment from the Baptist sect of his childhood, or perhaps a Mesopotamian Jewish or Christian background.<sup>73</sup> Given Pabakos's Iranian background, would he have spoken with Mani in Middle Persian or Aramaic? While Mani surely had a degree of competence in Middle Persian (and Parthian), he is elsewhere portrayed as using an interpreter at court.<sup>74</sup> Pabakos too might have been bilingual, as were other followers of Mani who must have contributed to the composition of the *Šābuhragān* and begun the translation of their founder's other writings into Iranian already during his lifetime; bilingual disciples such as Mar Ammo may have been involved in the early redactions of the *Kephalaia*.<sup>75</sup> Similar difficulties exist for reconstructing the interaction between primarily Aramaic speaking rabbis and Middle-Persian speaking Mazdayasnians, especially the learned clergy, as ably discussed by Shai Secunda. Noting that the two groups seem nevertheless to have surmounted this linguistic barrier, he argues that the rabbis likely learned about Mazdayasnianism through oral exchange, perhaps even formal religious instruction, rather than through reading a text in Middle Persian, especially given the difficulties inherent in the script.<sup>76</sup>

In contrast to the Babylonian rabbis, Mani and his *electi* were engaged in an explicit program of both proselytizing and incorporating the texts of other religions, so it is likely that they actively sought out written traditions; catechumens such as Pabakos would have been a logical source for such materials. Indeed, he claims that the 'law of Zarades' is written, and it is possible that a copy was consulted during the redaction of 2 Ke. The Manichaeans may have even transmitted the text within their own communities, perhaps modifying it slightly to fit their special terminology, such as the 'land of light'.<sup>77</sup> On the other

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73 Tubach 1997. As Tubach points out, some of these disciples might have been from an Iranian background (p. 393). The early followers of Mani with Iranian names are discussed in Sundermann 1994: 245–247.

74 For Mani's language competence, see especially Durkin-Meisterernst 2000. Mani's use of the interpreter Nūh-zādag during his first interaction with Bahram I may have been due to the particular exigencies of this situation (Panaino 2004).

75 Mar Ammo stands behind much of the Manichaean tradition in Parthian; see Durkin-Meisterernst 2000.

76 Secunda 2013: 42–50.

77 While 'light' is clearly associated with heavenly realms in Mazdayasnianism, there is not, to my knowledge, a precise equivalent to the expression 'land of light' found in the second saying, though it is widespread in the Coptic Manichaica. It recalls the Mandaean expression 'light-earth' (*arqa dnhura*); see further Rudolph 1965: 52 n. 2.



hand, Pabakos quotes the text in conversation, so the tradents, or the editor, may have simply reproduced this oral exchange from memory, perhaps modifying it.<sup>78</sup> It is also possible that the conversation was invented, but the text cited from memory; or that the textual citation was also invented, a possibility considered in Part II.<sup>79</sup> Whatever path the sayings from the 'law of Zarades' took to their form in the 2 Ke manuscript, it clearly involved multiple languages and at least several instances of oral and written exchange. The seemingly straightforward narrative of Pabakos quoting the 'law of Zarades' thus masks a complex set of possibilities for reconstructing the Manichaean knowledge and use of this text.

Nor can Pabakos's formulaic introduction be understood as the transcript of an actual conversation. At first glance, it resembles various formulae for citing the Zand in Pahlavi literature, such as 'it is revealed (*paydāg kū*)'; but the form 'it is written' is unattested, reflecting the primarily oral form of transmission.<sup>80</sup> Given Mani's imitation of Pauline style, the formula is more likely a rewriting of 1 Corinthians 9:9 'it is written in the law of Moses', with Zarades substituted. The Manichaeans seem to have associated a specific law with a number of groups, including rejected sects such as the Baptists in the CMC;<sup>81</sup> but also with themselves.<sup>82</sup> In K342, the chapter immediately following the citations of the

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78 In this case, the Manichaeans may have simply assumed that the 'law of Zarades' was written down. Cf. the remarks on the Middle Persian cosmogonic fragment M8101, in which the phrase 'in their book' (*pd (nb)yg y*) is found, in Skjaervø 2009, 277. He comments that elsewhere references to the Zoroastrian tradition are expressed by the phrase 'in the nask', and thus we cannot be sure whether the Manichaean author had actually found the information in a book or simply gotten it from a Zoroastrian who told him this; i.e. which he had then assumed would mean a book 'since their own, the Manichaeans', stories were in books'.

79 In opposition to this skeptical position, a radically generous reading, which cannot be entirely discounted, admits the possibility that this oral exchange was recorded by scribes and then edited, a process standing behind some question-and-answer literature in the Roman empire; see the survey of Graeco-Roman evidence in my chapter 2 in this volume.

80 Collected in Cantera 2004: 96; see also Cereti 2010. The situation is the same with respect to legal discussions in Pahlavi literature. Secunda 2010: 155 comments that nowhere in the Middle Persian literature do we find a form such as *pad čāštag \*nibišt*, 'as it is written in the teaching'.

81 See Cirillo 2001: s.v.

82 Mani also seems to use the term 'law' in reference to the five commandments (TM169, r4–8). In North Africa, Felix introduces himself as 'I, Felix, a Christian, a worshipper of the law of Mani' (Augustine, *Answer to Felix* 1, 20, tr. Teske 2006: 297). For more on the Manichaean use of 'law' see BeDuhn, chapter 9 in this volume.

'law of Zarades', Mani states that previous apostles of light, including Jesus, Buddha, and Zarades, all revealed their own laws in their respective lands.<sup>83</sup>

Thus, 'law' may simply be a Manichaean generic term denoting the traditions associated with Jesus, Buddha, or Zarades; in which case 'the law of Zarades' would not be a title at all. The citations of Jesus, or 'the savior', in the *Kephalaia* provide useful comparative material on this point. Alexander Böhlig collected the biblical citations in the Coptic Manichaica in an important study published posthumously.<sup>84</sup> His survey reveals that the explicit quotations (among numerous allusions) are found only in the *Kephalaia*, perhaps because it belongs to a genre of learned discussion in which direct citation was expected.<sup>85</sup> Some are simply introduced by the phrase: 'The Savior said'. One of these quotations closely parallels the Pabakos section: Anonymous catechumens ask Mani to explain the parable of the two trees, which is 'written' in the 'gospel':<sup>86</sup>

They said to him, we beseech you, our master, that you may (recount) and explain to us about these two trees [that Jesus] preached to his disciples. As it is written in the gospel, [he says]: 'The good tree shall give [good] fruit; also the bad tree shall give [bad] fruit.'

This text, a reference to Luke 6:33–34, is correctly attributed to 'the gospel'. Pabakos, by contrast, attributes the *Gospel of Thomas* quote to the '[law] of Jesus', according to a plausible (but by no means certain) restoration of the lacuna. Thus the '[law] of Jesus' is a more general option of attribution for the Jesus tradition, a general term, not a title, as opposed to 'gospel'.

By analogy, the 'law of Zarades' might be a general term, like 'law of Jesus', as opposed to a title, such as 'gospel'. It would thus be an interpretive gloss on *nask* and *Gāthās*, both of which terms were known to the Manichaeans.<sup>87</sup> On the other hand, 'law of Zarades' could also be a translation, much like Paul's 'law of Moses' renders Torah (of Moses). According to some scholars, the term 'Avesta' itself means something like 'law'. For instance, Walter Henning translated it as

83 See the discussion in Gardner, chapter 4; and my own contribution in chapter 8.

84 Böhlig 2013: 65–104.

85 See further my contribution at chapter 2 in this volume.

86 1 Ke 17, 2–7; translation Gardner 1995 (adapted).

87 There is even a comparison between Primal Man's five sons and the five *Gāthās* of Zarathustra in the Parthian *Sermon on the Soul* 32: 'In the *nask* it [the living air] is called the Ahunauaitī *Gāṣā*', tr. following Sundermann 1997(b): 42. The second *Gāthā* (the *Uštāuaitī Gāthā*) appears to be compared to the second son of Primal Man in *Sermon on the Soul* 46, see Sundermann 1997(b): 119.

‘injunction’.<sup>88</sup> Sundermann proposed a similar reading, appealing to a Christian bilingual Sogdian / Syriac document, in which Sogdian *apštāwan* translates the Greek loanword in Syriac, *diathēkē*, or ‘testament’.<sup>89</sup> But this is not exactly ‘law’; and in any case there is no evidence for the use of the term Avesta in the early Sasanian period, so it is unlikely to have been the model for the ‘law of Zarades’. It is more likely that ‘law’ is a translation of *nask*, a term used in both Manichaean Middle Persian (M4525) and Kartīr’s inscriptions.<sup>90</sup>

Alternatively, the ‘law of Zarades’ refers in particular to the *Dād Nask*, or ‘law book’, one of the three components of the Avesta according to the conventional division as found in book eight of the *Dēnkard*. Like the other two components of the Avesta, it contains seven parts: The *Nikātum*, *Duzd-sar-nizad*, *Huspāram*, *Sakātum*, *Vidēvdād* nasks, and the *Čihrdād* and *Bagān Yašts*. In the *Anthology of Zādspram*, a ninth-century Pahlavi theological composition, an alternative division of the *Dād Nask* is offered, this one in two parts: ‘One is the *Dād of the Jud-dēw*, that is the *Vidēvdād*, and one the *Dād of Zardušt*, that is the other *Dād* (the other *dādīg* nasks).<sup>91</sup> The *Dād of Zardušt*, of course, corresponds to the Coptic phrase ‘law of Zarades’.

Despite the formal identity of these titles, I have not yet identified the passages quoted by Pabakos either within the *Vidēvdād* nask, which is preserved complete, or in the *Nīrangestān* and *Hērbedestān*, the surviving sections of the *Huspāram* nask.<sup>92</sup> Of course, it is possible that they come from a lost section, and a comparison of the Coptic quotations from the ‘law of Zarades’ with typical formulations in the *Nīrangestān* and *Hērbedestān* suggests strong affinities in both form and content. For example, in *Nīrangestān*, fragard 2, chapter 23 *On Failing to Honor the Religion*, verse 23.1 of the Pahlavi Zand reads:<sup>93</sup>

He who does not perform Gāthās, either because of denial when he says: “There is no religion”, or of defiance when he says: “There is (a religion)”, but does not offer gratitude to it, is a *tanāpuhl* sinner.

88 Henning 1946, noting parallels with the Sogdian. He is supported by Morano 1987.

89 Sundermann 2001(a).

90 For M4525, see Sundermann 1981: 72, text 4a.15, n. 1. Skjaervø suggests in passing that Middle Persian *nask* may correspond to the Graeco-Coptic law or *nomos* mentioned in a related passage in Hom (Skjaervø 2011); a new passage in 2 Ke, discussed below, seems to confirm this hypothesis.

91 *Zādspram* 100.

92 See also Shaki 2011.

93 English translation following Kotwal and Kreyenbroek 2003, III.31. Pahlavi text: *Kē gāhān nē yazēd anastih rāy* [*ka gōwēd ay dēn nēst*] (*ayāb tarmenišnīh rāy*) [*ka gōwēd ast, u-š nē āzādīh dādār*] *be tanāpuhl bawēd*.

The *tanāpuhl* is the most serious class of sinner according to some traditions; and in others the second most, after *margarzān* sinners.<sup>94</sup> Like the first passage from the 'law of Zarades', the topic here is blasphemy: Denial of the land of light in the Coptic text, and denial of religion in the Pahlavi Zand. In both cases, the sinner will not attain the heavenly realms. Although it is difficult to compare sentence structure across two languages so different as are Coptic and Middle Persian, there are interesting similarities between the 'law of Zarades' and the *Nērangestān*. First, the laws are cast in the third person, with relative constructions: 'He who ...'. Second, and more specifically, both the Coptic and Middle Persian present the sinful attitude (i.e. of denial or defiance) as a quotations: 'He who says ...', and 'when he says ...'. Interestingly, this policy of quoting the sinner's attitudes is found in the Pahlavi Zand of the *Nērangestān*, but not in its Young Avestan original.<sup>95</sup>

It is also possible that the Coptic 'law of Zarades' is a quotation from a part of the Avesta other than the *Dād of Zardušt*. The *Hādōxt Nask*, one of the texts learned by the page in *Khosro and the Youth*, contains various teachings about the post-mortem fate of the soul, as do the excerpts from the 'law of Zarades'; but again there is no exact correspondence in the extant sections. On the other hand, some of the fragmentary *nasks* demonstrate significant overlap with the 'law of Zarades' in both form and content, such as Fragment Darmester 3:<sup>96</sup>

He has not won anything who has not won (anything) for his soul. She has not won anything who has not won (anything) for her soul. Here on earth there is not any prosperity, O Zarathustra, as ordinary people call it.

Indeed, this passage presents the 'He who ...' constructions as oracular statements of Ohrmazd to Zarathustra, suggesting that the Coptic 'law of Zarades' quotations might also be taken from a revelation dialogue between Ohrmazd and Zarathustra, a literary form used in some Avestan texts such as the *Vidēvdād*.

Another important parallel is found in the vision of Mani's rival Kartīr, the *mōbed* who steadily gained influence at the Sasanian court and sought to

94 See Shaki 2006.

95 The corresponding Avestan text reads: 'He who fails to recite the Gāthās, either out of hostility or out of defiance, forfeits his body' (p. 31).

96 Translation by Hoffmann 1968.

establish an early form of Mazdayasnian orthodoxy.<sup>97</sup> Kartīr appears to invoke the *nask* in an account of his otherworldly vision:<sup>98</sup>

And in the same way as it is revealed [in the *na*]sk that [when] people [pass on ... And he who] is just (*ardā*), his own [*dēn*] comes to meet him ... And he who is just, him his own *dēn* [leads] to paradise. And he who is wicked (*druwand*), him his own *dēn* leads to hell.

Skjaervø, who proposed this restoration, has also argued that this section of Kartīr's vision is a paraphrase of the Pahlavi *Vidēvdād* 19.28–30, in which Zarathustra and Ahura Mazda dialogue about the fate of the soul after death.<sup>99</sup> It is striking how Kartīr uses the same relative clause structure which we have already encountered in the Coptic 'law of Zarades', as well as the Pahlavi *Nērangestān* and the Avestan Fragment Darmester 3: 'And he who is just, him his own *dēn* leads to paradise; and he who is wicked, him his own *dēn* leads to hell'. Similarly, like all three sayings from the 'law of Zarades', the passage in Kartīr's vision links the post-mortem fate of the individual to their actions in life.

The quotation from the 'law of Zarades' in K341 builds on already published evidence from 1 Ke for the existence of written Zarathustra traditions already in the third century: 'Zarades (did not) write books. Rather, [his disciples who came] after him, they remembered; they wrote ... that they read today ...'.<sup>100</sup>

97 The vision is preserved on two inscriptions, at Naqš-e Rostam (KNRm) and Sar-e Mašhad (KSM). For a detailed account of Kartīr's evolving relationship to Mani, see part v of this chapter; as well as my chapter 8 in this volume, with references to earlier literature.

98 Skjaervø 1983: 276 (adapted). Jean Kellens has argued that this restoration does not imply that the *nask* was written down (Kellens 1998: 485–486). Indeed, recent work has suggested that Kartīr's inscriptions represent 'early attempts to textualize oral composition by making use of the oral formulaic style in the medium of writing' (Shayegan 2012: 106, with extended analysis at 161–173). Panaino nevertheless argues that 'it is still difficult to believe that it was possible to quote part of it in an inscription without the existence of another written Vorlage' (Panaino 2012: 78 n. 30).

99 Skjaervø 1983: 289–291. A more recent discussion emphasizes the fluidity of the oral tradition drawn on here by Kartīr: '... exact parallels are not necessarily to be found, however, as all these narratives rest on the oral tradition, which is, by definition, fluid in form. The reference could, for instance, also be to some exegesis of the *Gāθās*' (Skjaervø 2011).

100 1 Ke 7, 30–33. English translation following Gardner 1995: 13. The assertion that Zarathustra's disciples wrote the Avesta is itself attested in Mazdayasnian tradition (Stausberg 1998: 259).

This passage has been cited by Skjaervø as evidence for a written Zand during the early Sasanian period, probably in a script close to that of the Pahlavi Psalter.<sup>101</sup> Cantera, for his part, suggests that it implies the existence already under Ardashir of a 'zwar schriftliche zoroastische Texte, nicht aber notwendigerweise ein vollständiger Kanon'.<sup>102</sup> In his recent work, Skjaervø has emphasized 'the primarily oral nature of the ancient Iranian literature', proposing instances in which Iranian Manichaean texts adapt oral tradition.<sup>103</sup> Now 2 Ke provides even clearer evidence that a Pahlavi Zand, or closely related texts, had been committed to writing in the third century. At first glance, Pabakos's assertion that the sayings of Zarades are written in his law seems to contradict 1 Ke passage, which attributes texts to his disciples. Yet according to Manichaean polemic, the gospels were not written by Jesus himself, but his followers, and were called the '[law] of Jesus' by Pabakos. Similarly, the implication is that the 'law of Zarades' was in fact written by his disciples, and thus corrupted.

#### Part IV: Mani, Kartir and the 'Law of Zarades'

Given the connection of the 'law of Zarades' to Avestan tradition, we can now explore how Mani interprets it over five chapters in the 2 Ke codex (K341–345), forming one of the sub-units within the volume. After Pabakos quotes from the 'law of Zarades' he quotes various sayings of Jesus, related to the *Gospel of Thomas* and synoptic tradition. The catechumen asks Mani to give the 'interpretation (ἑρμηνεία)' of 'the two judgments',<sup>104</sup> apparently a perceived inconsistency between condemnation for certain sins and forgiveness for others which he finds in the teachings of both Zarades and Jesus, figures who are termed 'fathers'.<sup>105</sup> Mani's response interprets the sayings of both; and, like Pabakos, he does not appear to give more authority to one or the other.<sup>106</sup> While

101 Skjaervø 1997: 320–321.

102 Cantera 2004: 154.

103 Skjaervø 2009: 283.

104 Thus 2 Ke 417, 9–14 / G305.

105 Thus 2 Ke 419, 11–15 / G303. The term 'father' appears to be a less frequent term for the 'apostles of light', Mani's predecessors who revealed the message of salvation; cf. the reference to the 'ancient fathers' at the beginning of M7, the 'Zarathustra fragment'. Skjaervø compares this phrase to 'the various formulas used, for instance, by Ferdousi to authenticate his stories' (Skjaervø 2009: 278).

106 Contrast the *Disputations* of Adamantius, which compared the Mosaic law unfavorably to gospel passages, following Marcion's *Antitheses*.

most of the extant text explains the Jesus traditions, Mani may allude to the 'law of Zarades' in the fragmentary opening of his address, noting that those who do not believe in 'this law' hold nothing 'true' and at the end will go to punishment.<sup>107</sup> Mani explains that forgiveness is granted to catechumens who repent of their misdeeds, in contrast to the 'sects (δόγμα) of error (πλάγη)'<sup>108</sup> who blaspheme the holy church and will be condemned to eternal punishment. At this point, Pabakos glorifies Mani, pronouncing himself satisfied, and κ341 is concluded.

The subsequent chapter, κ342, displays some thematic continuity in its lengthy discussion of the apostles of light and their visions of heaven and hell.<sup>109</sup> The interlocutor is not named, but is described as a nobleman (εὐγενής). Perhaps he is an associate of Pabakos, who is again the dialogue partner of κ343, which also concerns personal eschatology as reflected in a very fragmentary discussion on 'coming forth from the body'.<sup>110</sup> The name of the interlocutor in κ344 is missing, but it is a discussion of resurrection and punishment, thus continuing the same topic. Finally, κ345 includes a dialogue with Shapur and a group of catechumens (perhaps including Pabakos, though he is not named in the extant text), in which post-mortem existence is once again the theme. This discussion includes another, more fragmentary comparison between the sayings of Zarades and Jesus. The saying of Zarades mentions death, bonds, and fetters;<sup>111</sup> suggesting a topic similar to the previous three quotations in κ341. In summary, the three quotations from the 'law of Zarades' are part of an extended section (κ341–345) in which post-mortem fate is the dominant theme, apparently set at Shapur's court, as Mani speaks with Pabakos and other catechumens, an anonymous nobleman, and the king himself.

The three sayings from the 'law of Zarades' all link post-mortem condemnation to forms of denial: That the law is true, that heaven exists, that there will be an end. Mani compares these attitudes to blasphemy against the Holy Spirit; the consequence is failure to reach heaven and, presumably, a post-mortem existence in hell. The first two sayings both prefigure his assertions in the following chapter, κ342: First, that the 'established, true law' is revealed by various

107 Thus 2 Ke 417, 21–25 / G305.

108 2 Ke 419, 1–2 / G303.

109 For a detailed analysis of this passage, see my other contribution at chapter 8 in this volume.

110 2 Ke 428, 29 / G296 and 429, 8 / G293. The context is a parable contrasting the good servant and the bad servant; cf. κ141 with the title *How the Soul Comes forth from the Body* (1 Ke 343, 28–29).

111 2 Ke 437, 29–438,2 / G317–318.

apostles in their respective lands; and second, that heaven (and hell) exist. These same issues of punishment for denial and blasphemy are also found in K39, which contains a discussion of the ‘torture and affliction’ experienced by sinners ‘because they have blasphemed and despised the Holy Spirit since every generation of the world.’<sup>112</sup> The 2 Ke codex, for its part, provides examples of doubters. Another section features an extended passage on Chasro the blessed (i.e. Kay Kōsrow of Iranian epic tradition) and his quest for the land of light.<sup>113</sup> After agreeing to adopt an encratic lifestyle (i.e. no women, feasting, or hunting), Chasro is guided there by the mysterious sage Danaan. Yet his lieutenant Iuzanes declines to follow this example, preferring to return to Iran and enjoy the traditional pleasures of the aristocracy rather than to pursue heaven. This effective rejection of the Manichaean portrait of heaven, and the validity of the elects’ lifestyle which leads there, results in a tragic death for Iuzanes on his trip home.<sup>114</sup>

The story of Chasro and Iuzanes represents a Manichaean adaptation of Iranian epic tradition; and it must be emphasized that the reflections on denial and its consequences in the ‘law of Zarades’ are also echoed in Middle Persian literature.<sup>115</sup> Pabakos’s questions about eternal condemnation for certain actions recalls the punishment of *margarzān* sinners, the most serious grade in the hierarchy of sinners. According to the *Šāyist-nē-šāyist*, these individuals will always be impure and condemned; according to others, they can be purified and saved from punishment in hell through confession and punishment on earth.<sup>116</sup> Various forms of denial are accounted as *margarzān* sins. In a series of sayings about post-mortem existence from *Dēnkard* VI it is said: ‘A man who performs the worship of the gods with the thought that the gods do not exist and that the thing does not exist, is an enemy of the gods and his place is in hell!’<sup>117</sup> Similarly, in the famous account of post-mortem existence in the

112 1 Ke 104, 17–18; translation following Gardner 1995: 108. Similarly, at 1 Ke 106, 11–13: ‘And you will escape the terrible end of the deniers and blasphemers who have seen truth with their own eyes, and have turned back from it’ (Gardner 1995: 111).

113 For a full discussion of this passage, including its place in the epic tradition, see BeDuhn’s chapter 6 in this volume.

114 Mani’s emphasis on the condemnation of the sects may point to his rival Kartīr, who promoted his own vision of heaven, including feasting, as a confirmation of his own salvation; see my contribution to this volume at chapter 8.

115 On denying the existence of heaven and hell, see further in chapter 8.

116 Janý 2007: 351; with references.

117 Text and translation in Shaked 1979: 176–177. The Middle Persian is in the ‘He who ...’ format.



*Book of Ardā Wīrāz*, doubting the existence of heaven and hell will lead one to hell.<sup>118</sup>

As I show elsewhere in this volume, both κ342 and Kartīr's account of his vision assert that 'heaven and hell exist', and thus build on the first saying of Zarades as quoted by Pabakos: 'Whoever says that the land of light does not exist, he is one who will not see the land of light'.<sup>119</sup> This suggests that the 'law of Zarades' designates a written collection that both Mani and Kartīr appealed to and interpreted in their competitive proposals regarding the nature of post-mortem fate. While Mani may have first come across the text in conversation, as is in fact portrayed in κ341, it is also possible that the 'law of Zarades' was excerpted in pamphlet literature circulated by Kartīr and his associates. Such texts are alluded to in 'The Section of the Narrative about the Crucifixion' in the Hom codex, in a polemic against the μαγογχαίος with the charge: 'They wrote [lying?] libels'.<sup>120</sup> Similarly, while comparing the Magousians and Jews, one of the *Bēma* Psalms states that the former 'wrote lying libels, they published them concerning you (i.e. Mani)'.<sup>121</sup>

The Graeco-Coptic term βιβλιαδιον suggests short texts on small-format writing materials that could be posted in public areas, much like the anti-Christian pamphlets that were distributed across the Roman empire at the beginning of the Diocletianic persecution.<sup>122</sup> Justin Martyr, for example, uses βιβλίδιον to denote imperial *libelli*.<sup>123</sup> Skjærvø suggested that the Hom passage refers to copies of Kartīr's inscriptions, and other 'anti-Manichaean tracts' that were 'circulated throughout the empire'.<sup>124</sup> This hypothesis is further supported by the multiple references in the inscriptions to 'documents', 'charters' and 'records' (*gitt, pādixšīr ud mādayān*), to which his name was sometimes attached, during

118 *Book of Ardā Wīrāz* 61. For more on the punishment of *margarzān* sinners in this text, see Leurini 2002: 214. Similarly, in the *Apocalypse of Peter*, sinners in hell exclaim that they did not know (7:8, adulterers), or did not believe (7:11, murderers) that they would be punished.

119 2 Ke 416, 6–8 / G278.

120 Hom 81, 24: ἀγχοεῖ ζῆβιβλιαδιον, followed by a lacuna. Pedersen suggests the restoration ἰ[σαλ, based on the parallel cited immediately below.

121 Cf. 2 Ps 43, 21–22, ed. Wurst: ἀγχοεῖ νεγβιβλιαδιον ἰσαλ αγτσεγ ετβητῆ.

122 Eusebius, *History of the Church* 9, 5.1, who describes their genre (ὑπομνήματα, or memoirs) rather than their format.

123 Lampe 1961: s.v.: 'A memorandum (*libellus*) sent to emperor or governors', citing three passages from Justin Martyr.

124 Skjærvø 1997: 341. As Huyse 2009: 73 argues in his survey of Iranian state inscriptions from the Achaemenid to the Sasanian dynasties: '... many stone and rock inscriptions had no other purpose than to "eternalize" texts of documents on papyrus, parchment, or leather.'

the reigns of Shapur, Hormizd I, Bahram I and Bahram II.<sup>125</sup> We might therefore surmise that Kartūr was affiliated with the state chancery; and that, as part of his efforts to gain more authority, he produced and distributed apologetic / polemical texts.<sup>126</sup> He may have appealed to the ‘law of Zarades’ in this literature. Another passage in Hom, on the fate of Mani’s body, also refers to a *written* tradition about Zarades which may also come from one of Kartūr’s documents: ‘Consider Zarades: As it is written, he was buried in the tombs of the kings’.<sup>127</sup>

This unattributed reference to Zarades suggests a connection with Iranian royalty; other passages in the Coptic Manichaica, including new material in 2 Ke, portray support for traditions about Zarades at the Sasanian court. This is hinted at in a well-known passage from Hom describing Mani’s interview before Bahram:<sup>128</sup>

As soon as the king (Bahram) saw him (Mani), [his face] convulsed with angry laughter. He spoke to him (a torrent) of words: “Look, for three [whole] years [you] have been travelling with Baat. What law is it that you have [taught] him, so that he has left our (law) behind him and taken up yours for his own? He (returned?) to *t-hermēneia*: Why did you not go with [him]—as I ordered you to go with [him]—nor again come with him?”. My [lord (Mani)] understood immediately that the matter was being stretched for an excuse ...

Bahram thus accuses Mani of corrupting Baat, causing him to abandon ‘our (law)’ and take up his own instead. In a similar passage from 2 Ke, Kartūr accuses Mani before Bahram:<sup>129</sup>

Mani is the one who has led astray the entire world. He took the men and the women [and they] followed after him. He says to the people: “Do not [do the] works of the king”.

125 See Huyse 1998: 114–115 for references. The precise materials and form of these documents, or of the ‘little books’ mentioned in Hom, cannot be identified. Very little is known about the varieties of written media in Sasanian Iran.

126 Tafazzoli 2000: 18–37 on scribes in Sasanian Iran; pp. 34–35 on religious scribes.

127 Hom 70, 11–15, ed. Pedersen 2006. Skjaervø suggests that this may be an early reference to the tradition that Zarathustra was buried at the Ka’be-ye Zardošt (Skjaervø 1997: 316). For Manichaean adaptations of traditions about Zarathustra’s life see further Skjaervø 1995(b).

128 Hom 46, 10–19, following the translation in Gardner, chapter 7 in this volume.

129 2 Ke 451, 2–6 / G335, following the translation of Gardner in chapter 7.

Mani is then ordered by the king not to renounce the ‘law of Zarades’.<sup>130</sup> This parallel account thus clarifies that ‘our (law)’, as mentioned in Hom, is more specifically the ‘law of Zarades’; this in turn suggests that the ‘law of Zarades’ is to be identified with *nask* in the related Middle Persian fragment (see above).

Bahram’s endorsement of the ‘law of Zarades’ in 2 Ke implies that it may have held an official status at the court, which perhaps even supported its compilation. Kartīr himself would probably have had a key role in such a collection over his long career. Indeed, as Skjaervø notes, his inscriptions ‘are the earliest post-Achaemenid evidence we have for this great oral [Mazdayasnian] tradition, which contained the current understanding of the *Gaθās* and the *Yasna Haptajhāiti* and their exegesis (the *zand*)’.<sup>131</sup> The phrase *dēn-ōšmurdan* mentioned in his inscriptions further suggests a substantial exegetical activity of organizing and expounding these traditions.<sup>132</sup> Perhaps these efforts also included writing, as his inscriptions suggest, as well as the pamphlets described above. We have seen that the ‘law of Zarades’, like Kartīr’s inscriptions, does not have an exact correspondence within the extant Pahlavi Zand of the Avestan canon, which can be explained by the oral nature of the developing exegetical tradition. Another possible reason for this divergence is that the ‘law of Zarades’ represents an early version of the court archetype (*Avesta des Nasks*), not the liturgical one (*Avesta des liturgies*) that dominates the manuscript transmission.<sup>133</sup> The general availability of this *Avesta des Nasks* is uncertain, but it seems reasonable that Pabakos, as a well-connected noble, would have had access. The pamphlets circulated by Kartīr and his associates, which may have contained excerpts of the ‘law of Zarades’, would have circulated selections of the text more broadly.

The interview with Bahram in Hom and 2 Ke suggests that Mani was arrested, in part, for abandoning the ‘law of Zarades’, and encouraging Baat to do so. This charge implies a more polemical stance to the text than is evident in

130 It is possible that *t-hermēneia* refers to Zand, but there are some difficulties involved in making this identification. See the discussion in Gardner, chapter 7.

131 Skjaervø 2011, iv: ‘Kartīr and Mazdayasnian Tradition’.

132 Yuhan Vevaina has recently analyzed Kartīr’s exegetical activity, arguing that his use of the phrase *dēn-ōšmurdan* ‘refers, therefore, not just to a textual study of the *dēn*, but rather, I believe, it encodes the entire episto-hermeneutical complex of memorization, ritual performance, and numerological speculation on the sacred corpus’. He suggests that there was organized priestly activity in these areas already in the third century (Vevaina 2010: 136–137).

133 Following the distinction in Kellens 1998. See also the similar distinction outlined in Panaino 2012.

his exegesis of the sayings quoted by Pabakos, which treats them as authoritative. The scene is not, of course, an accurate historical representation, so an examination of its allusions to gospel literature helps to explain this apparent inconsistency. In some ways it recalls the Passion narrative, with Kartir in the place of Caiaphas; and Bahram, approximately, standing in for Pilate. Yet neither Caiaphas nor Pilate charges Jesus with abandoning the law, suggesting that Bahram's accusation against Mani was not introduced in order to maintain a structural parallel with accounts of Jesus's trial. And Kartir's charge that Mani discouraged people from the 'works of the king' may be accurate, given his frequent claim in the inscriptions to have worked on behalf of the kings, following their orders.<sup>134</sup> On the other hand, the Pharisees accused Jesus' disciples of acting unlawfully by working on the sabbath (Mt. 12:2); and in the sermon on the mount, he proclaims: 'Do not think that I have come to abolish the law or the prophets; I have come not to abolish but to fulfill' (Mt. 5:17–18). The Manichaeans would have understood Mani's use of the 'law of Zarades' on the model of Jesus in the gospel narrative: Charged with abandoning the law, but instead offering his own interpretation of it.

2 Ke thus portrays Mani expounding the 'law of Zarades' to his catechumens; but later being accused of abandoning it by Bahram, in the presence of Kartir. The combined evidence of these two passages demands that we revisit the popular image of Mani in Islamic heresiology as a *zindīk*, that is, a false interpreter of the Avesta.<sup>135</sup> The term is first used by Kartir himself (*zndyky*), but without explanation. Later, some Arabic authors state in general terms that Mani corrupted the writings of Zarathustra, while others make more specific assertions, for example that he took names from the Avesta of Zoroaster, perhaps reflecting the use of the names of Iranian divinities in the *Šābuhragān*.<sup>136</sup> The most extensive description of Mani as *zindīk* is found in the eleventh-century Mu'tazilite author, 'Abd al-Jabbār:<sup>137</sup>

He adopted the Avesta, which was the book of Zarādusht, the prophet of the Zoroastrians. It is a book which is not in the language of the Persians or in any language at all. No one understands what it is. It sounds like

134 E.g. Kartir 1–2, 14–16 (paragraph divisions following MacKenzie 1989).

135 For a comprehensive discussion, see de Blois 2002, who argues that the Middle Persian *zandīk*, from which the Arabic term is derived, is derived from the Aramaic *zaddīk* 'righteous', a designation for Manichaean electi.

136 Reeves 2011: 113. For the names of Iranian divinities in the *Šābuhragān*, see Sundermann 1997(b): 343–347 and Colditz 2005.

137 Reeves 2011: 175.

murmuring. They recite its words, but they truly do not know what it means. However, Mānī the priest maintained that he could understand it and knew what it meant. Mānī claimed that he was the messenger of light. He invented foolish things for them and said: “This is the interpretation of the Avesta!”. The general public was fascinated and his fame grew among them.

While ‘Abd al-Jabbār may be using Mazdayasnian critiques of Mani,<sup>138</sup> the figure of the ‘mumbling magoi’ who do not understand the ritual formula that they recite, suggests instead that he is adapting a Judaeo-Christian polemic.<sup>139</sup> His account contains a number of inaccuracies, suggesting that Mani engaged directly with the oral Avesta, apparently in a ritual context, maintaining that he alone was able to interpret it properly. But Mani surely did not memorize the Avesta, much less understand or translate it, whatever his knowledge of Middle Persian; nor did he function as an *hērbed* or *mōbed*, whatever his knowledge of Mazdayasnian ritual and teaching.

Manichaean sources themselves, including 2 Ke and other Medinet Madi codices, offer a much more promising explanation for Kartīr’s use of the term *zindīk*. Throughout both volumes of *Kephalaia*, in addition to expounding his doctrine in lessons, Mani offers various ‘interpretations’ (ἑρμηνεία), as stated by the authorial note at the end of the 2 Ke codex:<sup>140</sup>

I have written these chapters ... the lessons and the interpretations that the apostle [uttered] from time <to time>, place to place (and) land to land ...

But interpretations of what? In the prologue to 1 Ke, Mani declares that he has unveiled the wisdom and the scriptures of the sects in his ‘interpretations’.<sup>141</sup> This is part of the famous passage in which he recounts how his predecessors Jesus, Zarathustra and Buddha did not write books, a task left to their disciples. Indeed, in the first volume of the *Kephalaia*, Mani interprets various Jesus traditions, including κ2 in which he explains Jesus’s parable of the two trees, as quoted from the ‘gospel’.<sup>142</sup> Significantly, Mani also attacks other

138 Compare Kartīr’s charge that he led ‘the people’ astray in 2 Ke 451, 2–6 / G335.

139 For the image of the ‘mumbling magus’, see *Secunda* 2013: 72–77.

140 2 Ke 495(?), 3–5. For an earlier discussion of this term in Coptic Manichaean sources, see Klíma 1958.

141 See 1 Ke 7, 3–10.

142 1 Ke 17, 5, a reference to Luke 6:33–34. See above for other quotations from Jesus traditions.

explanations of the same parable by ‘the sects’; in this case, apparently, the Marcionites.<sup>143</sup>

This interpretive activity was considered central to Mani’s persona, as is clear from Hom, in which he is described as ‘the good interpreter (ἡΓΕΡΜΗΝΕΥΤΗΣ ΕΤΑΝΤ)’ and the ‘interpreter of the land of great Babylon.’<sup>144</sup> Mani’s dialogue with Pabakos in K341 portrays him as an interpreter not only of Christian texts, but also the Mazdayasnian ‘law of Zarades’. At its most basic level, ‘interpretation’ may refer to translation: That is, Mani would have discussed the ‘law of Zarades’ not in Middle Iranian but in his native Aramaic.<sup>145</sup> His comparison of the three sayings of Zarades with several sayings of Jesus is a more extended exegetical endeavor, explicitly described as an ‘interpretation.’<sup>146</sup> Given the relevance of these sayings for Mani’s and Kartir’s competing visions of post-mortem fate, it is likely that they were included in one of the latter’s pamphlets. His use of the Middle Persian term *zandik* would thus reflect the Manichaean presentation of their founder as the ‘good interpreter’ of the ‘wisdom and the scriptures’ of the ‘sects’, including the ‘law of Zarades’; it also suggests that this activity was a primary reason for the conflict between the two sages. Kartir therefore did not imply that Mani and his followers produced their own Zand, in the sense of a Middle Persian translation and interpretation of the Avesta, as proposed by Schaefer, who argued that Mani’s dualism was based on an “allegorical” reading of Avestan passages.<sup>147</sup> Instead, *zandik* refers to the Manichaean discussion and appropriation of Zand material, described in 2 Ke as the ‘law of Zarades.’<sup>148</sup>

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Only one ‘interpretation’ in the first volume is not from a Jesus tradition: K10, entitled *Concerning the Interpretation of the Fourteen Great Aeons, about which Sethel has Spoken in his Prayer* (1 Ke 42, 25–26).

143 1 Ke 17, 15–20.

144 Hom 60, 31 and Hom 61, 16 respectively.

145 For ἔρμηνεία as translation in early Christian Greek literature, see Lampe 1961: s.v. Additionally, just as Manichaean scribes copied Gospel literature, they may have transmitted the ‘law of Zarades’, not only in Middle Persian, but also translated into Aramaic, and eventually into Greek and Coptic.

146 Thus 2 Ke 417, 13 / G305. As Mani has just quoted a variant of logion 44, log. 1 of the *Gospel of Thomas* seems particularly relevant: ‘Whoever discovers the interpretation (ἑρμηνεία) of these sayings will not taste death’. Note also that Mani’s explanation of the ‘law of the Magousaeans’ in K100 is described as a ‘spiritual interpretation’ (1 Ke 252, 6–7) and a ‘true interpretation’ (1 Ke 252, 11–12); here following Funk’s ‘Addenda & Corrigenda’ as given in Pettipiece 2009: 197.

147 Schaefer 1930, who adapts Mas’ūdi’s explanation of the term.

148 Cf. Shaked 1994(a), who argues that the term *zandig* “surely betrays a principal technique of the Manichaean missionary work among Zoroastrians, which must have

### Conclusion: Un Mage Iranisé?

We have explored a number of possible threads linking the ‘law of Zarades’ to a diverse set of ancient literary traditions. It appears to be mostly unrelated to Greek and Latin texts attributed to Zoroaster, though there are intriguing similarities with *Zostrianos*, a Sethian treatise probably composed in Syro-Mesopotamia during the first half of the third century. Various Graeco-Roman reports on Iranian religion echo the terminology found in κ341: Nicolaus of Damascus in the first century B.C.E., and Agathias in the sixth century C.E., both attribute a divinely revealed ‘law’ to the Iranian sage. Although neither author discusses the contents of this ‘law’, the Christian heresiologist Theodoret of Cyrrihus connects it to various social practices, including next-of-kin marriage. Yet it is not certain that these authors are referring to a text at all; 2 Ke is the sole extant work from the ancient Mediterranean to quote from this mysterious ‘law of Zarades.’

The three sayings cited by the catechumen Pabakos overlap in basic form and content with several Middle Iranian texts, including the Pahlavi Zand of the *Nērangestān*, and a paraphrase of the Zand of the *Vidēvdād* in Kartīr’s inscription. While the precise nature of the ‘law of Zarades’ remains unknown, it was likely a compilation of Middle Persian Zarathustra traditions that anticipated, but differed from, the extant Pahlavi Zand of the Avestan Canon. Like the ‘law of Zarades’, several other Manichaean texts ascribed to Zarathustra concern personal eschatology; for example, British Library Sogdian fragment 5 may be an interpretive expansion of the ‘law’, attributing the doctrine of the elect’s five commandments to an ancient authority. The role played by the ‘law of Zarades’ in Mani’s final confrontation with Bahram and Kartīr suggests that it was a text sponsored by the Sasanian court, not one that had been composed by Mani or one of his followers. The root of this conflict seems to have been Mani’s activity as interpreter (πρῆρμηνεγτης), offering a new explanation of a text already read and interpreted by Mazdayasnian authorities.

While Mani thus adapted Iranian texts to his own system, he also participated in the transmission of texts from the eastern Mediterranean to the Sasanian court. In the *Šābuhragān* he presents apocalyptic traditions from the gospels, essentially offering a translation-paraphrase in Middle Persian,

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consisted in using the exegesis of the Avesta, Zand, for reading Manichaean ideas into the scriptures” (Shaked 1994(a): 60). Interestingly, a similar strategy is found much later in the *Škand-gumānīg wīzār*: Mardān-Farrox interprets several New Testament passages, presumably from a Middle Persian translation, and in a few instances clearly modified, to argue in favor of Mazdayasnian dualism (Gignoux 2008).

no doubt from an Aramaic harmony like the Diatessaron. The few extant Manichaean Syriac fragments employ Greek loan words reflecting various components of Hellenistic learning; these are probably taken from Greek texts in Syriac translation, including Sethian texts similar to *Zostrianos*.<sup>149</sup> Mani shared this interest in Greek learning with the early Sasanian court. The astrological literature collected there surely included Graeco-Roman Zoroaster pseudepigrapha: notably, the *Kitāb al-mawālīd*, a seventh-century Arabic translation of a Pahlavi translation from the Greek original, is ascribed to Zoroaster, and contains a horoscope taken at Ḥarrān on April 9, 232 C.E.<sup>150</sup>

Given this extensive circulation of literature, determining the ‘origin’ of Manichaean teachings, such as the discussion of the astrological science *melothesia* in κ70, can be futile. He may have drawn on earlier work in this area by Syriac authors, especially Bardaisan.<sup>151</sup> Alternately, he may have used ‘Sethian’ sources such as the ‘prophecy of Zardusht’ and the *Book of Zoroaster*; or even been drawn to the topic by interest in it at the Sasanian court: A *melothesia* is found in the ninth-century Pahlavi book, *Zādspram*, a compilation from lost Avestan material.<sup>152</sup> Whatever his sources, Mani’s interpretation uniquely reflected his own system. Similarly, his numerous appeals to Zarades are not signs of ‘pure’ Iranian content, but an act of *bricolage*: Mani was developing both Iranian and Graeco-Roman traditions, which he combined and adapted in various contexts. Scholars have long recognized Mani’s hybridization of Christianity and Mazdayasnianism, using metaphors such as a metallic alloy and an interwoven garment. Mani’s explanation of the ‘law of Zarades’ in κ341 gives us a rare window on the process of weaving: An *Interpretatio Manichaica* of an Iranian text with reference to the Jesus tradition.<sup>153</sup> While this action led to his later condemnation by Bahram and Kartīr, it also led to the transmission of Iranian Zarathustra materials, albeit in excerpted and transmitted form, across the border and into Egypt.

Would the ‘law of Zarades’, given its usage at the Sasanian court, have presented an unfamiliar *mage iranisé* to a late antique Egyptian reader of the *Kephalaia* in Coptic translation? The eschatological and cosmological focus of the excerpts certainly differed from the Zoroaster of Graeco-Roman pseude-

149 On the Greek terms, see Burkitt 1921, cxxxv–cxl; see also BeDuhn in Chapter 9, n. 67.

150 Pingree 1997: 45–46. Interestingly, the translation of *hērbēd* on Shapur’s trilingual inscription (šKZ) is *magos* (Back 1978: 364), suggesting familiarity with, and adoption of, this widespread designation in Graeco-Roman literature.

151 See the passage preserved by Agapius of Mabbug (Vasiliev 1907: 520).

152 Reeves 1999: 178.

153 Skjaervø 1995(a): 281 and Koenen 1986: 332, respectively.



pigrapha, a sage associated with astrology and the natural sciences. This gap in expectations is partly explained by the orientalist exoticism behind the *magēs hellēnisēs* tradition, which ascribed potent but suspect forms of knowledge to eastern sages, with no regard for accuracy of representation.<sup>154</sup> On the other hand, cultural interaction with Iranian *is* reflected in some Greek and Latin literature, reflecting the diverse situations in which this occurred.<sup>155</sup> As Phiroze Vasunia observes: ‘The Greek and Latin sources used ideas and doctrines connected with this figure for different purposes, and emphasized different features of the Iranian material to suite their own purposes.’<sup>156</sup> For example, Agathias’s presentation of Iranian customs rests on varied sources: For the account of kings, he used a Greek translation of a Middle Persian document from a translator, presumably a diplomat whom he had met at Constantinople; yet his discussions of religion often are often derived on earlier Greek accounts, and, as a Christian, he often presented them unsympathetically.<sup>157</sup>

Like most Graeco-Roman descriptions of Iranian religion, the *Histories* received limited circulation among a learned elite. The translations of Sasanian documents have been lost, if they were ever copied. In contrast, the Manichaean transmission of Iranian tradition would have been far more extensive, on the scale of the mission itself. The ‘law of Zarades’, as quoted in 2 Ke, is the first extant Middle Iranian work in Greek or Coptic translation. The epic material on Chasro in the same volume further highlights the role of the Manichaeans as literary border-agents, bringing their own versions of Sasanian traditions into the Roman empire.<sup>158</sup> Of course, we should not follow Diocletian in reducing Mani’s legacy to a Persian invasion of the Roman empire, even if an author such as Agathias could opine that the teachings of Zarades / Zoroaster

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154 For a discussion of Graeco-Roman views of Iranian religion, and especially Zoroaster, in relationship to Orientalism, see Vasunia 2007: 20–29.

155 Subtle aspects of cultural exchange continue to be elucidated: Quack has recently demonstrated that much of the astrological and other esoteric teachings attributed to Zoroaster and Ostanēs, including *melothesia*, in fact preserve Egyptian content. He proposes attributing these texts to descendants of Persians who moved to Egypt after the Achaemenid conquest, a group he calls ‘magēs Égyptianisēs’ (Quack 2006: 267–282).

156 Vasunia 2007: 25.

157 For a discussion of Agathias’s background, see de Jong 1997: 229–231.

158 See BeDuhn’s contribution at chapter 6 in this volume. There were surely other instances, now lost, of Manichaeans transmitting Iranian literature to the eastern Mediterranean. One possibility is the so-called ‘prayers of Zarades’, mentioned in the somewhat confused *Seven Chapters* anathemas (text and translation in Lieu 1983). After all, the *Ašəm vohū* was transmitted within the Sogdian Manichaean community.

seemed identical to Manichaeism.<sup>159</sup> In fact, the Manichaean reception of Iranian tradition involved significant adaptations, beginning with the very act of translation. It belongs to *les mages sémitisés*, a term proposed by Shaul Shaked to describe the close interaction between Semitic and Iranian cultures in Mesopotamia.<sup>160</sup> Thus, while the 'law of Zarades' seems to derive from a text influential at the Sasanian court, the quotations in 2 Ke betray subtle changes, such as the use of 'land of light', a Manichaean term closely related to Mandaean traditions.

The Manichaeans, as translators of Mesopotamian-inflected Iranian texts, ironically carried out a process of cultural transmission similar to the one hypothesized by Bidez and Cumont for the Magousaeans, the name of the group blamed for the death of their founder. Of course, the Manichaeans were not Mazdayasnians, and Iranian texts seem to have been only a small percentage of their literary heritage, at least within the Roman empire. Nor did Hellenization encompass the direct application of Stoic or Platonic principles, as imagined by Bidez and Cumont. At its most basic level, it occurred through translation into Greek, and then Coptic; the role of Mani's own language of Syriac is unfortunately largely invisible to us. Hellenization also proceeded in-step with assimilation to Christian texts and ideas, as suggested in K341, which shows Mani integrating the 'law of Zarades' with Jesus traditions in response to concerns raised by the Iranian catechumen Pabakos. Such activity earned him the titles 'good interpreter', and 'interpreter of the land of great Babylon', evoking not only the process of translation and interpretation, but also the related, complex program of cultural hermeneutics within and beyond the Syro-Mesopotamian borderlands.

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159 For a translation and commentary on Diocletian's rescript, see Gardner and Lieu 2004: 131–333. On the similarity between Iranian religion and Manichaeism, see Agathias, *Histories* 2, 24 (Bidez and Cumont 1938: II 83–86, text D 11; Vasunia 2007: 48–51, text 5).

160 Shaked 1997: 114.

## Iranian Epic in the Chester Beatty *Kephalaia*

*Jason BeDuhn*

The Iranian epic tradition reached full flower with Ferdowsi's *Šāh-nāma* in the early eleventh century.<sup>1</sup> This achievement stood at the culmination of long lines of story-telling, in both poetry and prose, both oral and written. Ferdowsi himself supposedly relied on a prose epic compiled in Persian circa 957 C.E.;<sup>2</sup> but many of the same legendary elements can be found even earlier, for example, in the Arabic *History of Prophets and Kings* by Tabarī (d. 923). Prior to the time of Tabarī, we begin to rely on reports rather than actual surviving compositions. According to these reports, a chronicle had been composed in the closing years of the Sasanian dynasty, the so-called *Xwadāy-nāmag*. Supposedly, Ibn al-Muqaffa had made an Arabic translation of it already in the eighth century. But we have neither Ibn al-Muqaffa's work nor its purported Middle Persian source. The existence of a late-Sasanian prose 'Book of Kings' is not at all implausible, but cannot be confirmed.

What does survive of Iranian epic in Middle Persian (Pahlavi) belongs to medieval compendia, such as the *Dēnkard* and *Bundahišn*, which are contemporaneous with or even later than Tabarī and Ferdowsi.<sup>3</sup> They are usually regarded as conservatively reporting much earlier sources, whether those sources are imagined as literary or oral. In fact, they frequently claim to be summarizing the contents of *nasks* of the Avesta, the sacred literature of the Mazdayasnian religion. But it must be accepted that this is a claim that we are largely not in a position to verify, since most of the cited texts are lost. There is no doubt that some of the main figures and episodes cited in these medieval compendia go back to earlier Iranian myth and legend, but exactly how closely the reports adhere to such lost sources has been nearly impossible to know.<sup>4</sup> These medieval Middle Persian sources contain the same basic

1 Completed circa 1009 C.E.; see Omidšalar 1998: 341.

2 On the orders of the local ruler of Tus (Ferdowsi's home town), Abu Mansur Muhammad b. 'Abd al-Razzaq (d. 961). See Minorsky 1964.

3 A point stressed by Vevaina, forthcoming. I am grateful to Yuhan Vevaina for sharing his work on this subject in advance of its publication.

4 For example, *Dēnkard* 8, 13.1–17 gives genealogies of Iranian kings said to be taken from the *Čihrdād Nask*, i.e. an 'Avestan' text. Yet the report includes a discussion of the Sasanian

sequential chain of heroes found in the fully developed narratives of Tabarī and Ferdowsi, but provide nothing like full accounts of the individual figures or even of individual episodes involving them. They simply highlight some of the more renowned accomplishments of the ancient kings and heroes. Some of these allusions can be identified with stories told in detail in the *Šāh-nāma*, others cannot.

Nevertheless, it has been commonly assumed that the constituent legends of Iranian epic go back much further than these securely datable medieval sources, in an oral form even to the second millennium B.C.E., and this idea is connected to assumptions about the date of composition of those Avestan ‘texts’ (oral or written) that allude to such legends: Specifically, the Younger Avestan *Yāsts*, which are preserved independently of the compendia such as the *Dēnkard* and *Bundahišn*. Prods Oktor Skjaervø speaks for a very widely shared opinion when he refers to ‘at least a thousand years’ separating the composition of the Avestan texts from the medieval Pahlavi compositions where we get more expansive treatments of epic traditions.<sup>5</sup> Many would go even further.<sup>6</sup> Yet Skjaervø is unequivocal that ‘the transmission of the holy texts, like that of the secular literature that has not survived, must have been fundamentally oral’;<sup>7</sup> and, as a corollary of that observation, ‘naturally, the narratives have changed ... and any attempt to sort out the older layers becomes a laborious task’.<sup>8</sup>

At some point, the older sacred literature of the Avesta became canonized as a fixed ritual recitation, and its fleeting allusions to characters and episodes of the oral epic tradition reflects the state of the latter at that historical moment. But when this occurred, and just how fixed the sacred text became, remain debated questions. The exact date of the first written Avestan collection is also uncertain: A growing consensus among researchers finds good reason to place

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dynasty. So either the claim to be based on a *nask* of the Avesta is false, or the *nask* is itself a late- or post-Sasanian composition. The issue is complicated by uncertainty about how directly or indirectly the information derives from the *nask*. Vevaina, for instance, characterizes a section of the *Dēnkard* as a résumé of a ‘lost’ Middle Persian translation of a ‘lost’ Young Avestan commentary on the 2nd millennium B.C.E. Old Avesta (Vevaina, forthcoming). But for a similar anachronism in the Young Avestan text of the *Yāsts* themselves, see further below.

5 Skjaervø 1995(b): 187; cf. Skjaervø 2003/4.

6 Skjaervø himself dates the oral composition of the Young Avestan texts, including the *Yāsts*, to roughly the Achaemenid period (Skjaervø 1999).

7 Skjaervø 1999: 9.

8 Skjaervø 1995(b): 187. He draws an analogy to a comparison of the Medieval German *Nibelungenlied* with its Old Norse predecessors.

it in the late Sasanian era, that is, in the same fifth-sixth century C.E. period when the composition of the *Xwadāy-nāmag* is presumed to have been undertaken.<sup>9</sup> The influence and challenge of the Manichaean emphasis on written texts has been cited as a possible factor contributing to this development.<sup>10</sup> Any confidence that researchers express over the state of Iranian epic before this writing down of Avestan literature depends upon the arguments of historical linguistics. Such linguistic considerations prompt many to postulate a conservative oral transmission stretching back millennia earlier, and comparison is frequently made to the oral transmission of the Vedas, syllable by syllable.<sup>11</sup> No one suggests that the legends of Iranian epic were transmitted in this way; but it is argued that the *Yašts* must have been, due to their fixed ritual recitation, and consequently any reference to the legends made in the latter would have been frozen, so to speak, in the sacred verses, reflecting the content of the legends at that time.

The linguistic argument for dating the Avestan *Yašts* a millennium and a half before the *Šāh-nāma* is twofold: (1) the 'Young Avestan' language used in these texts shows certain developmental parallels with Old Persian of the Achaemenid period; and (2) the religious scholars of the Sasanian period were no longer competent enough in 'Young Avestan' to actually compose texts with it. Notice that both observations must be true to make the *Yašts* informative about the state of Iranian epic in the centuries B.C.E. I concede the first point to those much more expert than I to make this sort of judgment; but the second point remains unproven. Direct evidence of difficulty understanding the Avestan language comes not from Sasanian-era records, but from medieval translations and commentaries. The extent of Sasanian-period facility with Avestan language, before the trauma of the Islamic conquest and the regrouping of Iranian literary culture in the ninth century C.E., continues to be a subject of debate.<sup>12</sup>

9 Representative of this position are Nau 1927; Bailey 1943: 169–173; Boyce 1957: 33; Boyce and Grenet 1991: 16; Widengren 1965(a): 258; Frye 1984: 314; Skjaervø 2003/4: 37. See also Skjaervø 2012.

10 E.g. Nyberg 1938: 415 ff.; Nyberg 1958: 30 ff.; Molé 1953: 289 ff.

11 See *Vidēvdād* 4, 44–45, and more generally Bailey 1943: 158–166. Basil of Caesarea, in the fourth century C.E., provides eyewitness testimony to such oral transmission of ritual recitations from father to son within families of magi (*Epistle* 258; Deferrari 1961: 34–46).

12 For an analysis of the capabilities of Middle Persian speakers in working with Avestan language, see Cantera 2004, esp. 338–341; but cf. the doubts raised about this analysis by Skjaervø 2008 in his review of Cantera. Skjaervø 2003/4: 30 himself notes that Young Avestan texts contain both elements that are imitations of Old Avestan (i.e. 'pseudo-Old

F.C. Andreas proposed that Sasanian scribes would have been capable of rendering Middle Iranian terms back into hypothetical Avestan forms through a kind of mechanical transcription formula.<sup>13</sup> Andreas put his proposition in service of a larger theory about the origin and transmission of the Avesta that has not fared well.<sup>14</sup> Nonetheless, his more limited suggestion about techniques of linguistic retrogression serves to remind us of the late ancient historical context in which Avestan literature was first written down: Namely, at a time when similar techniques were being employed in neighboring India to render Prakrit (i.e. Middle Indian) texts into Sanskrit, as well as to compose entirely new texts in this artificial, scholastic language. The same thing was going on at the other end of the Sasanian realm, where Aramaic-speaking Jewish scholars continued to work with, manipulate, and even compose texts in extinct Hebrew. Such deliberate programs of reviving or re-inventing archaic forms of language and translating literature composed (in writing or in one's head) in later forms of the language 'back' into archaic forms was part and parcel of scholastic linguistic culture at the time, and arguments about the age of particular pieces of Avestan literature cannot be carried out in isolation from such contextual considerations.<sup>15</sup> Since the Avestan script appears to have been invented expressly for transcribing memorized, oral ritual texts that could not be adequately recorded using the existing Pahlavi script, we cannot hope to recover an Avestan text, in the full and proper sense, from any time before the fifth century C.E.<sup>16</sup>

### Before the Existing Written Sources

The hypothesis that medieval Iranian epic goes back to Parthian-period oral culture is associated with a trilogy of studies by Mary Boyce from the 1950s,

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Avestan') and elements belonging to later stages of Iranian that were 'probably introduced by the scribes' (Skjaervø 2003/4: 30). Nonetheless, he conceives the Young Avestan texts becoming fixed and 'unchangeable' in the Achaemenid period (37).

13 Andreas 1903.

14 See Henning 1942(a); Morgenstierne 1942; Bailey 1943: 193.

15 Hintze 1998: 155–157, notes the intrusion of Middle Iranian forms into the text of the Avesta, remarking that 'dialectal features of (each) particular region could enter into even the most holy passages'.

16 On the invention of the Avestan script, see Hoffmann 1971. Hoffmann attempts to establish the existence of this script already in the fourth century C.E., based upon the presumed date of an inscription using the script on a sarcophagus found in Constantinople (66); but de Blois 1990 has raised serious doubts about the date of this sarcophagus. See most recently Panaino 2012.

and was canonized, so to speak, by Ehsan Yarshater in the *Cambridge History of Iran*.<sup>17</sup> In general, Yarshater follows the arguments of Boyce that the Parthian period was decisive for the formation of Iranian epic as it has come down to us: 'As it was, when Ardashir rebelled against his Parthian overlord, the long duration of the Arsacid reign had already given Iran something approaching a national saga and a national history, casting into oblivion the memory of the Medes and the Persians and overshadowing or absorbing local legends. It was this eastern tradition turned "national" which was committed to writing in Sasanian times'.<sup>18</sup> Boyce concluded that the stories of the Kayanian hero cycle 'appear to have been little known in Pars at the beginning of the Sasanian era, and the Persian minstrels evidently acquired them from Parthian singers, in the north-east. There they had become interwoven with tales of Parthian warriors and Saka heroes'.<sup>19</sup> Boyce's systematic collection of sources on oral performance in Iran led her to the position that Iranian epic remained oral down to the Islamic invasion.<sup>20</sup> Yet she allowed for the traditional claim that a prose 'Book of Kings', derivative of the still vital oral tradition, had been composed in late Sasanian times.<sup>21</sup>

Yarshater envisions a renewed interest in ancient epic tales as part of a revival of 'patriotic spirit' at the time of Sasanian struggles with eastern invaders, such as the Chionites, who already featured in legends as traditional enemies of the Iranians from earlier contacts in central Asia.<sup>22</sup> This revival may have entailed more than simply recording tales in some imagined 'original'

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17 Boyce 1954(a); Boyce 1955; Boyce 1957; Yarshater 1983.

18 Yarshater 1983: 391. Yarshater demonstrates that Armenian forms of some heroic names derive from Parthian (e.g. Shavarsh = Siyavush, 390), and that other heroic names appear among names of rulers of Persis in Parthian times (e.g. Kapat / Kawad and Manuchihr, 305). Boyce notes Manichaean familiarity with the oral Parthian minstrel (*gōsān*) tradition; a Manichaean text refers to such performers: 'Like a *gōsān* who proclaims the worthiness of kings and heroes (*kw'n*) of old and himself achieves nothing at all' (*Gyān Wifrās*, Stanza 80: M5561 + 5562.V.7 = M847.V.9 = M4350.V.7; cited by Boyce 1957: 11). Note the use of *kawān* for 'hero', rather than 'giant'. But Skjaervø 1995(b) reviews several other passages where 'giant' seems to be the meaning.

19 Boyce 1968: 56. She regards the *Ayādgār ī Zarērān* ('Memorial of Zarēr') to be a surviving example of this Parthian verse tradition, 'characterised by the fixed epithets, hyperboles, and repetitions of oral epic'; albeit only written down following the Arab conquest, and showing signs of further narrative development beyond the form of the story as it was evidently recorded in the Sasanian 'Book of Kings'.

20 Boyce 1957: 32.

21 Boyce 1954(a): 51; Boyce 1957: 34.

22 Yarshater 1983: 391.

form; it would be consistent with what we know of such literary processes elsewhere that older legendary materials were fundamentally reframed at the time and in light of this struggle, and made for the first time into an epic. Such is Boyce's position: 'Through the *Xwadāy Nāmag*', she explains, 'a Persian national tradition was created; but to call it the *representative* of such a tradition is misleading'.<sup>23</sup> The intellectual achievement of the compilers of this 'Book of Kings', Boyce remarks, 'lies in the assembling of material' from diverse sources, both Parthian and Persian, as well as non-Iranian, 'in the order and clarity they imposed on heterogeneous—and often basically unrelated—matter'. In short, they provided Sasanian Persia 'with a history on a grand scale'.<sup>24</sup> Boyce suggests that an independent Parthian heroic cycle came to be artificially wedded to a religious narrative of Vištāspa and Zarathuštra, forming a creatively achieved epic sequence only in Sasanian times, and dates that fusion of traditions to the fifth century C.E.<sup>25</sup> According to this Parthian hypothesis regarding the origin of the heroic tales, references to the latter in the Young Avestan *Yašts* could not date to a supposed Achaemenid time of composition, but must be the result of a redaction or even composition of the *Yašts* in late Sasanian times, reflecting in their contents the new fusion of traditions in the connected narrative of a 'Book of Kings'.

A Sasanian 'Book of Kings', therefore, may not have been so much a writing down of an existing fully developed oral epic, but an act of re-composition. If the sacred text of the *Yašts* could be redacted in light of contemporary conditions, the *Xwadāy-nāmag* would have been all the more subject to narrative development and alteration to fit the times. We have no means to ascertain which episodes, which details, may have been present in earlier centuries. Both bodies of surviving witnesses to Iranian epic, therefore, the *Yašts* and the *Xwadāy-nāmag* (the latter known only indirectly as a source for later narratives), were first committed to a fixed written form in the late-Sasanian era, in conditions where reformulation and anachronism played a role. For this reason, then, it would be hazardous to treat them as reliable witnesses to any state of affairs earlier than that time.

Even leaving aside such problems, the Avestan literature through which one may hope to access older traditions offers only an extremely terse set

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23 Boyce 1968(b): 58 n. 2.

24 Boyce 1968(b): 59.

25 Boyce 1968(b): 58–59. In this she follows Nöldeke 1920: 5; cf. de Jong 2009: 37–38: 'we have no evidence at all for the use of narratives from the Avesta in Sasanian Iran before the fifth century, when the Sasanian monarchs began to use the title *kay* (referring to the Kayanian kings of the Avesta) on their coins'.



of allusions to epic material. ‘The rare mention of a martial exploit’ in this literature, Mary Boyce observes, ‘is brief and allusive, implying a dependency on a richer and more detailed source; and this can hardly have been other than a secular literature’ now lost.<sup>26</sup> The *Yašts* offer no full narrative of even a single episode that could be compared, detail-for-detail, with the *Šāh-nāma* and its kindred literature. They provide little help, therefore, in drawing conclusions about how far back individual elements of any story go.<sup>27</sup> However plausible or even probable that some of the content of our extant sources for Iranian epic derive from materials originally written down in the late Sasanian period, after a lengthy period of relatively conservative oral transmission, any conclusions proposed on their basis about the earlier state or development of Iranian epic remain mere hypotheses, awaiting confirmation from non-hypothetical, securely datable evidence from that earlier era.

Unfortunately, Greek and Roman discussions of Iranian culture lack references to any Iranian epic figures with the exception of Vištāspa / Hystaspes, in connection with ‘Zoroaster’, both of whom find mention already by the fourth century B.C.E. writer Ctesias.<sup>28</sup> Strabo refers to Persian teachers reciting for their pupils myths about the ‘deeds of gods and great men’ (15, 3.18), but we do not know what these myths contained. According to the Parthian hypothesis, these earlier Persian tales were almost totally displaced by eastern Iranian materials transmitted by the Parthians, and the latter came to form Iranian epic as we know it.

It is the Hystaspes-Zoroaster material that finds most frequent mention in Manichaean texts, particularly those securely dated to early in Manichaean literary history, such as the two volumes of the Coptic *Kephalaia*.<sup>29</sup> Assessment of this material contends with the question of whether it comes from direct contact with Iranian traditions, or derives from Hellenistic Zoroaster apocrypha. Just what were the books composed by the disciples of ‘Zarades’ known to Mani? Were these Parthian or Middle Persian collections of Mazdayasnian lore? Were they similar collections in Greek, perhaps popular among the Greek-speaking inhabitants of Parthian-era Mesopotamia?<sup>30</sup> Medieval

26 Boyce 1954(a): 47. Boyce notes that by ‘literature’ she means oral narrative (48 n. 2).

27 M. Rahim Shayegan, for example, has proposed that substantial details of epic episodes found in the *Šāh-nāma*, including those concerning the birth of Kay Ḳosrow during his father’s exile among the Turanians, were introduced into the narrative from actual political events in the fifth and sixth centuries C.E. (Shayegan 2003: 374–375).

28 Boyce 1957: 12 n. 2.

29 E.g. 1 Ke 7, 27–33 and 12, 16–19; Hom 70, 2–15; and now in a number of passages in 2 Ke.

30 See Bidez and Cumont 1938; Beck 1991; and specifically on Manichaean references, Boyce

Middle Iranian Manichaean texts from central Asia, on the other hand, clearly attest more direct knowledge of Iranian religious and epic traditions; but it has remained uncertain whether these may be traced to Mani and the beginnings of Manichaeism, or are the result of a later engagement with Iranian culture as the religion spread and developed. The Chester Beatty *Kephalaia* (hereafter 2 Ke) contains passages that will advance consideration of these problems.<sup>31</sup>

### The Story of ‘Chasro the Blessed’ in the Chester Beatty *Kephalaia*

In a passage stretching across four pages of the 2 Ke codex, we find a version of the well-known story of the occultation of Kay K̅osrow—here called Chasro the blessed (Chasrō, χασρω πιακαριος)—in which he yields up his kingdom and departs into some transcendental realm.<sup>32</sup> This story is told at length in the *Šāh-nāma*, and is also known in some form in the medieval Mazdayasnian compendium *Dēnkard*, as well as in the Islamic historians Tabarī (d. 923), Thaʿalibī (d. 1037), and Bīrūnī (d. 1048).

The introduction of the story and its principal characters is poorly preserved. As the passage begins to be readable, on plate 131 of Giversen’s facsimile,<sup>33</sup> a sage named ‘Danaan, the son of Danaan (ΔΑΝΑΑΝ ΠΩΗΡΕ ΝΔΑΝΑΑΝ)’ is speaking to the king, ‘Chasro the blessed’, in the latter’s military camp (φόσσατον from Latin *fossatum*), somewhere on campaign outside of Persia. It is noteworthy that he is quite explicitly the king of Persia already in this *kephalaion* composed in the late third or early fourth century, rather than of Parthia or some other Iranian realm. The *Kephalaia* uses the epithet ‘the blessed’ (μακάριος) of both Chasro and, in other passages, Hystaspes. This may be intended as a culturally appropriate correspondent to the Iranian title *kavi* / *kay*, typically applied to these figures in the Iranian tradition. On the other hand, the Buddha also bears this epithet. The formulaic manner in which the characters in the story

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and Grenet 1991: 16–17 n. 70; 508; 510 n. 42. It is noteworthy that the Greek name form ‘Zoroaster’ nowhere appears in Manichaean texts.

31 See especially Dilley, chapter 5 in this volume.

32 This particular section of the codex received preliminary study by Wolf-Peter Funk, who generously shared his unpublished readings and reconstructions of the text with the team; these have been invaluable to our edition of the text.

33 Because the exact placement of the quire containing this episode has not yet been determined, and so its pagination in the codex not yet finalized, the plate numbers from Giversen 1987 will be used throughout (referenced as G within the text, in contrast to the style elsewhere).

are repeatedly identified by their full names and epithets, as well as the formal repetitiousness of their exchange, brings us close to an oral story-telling style.

Chasro expresses the belief that Danaan can show him the way to the 'land of light', whereupon Danaan advises him: 'Now if you wish that I show you the path to the land of light and if you wish to go to the kingdom of light, then let no woman at all travel with you' (G131, 9–12). This prohibition extends even to female animals, as Danaan proceeds to list a variety of female domestic animals that should be banned from the camp. While the sexual encratism entailed in these instructions matches the Manichaean ethos, it also makes sense within the story's military setting, where a well-disciplined camp and even sexual taboos connected to martial exploits may be involved.<sup>34</sup> After a thorough search, the king declares his camp female-free; but Danaan discerns that one remains hidden, finds her, and brings her before the king. Chasro orders both she and the soldier who concealed her to be put to death. But Danaan intervenes. 'The one who travels on this path', he declares, 'should not kill anyone' (G132, 11–12). Here we have moved clearly away from any military justification for Danaan's instructions, in the pursuit of very different goals; the Manichaean ethos has been woven into the tale.

Following a very fragmentary section, the story moves towards the fulfillment of Danaan's promise to show Chasro the land of light. Danaan has led the king to 'the tree of ambrosia'. What happens next depends on the meaning of the verb used for what first Danaan and then Chasro do in relation to the branches of the tree. Coptic ⲉⲟⲉ is attested with the sense 'hang', and is used for example to describe Jesus or his followers being hung on a cross (2 Ps 121, 5.15; 142, 14; 143, 1; 195, 23.29). In these instances, however, the sense is passive or at least the one hung is the object of the verbal action carried out by others, with the preposition 'to' (ⲁ-) marking the object on which the individual was hung: '... he was hung on / to the cross' or 'they hung him on / to the cross'. In

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34 Kay Kōsrow's sexual encratism is highlighted in the *Desātūr*, a controversial work of uncertain date and provenance (in any case, pre-17th century C.E., based on its citation in that century by a number of authors) containing a miscellany of Iranian cultural traditions. 'In spite of all thy power', it says of him, 'thou didst keep far away from women, nor didst ever mingle with them'. In the commentary on this passage, it is said that he had a harem of 'four ladies of surpassing beauty, all of whom also spent their lives as virgins, so that the blessed prince left the world a *hirsâ*; now a *hirsâ* is one that never has had connection with women. His asceticism is celebrated' (Medhora 1888: 85–86). Allusion is also made in the same passage to Kōsrow's desire to commune with God, and his surrender of his throne to Lohrasp for that purpose.

active uses, εἶπε refers rather to hanging on, i.e. ‘clinging’, to someone or something marked by the object marker *ν*-, *ν*-, e.g. ἀἰεὼτ̄ ἡμακ ‘I have clung to thee’ (2Ps 53, 31); ἀἰεὼτ̄ ἡτεκναῶτε ‘I have clung to thy defense’ (2Ps 87, 26); ἀἰεὼτ̄ ἡτῆελπς ‘I have clung to his hope’ (2Ps 52, 22). Our passage employs the verb with the object marker *ν*- preceding ‘the branches of the tree’, as in the latter usages, rather than with a preposition; but uses the personal suffix *-q* to form a reflexive construction: Literally, ‘N.N. hung / clung himself to the branches of the tree’. Yet, since the result of this ambiguous verbal action is that both Danaan and Chasro are said to have ‘gone up to the land of light’, εἰτρῆ here probably designates hanging from branch after branch by one’s hands in the act of climbing, rather than hanging oneself from the branches of the tree in some sort of self-mortification; as Odin famously does in Norse myth.<sup>35</sup> With this understanding, the passage would read as follows:<sup>36</sup>

(Then) Danaan, the son of Danaan, ... climbed the branches of the tree ... (and he) went into the land of light ... (Then) Chasro the blessed climbed the branches of the tree. He went up to the land of the blessed light, the holy place of the gods. He eased and rested himself in the *ambrosia*, the place that lives forever.

The ascent to heaven by means of climbing a tree offers a striking image, unique to this version of the story. A similar motif appears throughout world mythology and folklore, but I have not found any parallel in Iranian epic or Mazdayasnian mythology. The tree’s association with the elixir of immortality, however, connects it with the white *haoma* tree known in Mazdayasnian literature (*Avestan gaokerena*, *Pahlavi gōkarn / gōkard*), situated in a mythical place equivalent to the setting of our story.<sup>37</sup> The same motif may be reflected in the promise made to the king in the *Šāh-nāma* that he will be taken to the ‘source of righteousness’. In the *Kephalaia* passage, the tree also possesses the qualities of a treasure-tree, from which Chasro receives ‘gifts and treasures and glory’ (G129, 8–9). This tree motif is unlikely to have been introduced in the Manichaean redaction of the story, since the *kephalaion* itself interprets the tree as symbolic of a well-known Manichaean entity with no obvious connection to tree

35 See *Hávamál* 137 in the Poetic Edda; Schjødtt 2008 (I owe these references to a personal communication from Jay Johnston).

36 G132, 24+129, 4. Note that the page reproduced as plate 129 follows 132 in our team’s reconstruction of the codex.

37 See *Yašt* 12, 17; *Vendīdād* 20, 4; *Bundahišn* 27, 4 and 30, 25; *Dādestān ī dēnīg* 37, 101; *Zādspram* 8, 5.

imagery, as ‘the illuminating Image, with the three angels who accompany her; she is the one who accompanies souls to the great aeon of light’ (G129, 5–7).

After this interpretive aside, the story resumes with something of an aporia, with Chasro back on earth and in conversation with one of his lieutenants, Iuzanes (Iuzanēs, ἰουζανης) the son of Tio (Tiō, τῖω). The name Iuzanes represents a Hellenized form of the Iranian name Bižan or Vēžan, belonging to a character who features prominently as a warrior companion of Kosrow in the *Šāh-nāma*. This same Hellenized rendering of Vēžan appears in the *Acts of Thomas*: Where the Syriac version has Wizan, the Greek has Iouzanēs.<sup>38</sup> Recently, Nils Arne Pedersen found the name Wizan / Vizen in a Syriac Manichaean fragment from Egypt, but without sufficient context to identify his narrative setting.<sup>39</sup> The name of Iuzanes’s father Tio appears to be a corruption of Gēv (Gīw, Bīy, Wēw), Vēžan’s father in the epic tradition, by way of misreading an initial Greek *gamma* (Γ) as *tau* (Τ).<sup>40</sup> This could have occurred either in the transmission of the *Kephalaia* itself, or already in a source utilized in its composition.<sup>41</sup> The names of both father and son, therefore, point toward a Greek stage in the transmission of this story, whether prior to its appropriation by Manichaean editors, or in the transmission of the Manichaean text itself.

Objections are made to the king’s intentions in both the *Kephalaia* and *Šāh-nāma* versions of the tale. In Ferdowsi’s account, the king’s advisors, including both Vēžan and his father Gēv, protest the lack of responsibility the king is showing by his desire to abdicate, particularly without an heir. They consider his self-mortifying behavior and retirement from their company to indicate derangement, and possibly even the inspiration of Ahriman. In the *Kephalaia*, likewise, Iuzanes cannot understand the attraction of the ‘land of light’: ‘This land to which you will go, is there food and drink in it? Does one marry women there, and do they become pregnant and give birth? Is there gold and silver, war and hunting?’ (G129, 10–13). Chasro replies that: ‘There is not a single one of these things in that place. The one who will go to that land, he will make *ambrosia* ... (and) will neither hunger nor thirst ... no evil of the body or bat-

38 For the Syriac, see Klijn 2003: 222; for the Greek, Bonnet 1898: 245, 17; Ἰουζάνης in Ps.-Abdias, *De historia certaminis Apostolorum* x, Paris 1566. Oazanes in J.A. Fabricius, *Codex apocryphus Novi Testamenti*, Hamburg 1719. See Justi 1895: 367a.

39 Pedersen and Larsen 2013: 98–99; cf. 233.

40 It is less likely to have occurred in copying the Coptic text, which employs the letter τ rather than τ.

41 The presence in the 2 Ke text of personal and place names that could not have been transmitted through a Greek intermediary complicates the question.

tle will ever overcome him' (G129, 15–19). But this life is not for Iuzanes, who replies: 'I will not go to that land. You are the one who has loved it ... But I will <go> to Persia and I will do the things that you have abandoned at that place. I will make war and battle and hunt. Then I will follow you' (G129, 20–24).

In the 2 Ke text, Chasro predicts that Iuzanes will not be able to have it both ways. Although the passage is highly fragmentary, he appears to foresee disaster for Iuzanes: '... you will not reach Persia ...' (G129, 25). The two go their separate ways: Chasro to the transcendental land of light, and Iuzanes to his fate. 'He went; he suffered ... He did not reach Persia ... he went astray among mountains and storms (?) (σαῖαε) that occurred there' (G130, 2–4). Here we see the infamous end of some of the most glorious knights of Kay *Ḳosrow* as told in the *Šāh-nāma*, but unknown in other medieval versions of the story. Ferdowsi reports that *Vēžan* and several companions die in a snowstorm as they try to follow *Ḳosrow* into the mountains. The Coptic term σαῖαε in our text refers to the same adverse conditions in the mountains in which *Vēžan* / Iuzanes and his companions were lost. It is attested only two other times: In 1 Ke 154, 6 without sufficient context to establish its meaning; and in 2 Ps 65, 18 where it is used poetically of the fearful conditions of this life, the antithesis of rest in paradise 'wherein there is neither heat nor cold ... hunger nor thirst'. Whereas in Ferdowsi the group meets its end because of a reluctance to leave their beloved king, the Manichaean form of the episode offers a more clearly differentiated moral choice, involving a rejection of the path Chasro has chosen, and its consequences. In both accounts, the main camp of the king returns safely to Persia again. In 2 Ke, the sage Danaan does not accompany Chasro, but 'went to the land from which he came' (G130, 8–9); wherever that may have been.

We see several close parallels between the story as told in 2 Ke and that in the *Šāh-nāma*: (a) a setting outside of Persia, at a kind of liminal territory (Iuzanes and Chasro discuss returning to Persia from their present location); (b) some of the same cast of characters (Chasro / *Ḳosrow*, Iuzanes / *Vēžan*, Tio / *Gēv*); (c) the influence of an outsider, whether divine or human (Danaan vs. *Soruš*); (d) conflict over martial versus pacifist values, with some rejecting Chasro's choice for a more traditional life of marriage, war, and hunt; (e) Chasro's choice to surrender his crown and depart; (f) the death of *Vēžan* amid mountain blizzards; (g) the safe return to Persia of Chasro's army.<sup>42</sup> Except for the idea that Kay *Ḳosrow* ended his days in an exceptional way

42 Cf. Tabarī's comparatively brief summary: 'After Kay *Khusraw* avenged himself and felt secure in his realm, he renounced his kingship and became an ascetic. He announced to the notables of his people and to the nation at large that he was going to relinquish power. They were overcome with anxiety, and their estrangement from him grew. They appealed

that preserves him immortal without death, none of these elements are to be found in the allusions to this figure in Mazdayasnian sacred texts and medieval compendia. The evidence of the 2 Ke text, therefore, establishes the existence of these elements of the legend, at a minimum, five hundred years earlier than previously attested, and almost certainly as much as eight hundred years earlier, to the very dawn of the Sasanian period.

As for the core idea of Kōsrow's occultation, it appears in both the Islamic authors and in the Mazdayasnian compendia from the same medieval period as the *Šāh-nāma*. According to *Dēnkard* 7, 1.40: 'Because he was needed as an instrument for the renovation, by the order of that word he moved on to a secret place for his body to be kept there undying until the renovation, as willed by the creator'.<sup>43</sup> The text situates this secret place at the fortress known as Kangdež, on a mountain between Iran and Turan (*Dēnkard* 8, 1.40).<sup>44</sup> The *Mēnōg ī xrad* 26, 62 more explicitly refers to Kōsrow handing rule over to another and going to *Garōdmān* (i.e. paradise; cf. *Bundahišn* 36, 7). The only evidence of this idea in the older Avestan literature comes as the barest allusion in the Young Avestan *Āfrīnagān ī Zardušt* 7: 'May you be free from disease and destruction, like Kauui Husrauuah'. Otherwise, the Young Avestan texts refer multiple times to his heroic and pious deeds, with a number of parallels to the larger set of stories about him in the *Šāh-nāma*, but say nothing about him surrendering his throne and departing; indeed, Haosravah and the other *kavis* are not identified as kings in the Avestan corpus.<sup>45</sup>

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to him, beseeched and implored him, and sought to persuade him to continue to direct their kingdom. But their effort was in vain ... Kay Khusraw disappeared. Some say that Kay Khusraw absented himself for acts of devotion, and it is not known where or how he died. Some tell other stories' (Goeje 1879–1901: 618; tr. Perlmann 1987). Tha'ālibī's account lacks many of the elements found in the *Šāh-nāma* and the *Kephalaia*: Kay Kōsrow is not prompted to his retirement by any advisor, divine or human; he makes his decision at his court, rather than on campaign; there is no tragic demise of his comrades-in-arms; and his occultation involves simply taking up the life of a hermit, without any heavenly ascent or mysterious departure. See Zotenberg 1900: 236–243.

43 Molé 1967: 10–11; translation from Vevaina, forthcoming.

44 *Bundahišn* 33 describes this legendary fortress, as does the *Rivāyat* appended to the *Dādestān ī Dēnīg*.

45 Nearly all of these allusions involve Haosrauuah's revenge for the death of his father Siāuuaršan by killing Keresauuazdah (*Yast* 19, 11) or Fraṅrasiān (19, 14), following a race of nine turns (19, 73–77), along the shore of Lake Caēcasta (5, 50; 9, 8; 9, 21–22; 17, 41–42); cf. 5, 41; 11, 7; 15, 30–33.

### Danaan, the Son of Danaan

The 2 Ke narrative also contains a number of unique elements unknown in other versions of the story, one of the most intriguing of which is the role of the sage Danaan. In Tha'ālibī's account, Kay Kōsrow's decision to renounce the throne and devote himself to spiritual pursuits is completely self-motivated; while in Ferdowsi's version of the story, the angel Soruš mentors the king. In the *Kephalaia*, however, a human sage plays the mentoring role. This figure, 'Danaan, the son of Danaan', is otherwise unknown. Any attempt to identify him depends in turn on ascertaining the linguistic source of his name. The double vowel in the second syllable could represent a long vowel, or alternatively the loss of an aspirated letter through a Greek intermediary of our material (thus, Danahan). As a rendering of an Iranian name, it could represent Dāna Dānayana, in which the second element is the patronym 'son of Dāna'. A legendary figure with such a patronym is among those slain by Keresāspa in the *Zamyād Yašt* (Yt. 19, 41). Etymologically, the name could derive from *daena*, the well-known term for a person's spiritual double; alternatively, it could derive from terms for knowledge or a dwelling or temple. A character named Dānāg ('knowing') serves as the interlocutor (in conversation with the divine 'spirit of wisdom') in the Pahlavi *Mēnōg ī xrad*; in the work's preamble, Dānāg is said to have traveled to many lands and studied with many sages, searching for truth until his discovery of wisdom (*xrad*). Dānāg and Dānān are effectively synonyms, entailing an adjectival or participial suffix, respectively, added to the root 'to know'. Also worth mentioning in this context is the legendary magus Dardanus known to Hellenic Iranophilia, whose books of wisdom were reputedly retrieved from his Babylonian tomb and formed the basis of Democritus's *On the Sacred Books of the Babylonians*.<sup>46</sup> An original Iranian name similar to Dānān could have been assimilated to the familiar Greek mythic progenitor Dardanus in Greek sources, thus obscuring the connection to the figure in our story. But this is no more than conjecture. A possible Iranian identity for Danaan must be weighed against his identification in the 2 Ke passage as a foreigner, who 'returns to his own land' following the ascent of Chasro.

As a Semitic name, a possible root in *dan*, 'judge', leads us back to two renowned wise men in that culture: The primordial sage Danel and the Jewish prophet Daniel. The former features as a kind of culture hero in the second millennium B.C.E. *Aqhat* legend from Ugarit, and his renown survives in

46 See Pliny, *Natural History* 30; Josephus, *Antiquities of the Jews* 8, 2.5.43; Arnobius, *Against the Nations* 1, 52; Apuleius, *Apology* 90; Tertullian, *On the Soul* 55, 5.



Ezekiel 14:14–20 and 28:3, as well as *Jubilees* 4:20, where he is the father-in-law of Enoch.<sup>47</sup> As for the prophet Daniel, it bears noting that Tabarī's chronological synchronization of Jewish and Iranian lore places the prophet at just about the right time to enter into the story of Kay Kōsrow: He says that Daniel's contemporary Nebuchadnezzar reigned at the same time as Kōsrow's successor Lohrasp (sections 645–647). Moreover, Daniel's interaction with Iranian kings in the Book of Daniel appears in elaborated form in Tabarī's account. Danaan plays a similar guiding role in relation to Chasro that Daniel has with 'Darius the Mede' and Cyrus; the latter figures are all but unknown to later Iranian royal history and legend, displaced by Kayanid kings such as Chasro. Indeed, such later historiography identifies Cyrus as a local governor serving under a Kayanid monarch. Despite these intriguing parallels, it is difficult to explain the mutation that would be involved in altering Daniel to Danaan. Manichaean texts typically preserve names from the Jewish tradition in a recognizable form, including theophoric names ending in *-el*.

With regard to a possible Indian origin of the character, etymologically the name could go back to Sanskrit *dhana*, 'wealth'; or *dāna*, 'gift'. For example, the famous warrior Arjuna in the *Bhagavad Gita* bears the epithet Dhananjaya ('wealth-winner').<sup>48</sup> The invariant, formalized 'Danaan, son of Danaan' of our text could point to an original D(h)anaputra. Unfortunately, no obvious sage figure from the Indian tradition suggests itself.<sup>49</sup> Dahnā appears as a region of India in Tabarī's history (Goeje 120–121, 136), as well as in his *Tafsīr* on the Quran (9, 76.7).

In Greek legend, Danaos (i.e. effectively Dana) appears as the eponymous ancestor of the Danaoi, one of the main tribal groups named by Homer in the Trojan War. Originally an Egyptian, Danaos sought refuge in Argos along with his fifty virgin daughters. It was Danaos's father Belus, however, who had connections with Mesopotamia: According to Diodorus Siculus, he established the priestly order of the Chaldaeans there as a colony of the Egyptian priesthood (1, 27.28).<sup>50</sup>

47 Note that his daughter in the latter text, Ednā, bears the same name as Danel's homeland of Adanah in *Aqhat*. Tabarī (Goeje 1879–1901: 176) repeats the report of Hadānah's marriage to Enoch, but Danel's name has been replaced by Bāwīl.

48 I owe this detail to a personal communication from Bruce Sullivan.

49 Such a name does not appear among the names of the Jaina Tirthankaras or the former Buddhas, nor among the Veda-revealing *rishis* or any other legendary sage figures.

50 The double-vowel form Danaas / Danaan is used of a female descendent of Danaos, the mother of Perseus, by Pindar and Sophocles (other writers use Danaēs / Danaēn).

The only other possibility suggested by our text comes from the fact that it first mentions Danaan immediately following a long passage on the Scythian sage Anacharsis, a figure well-known from Greek accounts. The transition from one to the other, covering a mere five lines of highly fragmentary text without any chapter break, might be read in such a way as to understand that Anacharsis tells the story of Danaan as that of one of his ancestors. If so, then we should situate Danaan among Scythian culture. The Indo-European water-goddess Danu stands behind the name of a number of rivers stretching from the Don to the Danube, and Danaan could represent a theophoric name connected to this cultural context. Unfortunately, the text presents too many lacunae and uncertainties to identify Danaan's homeland with any confidence.

Since the 2 Ke version of the occultation of Kay Kōsrow diverges in a number of details from the more familiar versions of Ferdowsi and Tabarī, we must be very cautious about assuming that any of the content of the medieval versions not found in the *Kephalaia* goes back very far into antiquity. Almost certainly, the Manichaean retelling has altered some details of the legend as it existed at the time, in order to align it with Manichaean views and values. This may include the theme of separation from women in our text; although given its setting in the military camp, it may have had a prior martial significance that has simply been reinterpreted in an ascetic Manichaean setting. Nevertheless, we cannot rely on such ideological redaction to account for all of the differences between the late antique Manichaean version and the one retold in medieval sources. Rather, it seems necessary to conclude that certain themes and details dropped out of the narrative over time, to be replaced by others. I would count among such likely original elements the figure of the sage Danaan (in the role played by the angel Soruš in Ferdowsi's version), and some of the particulars of Kōsrow's final destination, with its world tree exuding what is unmistakably the immortalizing sacred *hōm* or *soma* of Indo-Iranian tradition.<sup>51</sup> We remain in the dark about when individual elements of the medieval versions first appeared. The previous effort to find correlations to Ferdowsi in the few allusions of Mazdayasnian sources must now give way to pursuing the details offered by our new, much earlier Manichaean source, which contains striking

51 In the Mazdayasnian tradition, two trees exist side by side: The first called the 'Tree of Antidotes' or 'Tree opposed to harm', having the qualities of a world tree, from which all other plants derive. 'Near to that tree has grown the white *hōm*, the healing and undefiled, at the source of the water of Arēdvīvsūr; everyone who eats it becomes immortal, and they call it the Gōkarn tree, as it is said that *hōm* is expelling death; also in the renovation they prepare its immortality therefrom, and it is the chief of plants' (*Bundahišn* 27, 2–4; cf. 9, 6; 18, 1–6; 24, 27).

mythological features whose presence in earlier versions of the story of Kay *Ķosrow* would have remained unknown and unguessed, if not for the discovery and decipherment of the 2 Ke codex.

### The Place of Iranian Epic in Manichaeism

In order to determine more precisely the age of the 2 Ke account of the occultation of Kay *Ķosrow*, we must assess the likelihood that Mani himself retold this story, or whether it constitutes a secondary, apocryphal addition to Mani's teachings. The kephalaia purport to be oral teachings of Mani written down after his death. Obviously, such a scenario presented great opportunity for scholastic redaction and expansion of Mani's actual instruction. Did Mani actually know and relate any Iranian myth or legend beyond the figure of Zarathuštira, or did his Iranian disciples introduce such materials into the Manichaean literary repertoire? The only evidence that has been available to address this question comes from central Asia, among the texts from Turfan. Since they represent medieval Iranian Manichaean literature, however, we face particular difficulty in deciding how much they may have been transformed by translation and transmission, including the possible addition of elements from the Iranian epic tradition.

Leaving aside references to Gayōmart as belonging to cosmogonic myth, and to Vištāspa<sup>52</sup> as belonging to the Zarathuštira legend, we have references in Iranian Manichaean literature discovered in Turfan to Yima,<sup>53</sup> Frēdōn (Thraētaona),<sup>54</sup> Sām and Narīmān, and Rostam.<sup>55</sup> A scene from Iranian epic also appears to be the subject of a fragmentary painted textile from Turfan,<sup>56</sup>

52 Vištāspa is mentioned in both 1 Ke and 2 Ke (as Hystaspēs), and appears in the Parthian fragment M 4990 (published under the designation T II D 58 in Henning 1943: 73–74) with such familiar companions as Wahman, Zarēr, and queen Hudōs. Jāmāspa is mentioned as enemy of Zarathuštira and corrupter of his teachings in the Sogdian fragment 18248 (published under the designation TM 393 in Henning 1944: 137–142), perhaps due to his legendary role in writing down Zarathuštira's teachings (see Bailey 1943: 149 ff.).

53 M692 (Sogdian, edited by Henning 1943: 74). Skjaervø 1995(b) demonstrates a set of correlations between Yima and the Manichaean *Rex Honoris*.

54 M4b (Middle Persian, edited by Müller 1904: 55–59, and by Salemann 1908: 6–7) and M781 (Middle Persian, edited by Henning 1947: 40).

55 Or. 8212/81 (Sogdian, frag. 13, Sims-Williams 1976: 54–61). Although this fragment has no overt religious element, Sims-Williams identifies its scribal hand with that of frag. 4, for which he makes an argument for Manichaean provenance.

56 MİK III 6279 (entry 77 in Gulácsy 2001). Its Manichaean provenance is established by an accompanying text in Manichaean script.

depicting two warriors fighting a demon from behind a fortification. All of these manuscripts are medieval, dating roughly to the ninth or tenth century C.E., and their dates of composition remain almost entirely a matter of speculation. The only way in which we might place any of these references in the time of Mani would be if we could identify them as passages from Mani's own compositions.

Mani is known to have composed only one work in Middle Persian, the *Šābuhragān*, a kind of catechism for the Sasanian emperor Shapur I, in which Mani surveyed key elements of his teaching, and did so with conscious synthesis of Semitic and Iranian religious themes and concepts. Unfortunately, almost nothing survives from this text between a cosmological opening and an eschatological closing. So, while it does display significant engagement with Mazdayasnian religious ideas, the preserved portions do not address the heroic period of legendary history where we would hope to find parallels to Iranian epic.

Since Mani apparently composed the rest of his works in Aramaic, the surviving Iranian fragments of these texts represent translations that may have handled the original somewhat freely, and therefore may have introduced names from Iranian epic at a later date as part of the translation process. For the most part, that has seemed to be what we are dealing with, for example in Mani's book of legendary world history, called the *Book of Giants*. W.B. Henning assembled the bulk of the surviving fragments of this work in 1943, and it has been the subject of a book length study by John C. Reeves in 1992, and a thorough article by Prods Oktor Skjaervø in 1995.<sup>57</sup> All three scholars concur that the work is based primarily on Semitic biblical and para-biblical materials; and that in its Middle Persian, Parthian, and Sogdian translations the primary engagement with Iranian legend involves the substitution of familiar heroic names for the originally Semitic names of the figures in Mani's narrative.<sup>58</sup> In some cases these substitutions appear to be informed by parallels in the character and deeds of the heroes; in other cases the Iranian names bear a superficial

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57 Henning 1943; Reeves 1992; Skjaervø 1995(b).

58 Henning asserted that Mani 'did not make any use of the Iranian mythological tradition' (1943: 52). Earlier he had been just as sure that Mani had combined his Semitic mythological sources with Iranian epic material (Henning 1936: 3–4). His change of thinking came from observing that the use of Iranian heroic names in Manichaean myth was often a matter of simply substituting appropriate Iranian figures for Mani's original characters derived from Semitic legend, such as the Enoch literature. Even if such 'cultural translation' was initiated already by Mani as part of his missionary operation, it did not necessarily go beyond a rather superficial onomastic adaptation to any significant engagement with narrative elements or fully developed legendary figures within the Iranian material.

resemblance to the Semitic forms, or are etymological matches. These prior researchers allow that some slight character elements might be carried over with the identifications, but that this does not amount to much.<sup>59</sup> The main point of ambiguity in the analysis involves how early these translations were made, and whether they dated back to Mani's own lifetime.

Skjaervø quite rightly points to Mani's own initiative not only in having his works translated for missionary purposes, but for supporting what we might call 'cultural translation' that involved substituting names, terms, and concepts from local traditions for his original ones in a way that accommodated other religions and cultures. With this setting in mind, Skjaervø concludes:<sup>60</sup>

There can be little doubt that the Iranian (oral) epic traditions were used by the Manichaean missionaries to render Mani's teachings more accessible to the Iranian audiences. This is completely in line with Mani's policy ... At what exact time the Iranian elements entered the Manichaean prophethology and the *Book of Giants* is impossible to determine. There is no evidence, however, that Mani depended upon the Iranian tradition when he first composed the book. Instead—like most of the allegedly Iranian elements in Manicheism—they can be explained as secondary Iranization ... What is significant from the point of view of Iranian literature is that the Manichaean literature provides independent evidence for the Iranian epic tradition in the early Sasanian period and is therefore of crucial importance for understanding how it developed.

One notes that, after expressing doubt whether Mani drew upon epic Iranian tradition in his original compositions, Skjaervø confidently assigns engagement with such material to the early Sasanian period. In fact, in referring to 'secondary Iranization', Skjaervø apparently means a development occurring in Mani's own thought and lifetime, as he gained substantial contact with Iranian culture. This of course presupposes that (1) the translations of Mani's works occurred already in his lifetime, and (2) that the medieval manuscripts that we now have reflect unchanged those third-century translations. There is good reason to accept the first assumption, just as there is good reason to question the

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59 Henning remarks (1943: 55) that in their journey across central Asia 'the stories of the *Book of Giants* were influenced by local traditions. Thus, the translation of Ohya as Sām had in its train the introduction of myths appertaining to that Iranian hero; this explains the 'immortality' of Sā(h)m according to text I; the country of Aryān-Vēžan equalling Airyana Vaējah in text G (26) is a similar innovation.'

60 Skjaervø 1995(b): 220–221.

second. Remarks made in surviving fragments of Manichaean church history, collected by Werner Sundermann, show Mani deliberately organizing missionary activity in the Parthian north, just as in the Greek west, with translation and circulation of his texts as one of its primary methods.<sup>61</sup> W.B. Henning published already in 1943 a Sogdian kephalaion fragment in which Mani himself is portrayed identifying heroic figures from the *Book of Giants* with equivalent figures from Iranian legend.<sup>62</sup> In fact, in a passage from the Berlin codex, Mani intriguingly refers to the *Book of Giants* as the 'book written for the Parthians' (1 Ke 5, 25). Yet, when we look at the surviving fragments of the products of the mission to Iranian populations, such as the *Book of Giants*, some retain Semitic names for the characters, some mix Semitic and Iranian names, and some have exclusively Iranian names. This fact in itself undercuts much of our certainty that we know what first generation translations of Mani's works looked like, and how much or little they engaged Iranian epic.

New evidence regarding the *Book of Giants* has come to light, however, since Reeves and Skjaervø offered their assessments. Enrico Morano, in his contribution to the *Festschrift* for Nicholas Sims-Williams, has published a text which begins to change the previous picture, and seems to show engagement with Iranian epic in Mani's original composition.<sup>63</sup> The Sogdian homily preserved on M813.1 quotes Manichaean sacred scripture in the form of Parthian language passages from the *Book of Giants*, identifiable as such by a passage referring to the figure Ohya, well-known as a featured character of that book, a 'giant' who battles the great dragon Leviathan. Because of this dual-language format, the reader can distinguish clearly the words of Mani's own text (quoted in Parthian) from the comments of the homilist (in Sogdian). The passage being quoted from Mani's text is a kind of summative critique of heroic legend itself, in which Mani points out that worldly virtues did not save heroes of the past from mortality. Ohya is mentioned alongside of his brother Narīmān as examples of those who should be immortal if 'nobility and manliness' could provide such an outcome.<sup>64</sup> We note the mixture of Semitic Ohya with Iranian Narīmān

61 E.g. M2; and cf. M5815, which refers to missionary operations in Merv, involving making copies of the *Kawan* and *Ardhang* and Ammō taking copies of them with him to Zamb on the Oxus.

62 14638, published as T ii s 20 in Henning 1943: 69–70. Ohya is identified with Sāhm-kwāy, Ahya with Pāt-Sāhm.

63 Morano 2009.

64 This passage seems very closely related to a Sogdian text, M500, published by Henning (1942(a), text 1): '... manliness, in powerful tyranny, shall not die. Sāhm kwy and his brother will (would?) live eternally. For in the whole world in power and strength, and in ...

in the names of these two figures. Mani's Aramaic original probably had Ohya and Ahya, both Semitic names. The names Sām and Narīmān regularly replace these in fragments of the Sogdian version of the *Book of Giants*,<sup>65</sup> and it is somewhat strange that in the Parthian version quoted here Narīmān appears with Ohya. Ohya and Ahya (or Sām and Narīmān) are said to die at some beloved's feet; presumably this comes from the underlying Semitic legendary source.<sup>66</sup> So far we seem to be on familiar ground, with nothing more than a name substitution (Narīmān for Ahya) when Mani's composition was rendered into Parthian.

The real breakthrough comes with the second part of the passage quoted from the Parthian version of the *Book of Giants* in Morano's edition of the text, which mentions the failure of Siyāwaxš's beauty to save him from mortality: 'And if they had lived in beauty, then king Šiyāwaš (*šyy'wš*) would not have died, in whose beauty ...'. With the theme of this figure's beauty, we encounter a fully and exclusively Iranian legendary element. Tabarī writes: 'A uniquely beautiful and perfectly formed son was born ... named Seyāvash'.<sup>67</sup> Ferdowsi, as one would expect, is more effusive: 'A glorious infant hath appeared ... a babe of fairy form ... in visage like an idol of Azar, with face and hair unheard of heretofore' (2, 4.3). His beauty leads to disaster, since his father's wife falls in love with him. The inclusion of this passage in Mani's *Book of Giants* indicates that the latter work did, in fact, take up Iranian legend into its narrative. The only way to refuse that conclusion would require us to accept wholesale rewriting of Mani's original in the translation process, involving not just name and term substitutions, but actual additions of whole passages. Could Mani himself have issued a 'Parthian edition' of his work, adding new material from

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[they have no equal]'. This fragment lacked sufficient context to alert Henning to the conditionality of the first two clauses, as now proven by M813.

- 65 Sām is mentioned in *Bundahišn* 29, 7–9; he is son of Narīmān in Tha'ālibī and Ferdowsi. He was identified with Keresāspa by Bīrūnī. In *Dēnkard* 9, 15, Zarathuštra discovers Keresāspa's soul suffering for offense against Ahura Mazda's fire; but he is extolled for all the evil beings he has slayed, the serpent Srobar and the fiend Gandarep (Gandarewa, a water demon). He asks for admittance to paradise; he will combat Azi Dahak at the end.
- 66 Morano points to the allusion to both Leviathan and Ohya dying in the Parthian text M35 (Henning 1943, text N, where Ohya is apparently slain in turn by the angel Raphael after having slain Leviathan). In *Bundahišn* 29, 8, Sām is killed in his sleep by an arrow shot by the Turanian Nāin. The death of Sām is omitted from the *Šāh-nāma*.
- 67 Goeje 1879–1901: 598. His father's bride Sudāba is attracted to him, but he rebuffs her. As a consequence of her enmity, he is sent to war against Afrāsiāb, but instead marries the latter's daughter. His virtues attract jealousy, and Afrāsiāb agrees to a conspiracy to kill him. His wife posthumously gives birth to Kay Kōsrow (599–600). This theme of his beauty is not explicit in Mazdayasnian literature.

Iranian epic? Given Manichaean church attitudes towards the authority of Mani and the conservative preservation of his texts, I think such changes after Mani's death would be unlikely.

One might still object that we are dealing with a ninth-century Sogdian text, quoting a Parthian version of unknown date of Mani's original composition. It cannot be ruled out with complete certainty that additional material from Iranian epic was introduced somewhere along this chain of transmission and translation. What we have lacked until now is a Manichaean text that (1) comes from outside of the sphere of Iranian 'cultural translation' where later legendary additions were possible, and / or (2) can be securely dated in its present form to a substantially earlier date than our other sources for Iranian epic. The 2 Ke text now supplies that missing piece of evidence, and while it cannot lay claim to represent an actual literary composition of Mani, it does reflect active use and interpretation of Iranian epic within the first Manichaean century. Hence it can be relied upon to tell us something of the state of some of the constituent part of epic tradition in the early Sasanian period.

In light of this new evidence, we must reconsider Mary Boyce's estimate that the Parthian Kayanid cycle intersected with an originally separate Persian mythic tradition only in the later Sasanian period. Boyce's calculation made sense in light of the sudden appearance of Kayanid names and title among the Sasanian shahs in the sixth century C.E. Mani's familiarity with this material in itself does not contradict such a scenario, given his own Parthian ethnic background. But 2 Ke shows key characters from the Kayanid world already identified with Persia, rather than some more remote and mythical Iranian homeland, and already firmly associates them with a historical-legendary chronology leading to Vištāspa and Zarathuštra in the passage immediately following the tale of Chasro the blessed. This solidification of Iranian epic, therefore, dates to at least the beginning of the Sasanian period, and may be related to the Persian-Parthian partnership that the Sasanians effected in crafting the new Iranian polity.

Mani sought to craft a new polity of his own, a *religious* polity that similarly drew together formerly separate identities. Mani's overall hermeneutical program involved, in the case of both doctrine and ritual, a deliberate comparative engagement of multiple traditions, each of which he regarded as relatively informative about perennial truths revealed throughout history by God's prophets. This openness operated at two levels for Mani. At the core of his own teaching stood the conviction that when traditions of various origin were compared, their common core truths could be recognized and extracted from their different culture-specific corruptions. At a more peripheral level, Mani found it useful to employ popular parables and tales to make points germane to



the Manichaean message, even if deriving such a message from them required prodigious creativity. It is from such peripheral use that the Manichaeans became prime transmitters of Indian material from the *Pancatantra* (known in Persian as *Kalila wa Demna*) and the legendary narrative of the Buddha that became in the west the tale of *Barlaam and Ioasaph*. Manichaeans made similar use of Iranian popular narrative; but did Mani himself look to such material as part of the history of revelation? Was the *Book of Giants*, as an integral part of his program of religious systematization, Mani's attempt to reconstruct a 'true' heroic history synthesizing the distorted legendary memories of distinct cultures? If so, Mani himself may have played a crucial role in synthesizing Iranian epic by combining existing Parthian and Persian traditions into a fresh synthesis that in turn influenced subsequent retellings and performances of this material. Moreover, his broader interest in finding correspondences between Iranian and Semitic traditions may have first introduced the identifications of Biblical heroes with figures from Iranian myth that became a staple of later Islamic prophetology.

Much more textual evidence will be required to advance either of these possibilities beyond the realm of pure speculation. All that stands with certainty from the new evidence from the 2 Ke codex is that the historical study of Iranian epic has turned a fresh corner, and from here prior conclusions will need to be reassessed, while a whole new set of inquiries will be possible as this narrative is incorporated into thematic, developmental, and comparative study of west Asian myth and legend.

## Mani's Last Days

*Iain Gardner*

The final trials, suffering and death of Mani came to form the central historical event for the community, memorialised at the major annual occasion of the *Bēma* festival. However, before the recovery of primary Manichaean texts in the first half of the twentieth century, western scholarship was reliant on the highly distorted polemical accounts of those opposed to the religion who sought to caricature Mani and ridicule his mission. The most influential (anti-)biography was that contained in the *Acts of Archelaus* ascribed to a certain Hegemonius, a work dating to ca. 340 C.E., and which heavily influenced almost all subsequent Christian accounts of the events (and by extension the development of early modern European scholarship on the topic). The basic elements of the story as regards Mani's 'Last Days' can be summarised as follows:<sup>1</sup>

Setting of the scene: Mani was in prison because he had failed to cure Shapur's son (n.b.) of a fatal illness. From there he sent out disciples to proclaim his 'fictions and errors'; but, when the king of Persia learnt about this, he prepared to punish him. However, Mani was warned of the king's intentions in a dream and made his escape from prison by bribing the guards.

Narrative of the *Acta*: He went to the castle of Arabion from where he sent via a certain Turbo a letter to Marcellus indicating his intention of visiting Karchar / Kaschar (?); i.e. the scene of the subsequent dispute with Archelaus who was bishop there. This place is said to be five days' journey away. Mani arrives and the dispute takes place, this being the basic core of *The Acts of Archelaus* and an opportunity to refute Mani's teachings at length. There is also a second 'duplicate' narrative of debate and defeat for Mani set at a nearby village named Diodoris. (Meanwhile, the keeper of the prison is punished and the king gives orders to seek and apprehend Mani).

Epilogue: Mani again takes flight after losing the dispute with bishop Archelaus and earning the wrath of the local population. He returns to the castle of Arabion. There he is apprehended and brought before the king, who is inflamed with anger and desires to avenge two deaths on Mani (those of his own son and

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1 This is a simply a synthetic summary of what I regard to be the most relevant elements of the tradition for the present purposes.

of the keeper of the prison). So, the king gave orders that Mani be flayed and hung before the gate of the city, his skin be dipped in certain medicaments and inflated, and his flesh given to the birds.

If we disregard the obvious polemical features of this cycle,<sup>2</sup> we can extract a number of core elements to the story. For reasons which will become apparent I prefer to rearrange the order of events, so that the narrative section precedes those concerned with Mani's imprisonment and death. Thus:

- A. Mani travels at some distance away from the Persian king, noting that the 'castle of Arabion' was intended as a sanctuary for him and that Karchar (variously named in the manuscript tradition, see further below) is said to have been across the border in Roman territory.
- B. Mani's failure to heal the king's relative, who subsequently dies, is one apparent cause of his imprisonment.
- C. The nature of the teachings, and the promulgation of such by Mani and his disciples, are another cause.
- D. His interaction with the prison guard/s (perhaps only a stock motif).<sup>3</sup>
- E. Details of his flaying and the public exhibition and disposal of his body.

These then are the core elements in the widespread tradition deriving from the *Acts of Archelaus*. The account, especially the details of Mani's supposed travels, is generally supposed to be fictitious; but I have deliberately given this 'stripped-down' version since it will provide a better opportunity to evaluate what may or may not be authentic in it.

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2 I have removed details of the actual debate with Archelaus in Karchar, and the subsequent one in the village of Diodoris, although public disputations were an authentic feature of Manichaean missionary practice, including that of the apostle himself. It should be noted carefully that Mani's defence before the king (his 'apologia'), prior to his imprisonment and death, had similar aspects. It is of interest to compare details of the (much more lengthy) questioning and arguments raised by Archelaus with reports of Mani's trial preserved in both Muslim and authentic Manichaean sources. Nevertheless, it may well be that the setting here was a kind of fictional landscape, and an intrusion into the 'biographical' narrative (even if the latter is actually only a frame for the debate and refutation, the real core of the *Acts*).

3 Thus *Acts of Archelaus* 65, 7, tr. M. Vermes 2001: 147 and see n. 327. However, Mani's interaction with his guard was an authentic feature of the community's own tradition, for it features in one of the better-preserved sections of the 'Last Days' cycle preserved in the *Acts* codex (see already Schmidt and Polotsky 1933: 27) and probably also in 2 Ke (the 'guard' is directly mentioned in a poorly-preserved passage at 464, 3). Thus there could be a kernel of truth to a tradition that the *Acts of Archelaus* certainly used with negative purpose.

A second, more diverse, stream of tradition survived in the Islamic world. Muslim historians were often more balanced in their treatment of material, and concerned to credit their sources; although of course their accounts were also subject on occasion to distortion, embellishment and some factual error. Nevertheless, and for example, the Sasanian king under whom Mani was imprisoned and died was generally (though not always) and correctly identified as Bahram I. We can say that they did not create an overarching 'alternative' history in the manner of the *Acta*, and a number of the better sources certainly retain authentic details especially about Mani's trial and the accusations made against him. There was a greater awareness of the realities of the context, such as the structure of the Sasanian court and the role of the king's advisors and even that of the Mazdayasnian priesthood. A good example is the account by Tha'ālibī<sup>4</sup> which purports to quote the questioning of Mani before King Bahram and an assembly of *mōbeds*. The *Acta* is notably unconcerned or uninformed about such things. In the latter Mani's humiliation is at the hands of a Christian bishop, and he is forced to flee before the righteous fury of the good people of Karchar; any authentic Iranian context or Mazdayasnian critique has been entirely suppressed in favour of a Roman and Christian setting.

We are fortunate that all the principal texts from the Islamic period that were written by those external to the Manichaean community, both the Christian and Muslim, and also a few Mazdayasnian, Jewish and Mandaean accounts, have recently been collected together by John Reeves;<sup>5</sup> though there is still no truly systematic study of the development of these various traditions and their relationship to each other. I will refer further in what follows, as relevant, to specific details preserved by some of the more knowledgeable historians and encyclopaedists of the early Islamic period.

Modern western scholarship on the subject began to free itself from the dominant influence of the *Acts of Archelaus* firstly through a more critical attitude to historical and textual studies, and then by increased access to the traditions preserved in sources beyond the standard Greek and Latin curriculum

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4 Quoted in Reeves 2011: 41–42. Of course, Tha'ālibī is by no means the only source with such detailed information; one must survey all the testimonia collected by Reeves in his section 'Authentic Biographical Trajectories' (pp. 29–48), and compare them with the following section 'The *Acta Archelai* and its Satellites' (pp. 48–63).

5 Reeves 2011. See also the review by Gardner 2013(a). Throughout this chapter the relevant Christian and Muslim sources are generally quoted or paraphrased from Reeves for convenience. The translation of the *Acts of Archelaus* by Vermes 2001 should be consulted for a complete version of that work (which is not found as such in Reeves). I have also accessed various other editions and translations of the primary sources as required.

(such as those in Syriac, Arabic and Persian). But it was through the decades of the first half of the twentieth century, with the recovery of primary Manichaean sources from Central Asia and from Egypt, that the understanding of Mani's last days was transformed. The single most important text was certainly 'The Section of the Narrative about the Crucifixion', first published by H.J. Polotsky in his 1934 edition of the *Homilies* codex from Medinet Madi.<sup>6</sup> It was the 'cross-fertilisation' of information from this extensive new source in Coptic with details read in the fragments in Middle Iranian languages that led to a number of ground-breaking studies; and the result was a new and apparently firmly-grounded historical sequence of events that has become broadly accepted by all. The cycle includes the following elements (it is important to gain a sense of the structure):

- A. The favour shown to Mani by King Hormizd I (note that the 'Last Days' cycle begins here after the death of Shapur I).
- B. Mani's final journeys as his enemies begin to gather against him.
- C. His relationship with the 'vassal-king' Baat.
- D. His entry into Bēlapat (i.e. Bēt Lapaṭ / Gondēšāpūr).
- E. The accusations made against him by Kartīr the chief *mōbed* and other leading persons at court.
- F. The enmity of the king, Mani's interview with Bahram I and apologia.
- G. Details of the charges, the shackling and imprisonment.
- H. Mani's farewell speeches to members of his community.
- I. The giving of his final writing (the 'Seal Letter') and other insignia such as his robe.
- J. Mani's death, the dispersal of his body and the journey of his soul.
- K. Comparison to the crucifixion of Jesus and other righteous apostles.

A series of classic and foundational studies were written approximately in a single generation from the 1930s to the 1960s,<sup>7</sup> and what is striking is how little the topic has advanced over the last fifty years at a conceptual level.<sup>8</sup>

6 Hom 42, 9–85, 34 ed. Polotsky 1934. Also of substantial importance was the publication of the *Bēma* psalms in another of the codices, i.e. 2 Ps ed. Allberry 1938. These provided evidence for the role of the passion narrative in the ritual life of the community, which itself could now begin to be reconstructed with the further recovery of fragments of prayer-books and suchlike from Central Asia.

7 For example, Henning 1942(b): 941–953; Taqizadeh 1957: 106–121; Klīma 1958; Hinz 1971.

8 However, I must reference the conference paper given by W.-P. Funk at the Manichaean Studies Seminar of the SBL Annual Meeting 2002 in Toronto; but never published. Funk

Certainly there has been the continuing publication of fragments in Iranian languages, and a number of important and very technical studies especially by Sundermann.<sup>9</sup> However, our broad understanding of the architecture of Mani's last days remains much as it was established in the mid-twentieth century. A primary reason for this may be the dominant influence in Manichaean studies of the 'Cologne' *Mani-Codex* (in Greek) which was first deciphered in 1969; to which should be added the stalling of any new work on the other Medinet Madi codices (in Coptic) due to a whole series of unfortunate events, despite the fact that two other versions of the 'Last Days' cycle were preserved in the Chester Beatty *Kephalaia* (hereafter 2 Ke) and *Acts* codices. Due to the vagaries of its preservation, the most coherent part of the *Mani-Codex* concerned Mani's youth and upbringing among the 'baptists', and this astonishing new material caused much scholarly attention to turn away from the apostle's death to his youth and the formative influences upon his development.

Although it is something of an over-generalisation, we might say that a whole generation of scholars of Manichaeism have accepted a particular understanding of events, have acquiesced in a consensus of interpretation, and failed to give enough critical thought to the many problems that remain concerning Mani's 'Last Days' and which are evident enough in the standard rendition of the cycle. Just to give two examples: the role of Baat and Mani's relationship to him is totally unclear;<sup>10</sup> the comparative topography and timing of Mani's final journeys in the *Acts of Archelaus* and in Manichaean community sources remains unresolved.<sup>11</sup> The present author is as guilty of this failure as any other, and my point here is purely to draw our notice to what I regard as a remarkable fact and an example of the problems with scholarly fashion (perhaps a constructive example from the cultural history of Manichaeology?).

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attempted to detail the correspondences across the three Medinet Madi codices that contain 'Last Days' cycles. I have a copy of the synoptic table that he presented, (generously provided to me), and it does provide a kind of exemplar for what I would like to achieve.

- 9 In particular, the landmark edition of texts by Sundermann 1981; to be supplemented by his sequence of studies on church history, Sundermann 1986–1987. There have also been important publications by scholars such as N. Sims-Williams, referenced elsewhere in this chapter.
- 10 The article by Klíma 1958 was a valuable if speculative attempt to deal with the sources available at that time, but this chapter will show that it can not be regarded as a satisfactory resolution to the many evident difficulties.
- 11 It should be noted that BeDuhn and Mirecki 2007 made a partial but helpful attempt to reconcile the traditions in their introduction to a collection of essays on the *Acta*.

## Summary of Known Versions of the ‘Last Days’ Cycle from the Manichaean Community

### *The Section of the Narrative about the Crucifixion*

This text from the Coptic *Homilies* (hereafter Hom) is the single most important published source for the cycle, and will be given close and repeated attention throughout this study of the ‘new’ 2 Ke version. It will become apparent that, whilst the two codices can not be said to have contained copies of the same work, the narratives do cover a number of the same episodes. Indeed, there are passages of such close verbal correspondence that some theory of textual interdependence will necessarily have to be developed. Further, the same basic framework to the story can be observed.

The title is given at both the start and conclusion of the text, though in slightly different forms:<sup>12</sup>

(42, 9–10) ⲡⲙⲉⲣⲟ[Ϣ] ⲛⲓⲧⲧⲉⲟⲩⲟ ⲉⲁ ⲧ[ϢⲧⲁⲩⲣⲱϢⲓϢ, ‘The Section of the Narrative about the [Crucifixion]’.

(85, 32–34) ⲁϢϢⲱⲕ ⲛϢⲓ ⲡⲙⲉ[ⲣⲟϢ] ⲉⲁ ⲧⲉⲧⲁⲩⲣⲱϢⲓϢ ⲛⲓⲡⲡⲟϢⲧⲟ[ⲗⲟϢ ⲛⲓⲙⲛⲉ], ‘It is finished, namely The Section about the Crucifixion of [the] Enlightener, the [True] Apostle’.

One might speculate about what weight to give to the term μέρος / μέρος (‘section’, ‘part’) here: Does it refer to this codex (which is made up of separate literary works), or to a larger other whole from which this narrative has been drawn? Further, what exactly is the import of the Coptic term τεοιο (a ‘proclamation’, ‘preaching’, ‘recital’, ‘report’): Does it indicate some literary or ritual context?

The Coptic text was first published by H.J. Polotsky in 1934<sup>13</sup> (with German translation), which occasioned a great deal of scholarly interest and advances in the study of the ‘Last Days’ cycle as we have seen. S. Giversen published a facsimile edition in 1986,<sup>14</sup> which enables easy reference to photographs of the codex. N.A. Pedersen published a revised edition with a number of supplementary fragments, and English translation, in 2006.<sup>15</sup> In general, I have

12 The text was also provided with a running header of similar wording, but now mostly destroyed. See the comments by Pedersen 2006: x and n. 19.

13 Hom, ed. Polotsky 1934.

14 Giversen (vol. II) 1986.

15 Hom, ed. Pedersen 2006.

used the Coptic text from Pedersen with my own translations. In a few instances of particular importance I have provided revised readings of the Coptic text, checked against the facsimile and (if of vital interest) the original manuscript in Dublin.

W.B. Henning asserted that Jibrā'īl b. Nūḥ had quoted from 'The Section of the Narrative about the Crucifixion', this based on Bīrūnī's naming of the little-known figure as the source of his information about Mani's death.<sup>16</sup> W. Sundermann 'modified' this claim, noting that Jibrā'īl would more likely have accessed the material from an Aramaic or Iranian source.<sup>17</sup> In any case, the important point is that this author, probably a ninth-century Nestorian, knew 'that a certain disciple of Mānī had a book which informed about his fate'.<sup>18</sup> This is a valuable witness to the 'Last Days' cycle as a distinct literary production; though the precise relationship of this 'book' to our various extant versions of the cycle remains, of course, unknown. We can quote<sup>19</sup> the information derived as a paraphrase or summary of this primary source as known to Jibrā'īl:

(It said) that (Mani) was imprisoned because of a relative of the king who was convinced that he was possessed by a demon. He promised to cure him, but when he could not do it, both his feet and hands were placed in chains until he died in prison. His head was set up at the entrance of the pavilion, and his corpse was flung into the street in order for it to be a warning and lesson ...

### *The Acts Codex and the Greek Mani-Codex*

It has already been noted that scholarly attention in Manichaean studies shifted from Mani's death to his youth and background consequent to the identification of the Greek *Mani-Codex* in 1969, and its ensuing publication through the 1970s and beyond.<sup>20</sup> It so happens that the best preserved portions of this fascinating work are at the start, and that the account of Mani's adult life and public mission (which follows his upbringing amongst the 'baptists') coincides with rapid deterioration in the textual remains. No information at all is

16 Thus Henning 1942(b): 941 (also elsewhere), cf. ed. Sachau 1879: 208. Jibrā'īl's original work on the matter is lost, and so modern scholars are entirely reliant here on Bīrūnī's testimony.

17 Thus Sundermann 1986(d): 260–261; see also his cross-references in n. 48.

18 Testimony of Jibrā'īl quoted from Bīrūnī according to Reeves 2011: 42–43.

19 Translation from Reeves 2011: 43.

20 For an authoritative description of the publication history and contents (with bibliography), see Sundermann 2011.



preserved concerning Mani's final journeys or death, and indeed it is impossible to know what exactly the manuscript contained in its latter portions.

However, the characteristic format of the historiographic / hagiographic material in the *Mani-Codex* does resemble what is known of the *Acts* codex (Berlin P. 15997) said to have been recovered from Medinet Madi; i.e. that 'library' of Coptic codices from which 2 Ke and Hom also derive. In particular, both the *Acts* and the *Mani-Codex* are broken up into sections, each of which is headed by the name of the witness who transmitted the testimony to follow. These witnesses (a number of whom are known from other sources) appear to have belonged to Mani's immediate circle and the first generation of the church. There is thus the possibility that the Greek *Mani-Codex* and the Coptic *Acts* codex represent two versions of an early source for the life of Mani. Unfortunately, the latter manuscript has never been published,<sup>21</sup> and one is reliant largely on the description made in the first announcement of the remarkable discovery from 1933.<sup>22</sup> W.-P. Funk has been coordinating a project to edit the remains of the codex, and in 1993 he circulated to a small number of interested scholars provisional transcripts of some of the pages made at various times by Polotsky, S. Patterson and himself.<sup>23</sup> What is apparent is that the codex contained a third version of the 'Last Days' cycle found in the Medinet Madi 'library', including some of the same episodes represented in the 2 Ke and Hom versions.

These transcripts are marked 'No Publication', and it is clear that the work was at an early stage at the time they were circulated. Informal communication with Funk in 2011 confirms that little progress has been made since then. Consequently, there seems no option but to leave this important source aside.

### *Fragments of the Cycle in Middle Iranian Texts*

A systematic, detailed, scholarly and yet accessible compendium of all the fragments is desperately needed. There are, of course, the very learned and important studies by W. Sundermann;<sup>24</sup> but these are dense and difficult to use for anyone without training and expertise in the field (and access at hand to a fine library in order to follow the many cross-references). Editions of many

21 With the exception of a single leaf, the only one preserved in the Chester Beatty library in Dublin (the remainder is in Berlin), edited by Pedersen 1997. Unfortunately, for our purposes here, this particular leaf is not relevant to the 'Last Days' cycle.

22 Schmidt and Polotsky 1933: 26–29. For further relevant discussion of the literary genre see Sundermann 1986(c): 88–91.

23 Funk 1993.

24 Sundermann 1981; 1986–1987.

of the texts are more easily accessed in M. Boyce's well-known 'reader';<sup>25</sup> but this valuable collection has the disadvantage of being without translation. Consequently, anglophone scholars without training in Middle Iranian languages usually turn for a straightforward rendition of the texts to the collections of eastern Manichaean literature made by H.-J. Klimkeit,<sup>26</sup> J.P. Asmussen<sup>27</sup> or (on-line) P.O. Skjaervø.<sup>28</sup> Whilst all these authors are renowned specialists, none of the collections were conceived with the intention to provide the translated texts with critical apparatus or detailed commentary. Finally, some readers may have easy access to the study by L.J.R. Ort,<sup>29</sup> where the presentation and discussion of some of the relevant texts is in certain respects attractively conceived; but the monograph has, rightly, been heavily criticised.<sup>30</sup> Its use is problematic for the unwary reader as it is misleading in many important details, and it has an unfortunate reputation.

In what follows I have no intention to remedy this problematic state of affairs, but merely to summarise (and not exhaustively) the more important fragments. A knowledge of the basic structure of the 'Last Days' cycle gained from the more coherent and continuous versions preserved in Coptic enables us to place these remains in an appropriate order. The texts themselves can be (mostly) read in parallel to my comments in Skjaervø.

- i. Fragments on King Hormizd (see Sundermann 1981: text(s) 22; Skjaervø 'On Ohrmezd the Brave'): A series of small and poorly preserved fragments in Parthian. Both 'The Section of the Narrative about the Crucifixion', and the version of the cycle in 2 Ke, begin their accounts of Mani's 'Last Days' after the death of Shapur I during the life-time of his successor, Hormizd I. The relevance of these fragments is to attempt to determine if they belong to the cycle, and indeed whether they might parallel the Coptic sources.<sup>31</sup>

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25 Boyce 1975.

26 Klimkeit 1993.

27 Asmussen 1975.

28 Skjaervø 2006 (see the sections starting 'On Ohrmezd the Brave', then 'Mani's last days'). The translations are referenced to the presentation of texts in Sundermann 1981, listed simply as 'BT II'.

29 Ort 1967.

30 See the review by Boyce 1968.

31 See here (and for the following pieces) the important discussion by Sundermann 1986(d): 253–259 + ff. where he considers parallels between the Coptic version preserved in the Hom codex and the various Parthian fragments. Of course, he was not able to consider the further evidence provided by the 2 Ke version.

- I discuss the matter briefly below (cf. ‘Episode One’), but conclude that the fragments are too poorly preserved to make a definitive decision.
- ii. M4579 (Sundermann 1981 text 4a.12), two fragments in Parthian that may refer to Mani’s sojourn in the city of Hormizd-Ardašir early in the reign of Bahram I;<sup>32</sup> Skjaervø begins his account of ‘Mani’s last days’ with these pieces. However, they bear no obvious relation to anything recounted in the extant Coptic versions of the cycle, other than the name of the city.
  - iii. M6031 and 6033 (Sundermann 1981 texts 4a.13 and 14), two fragments in Parthian from the one manuscript and first published by W.B. Henning in his ground-breaking study of Mani’s last journey.<sup>33</sup> The testimony recorded here appears to be ascribed to Patīg / Pattikios (*ptyg*). The text is taken to refer to Mani’s final journeys with Bat (*b’t*), his entrance to Bēlapat / Bēt̄ Lapaṭ and the scheming of Kartīr (*qyrdyr*).<sup>34</sup>
  - iv. M3 (Sundermann 1981 text 23), the most coherent and dramatic of all the Middle Iranian accounts commonly assigned to the ‘Last Days’ cycle. The text recounts Mani’s entrance into the presence of the king and the latter’s furious verbal attack upon him. The episode is generally placed in Bēlapat between Mani’s arrival in the city and his subsequent imprisonment; and thus is regarded as a duplicate or variant to the narrative of Mani’s interview by the king as recorded in Hom 45, 19ff.<sup>35</sup> The king, who is unnamed in the text, is consequently identified as Bahram I. However, for further discussion and an expression of caution about the consensus viewpoint see below (‘Excursus on M3’).
  - v. Apart from the text M3, there survive some other Middle Iranian fragments that may belong to the interview or ‘trial’ narrative before the king. As already noted, this episode received extensive treatment in the extant

32 On this, see the discussion of ‘Episode Two’ below. However, it appears that Sundermann contextualised the Parthian texts by reference to Hom 44, 11.14; it may be that they refer to another occasion in the same city.

33 Henning 1942(b): 942–949 (listed there as T ii D 163).

34 For the reading *qyrdyr* (against Sundermann’s suggested *qyrdyl*) see the strong argument of Skjaervø 2011, sect. ii.

35 The ‘interview’ (really a series of accusations and charges to which Mani is allowed some right of reply) extends over several pages in both the Hom and the 2 Ke versions. Apparent parallels to the M3 text include descriptions of the king’s anger (Hom 46, 11) and the oath he swears (45, 26). This crucial episode bears some of the literary characteristics of a public debate, and as such it is worthwhile to compare Mani before bishop Archelaus and the city judges according to the *Acts of Archelaus*. More direct records of Mani’s ‘trial’ were preserved in certain of the Arabic and Persian histories (as previously noted above, texts in Reeves 2011).

Coptic sources, from which one can track the ghosts of authentic details preserved in later non-Manichaean historians and opponents;<sup>36</sup> such as that Mani had 'led astray the world', separated the sexes or turned against the traditions of the Magi. But, amongst the remains of the community's own texts, one should pay especial attention to the start of M4525 (Sundermann 1981 text 4a.15), where the king addresses Mani; and the start of M4574 (Sundermann 1981 text 4a.19) where there is a further mention of the figure of Bat. From both texts we read details or themes that the Coptic sources record as accusations made by Bahram against Mani. Notably, both these fragments continue with traditions about Jesus, Pilate and the Jews. The evidence for explicit parallels made between the two 'trial sequences' (i.e. of Mani and Jesus) is widespread, but also points to the text M4570 (Sundermann 1981 text 4a.18) where reference to the 'parinirvana of our father' (i.e. Mani) leads immediately to an extended account of the crucifixion of Jesus. What is especially interesting about this latter piece is that, while no details of Mani's passion are preserved in what remains, the text has the title 'The Discourse on the Crucifixion (*d'rwbđgyftyg wyfr's*)'. Although this header is often taken loosely to refer to the death of Jesus<sup>37</sup>—the overt content of the piece as it stands—I strongly suspect that the true subject of the text is Mani (compare the Coptic title 'The ... Narrative about the Crucifixion'). Probably most (or all?) versions of the 'Last Days' cycle contained passages recounting the agony of Jesus and other apostles. Supposed 'gospel' accounts preserved amongst Manichaean literature must thus be carefully mined for references to Mani, presumably their primary referent.

- vi. Testimony about Mani's final days and hours in prison, meetings with his disciples, his death and ascent: The theme of Mani's ascent ('parinirvana' in a Buddhist cultural environment) was important in Manichaean literature and liturgy; obviously it acted as a promise and even prefigurement of the individual believer's hope. See further the following section on this genre. But there are preserved a number of fragments that appear to provide more specific historical information and refer to the witness of those disciples who were able to visit and share their master's final hours of imprisonment. In particular, the community shared testimony about Mani's final prayers and instructions, and there was obviously a concern

36 One must read carefully the sources such as Tha'ālībī, Bīrūnī and Ibn Ḥazm collected in Reeves 2011: 29–48; but see also the disputation with Archelaus.

37 Thus e.g. Klimkeit 1993: 72–73; but see Sundermann's comments 1986: 253–254.

both amongst believers and by the authorities about the disposal of his body and final effects. Traditions about the desecration of the body, its public exhibition and so on, were a core feature of the anti-Manichaean tradition; but they seem to have had historical basis.<sup>38</sup> Whilst the extensive monologues attributed to Mani (especially in the Coptic sources) may scarcely be credible as any kind of verbatim record, other features deserve careful attention. Particularly important was his giving of a final written testimony, the ‘Seal Letter’;<sup>39</sup> the supposed appointment of Sisinnios (*mry sysyn* / ΣΙΣΙΝΝΙΟΣ) as his successor; and the bestowal of certain personal items (and possibly the preservation of body parts) that presumably formed the basis of a relics cult. Amongst the witnesses named in the various Coptic and Middle Iranian sources there were female lay disciples who mourned and tended the body (this perhaps influenced by gospel accounts of the role of women in Jesus’ crucifixion and entombment); a central role played by Mar Ammo (*mry ’mw* / ἈΜΜΩΣ), named with Mani in the incipit to the ‘Seal Letter’; and the figure of Mar Uzzi (*’wzyy*) who appears to have been with him at the end. See especially: M454 in Middle Persian on Mani’s final speeches and the ‘Seal Letter’ (cf. Sundermann 1981 text 24.3), together with the other fragments from the same manuscript (i.e. Sundermann 1981 texts 24.1–4); M5569 Parthian on the death and ascent of Mani (Sundermann 1981 text 2.10).

### *Information from Manichaean Liturgical Texts*

Mani’s passion and death were central to the liturgical life of the Manichaean church, and specifically commemorated at the principal annual *Bēma* festival. A substantial amount of detailed and primary information can be derived from the extant sources, such as those *Bēma* psalms (in Coptic) that were published by C.R.C. Allberry in 1938.<sup>40</sup> Psalms nos. 225 and 226 (amongst others) are

38 2 Ps 17, 12–17 (a ‘fire test’ to ensure that Mani was dead?); 24, 2–3 and 44, 17–20 (Mani’s corpse thrown in the street and his head exhibited at the city gate, compare especially the testimony of Jibrā’īl b. Nūḥ cited in Bīrūnī [Reeves 2011: 43]).

39 This is named in 2 Ke 462, 6 / G326 (τεπιστολην ἡτοφραγισ, not previously read in any extant western Manichaean text). See further the ‘speculative addendum’ in Gardner 2013(c): 310–314.

40 2 Ps, ed. Allberry 1938: 1–47; (improved readings in Wurst 1996). Only the second part of the Coptic *Psalm-Book* from Medinet Madi was published, although a facsimile edition of the first part is available in Giversen (vol. III) 1988. A project to publish an edition (with German translation) of this first part is well advanced by S. Richter et al., and one

an important source for specific details of the 'Last Days' cycle, albeit in a non-narrative framework. There is also relevant material amongst the Middle Iranian and other eastern Manichaean texts, in particular as regards the date of Mani's death<sup>41</sup> and including hymns in commemoration of his ascension or entry into *parinirvana*. Notable here is the Parthian text M5.

### *Salmaios' Lament*

The fourth text in the Hom codex, as it is edited<sup>42</sup> (the size and contents of the original book remain uncertain), deserves more attention from scholars than it has so far received. The genre is difficult to categorise, but the work does appear to contain reminiscences by this important disciple of Mani (as well as by others such as Ammo and Patīg).<sup>43</sup> Of especial interest for our purposes here is the passage concerning Mani's final journey and arrest at the orders of Bahram I, in particular because it is placed in the first person: 'When *we* went in ...'<sup>44</sup>

### The 'Last Days' Cycle in the 2 Ke Codex

This discussion must be regarded as both provisional and partial. My purpose is to demonstrate what can be achieved by a careful study of this source, and to introduce some of the new information that may radically advance our understanding of the 'Last Days' cycle; indeed, some that may overturn commonly-accepted details of the narrative, although much remains open to debate. However, I will focus only on the episodes leading to Mani's entrance into Bēlapat.

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hopes that it will be achieved in the near future. Allberry opened his publication with the doxology to the first *Bēma* psalm (no. 218), and the section entitled ΒΗΜΑΤΙΚ- makes up the first substantial section of his edition.

- 41 On the question of the historicity of the dates of Mani's passion, and the possibility that they were stylised according to the ritual calendar, see Sundermann 1988.
- 42 Note that Pedersen's edition contains previously unpublished fragments ('1A-10B') that he has identified as belonging to the Hom codex. He argues that these may have been part of 'Salmaios' Lament'; cf. Pedersen 2006: xxii.
- 43 For Salmaios, e.g. see his position with other prominent disciples of Mani in 2 Ps 34, 9-14 (doxology to psalm 235), and the citing of his testimony about Mani amongst the baptists in *Mani-Codex* 5, 14 (note Hom 87, 13 + ff.). For Ammo and (probably) Patīg, see Hom 91, 11 ff.
- 44 Hom 93, 19 + ff.

The later and vital elements of the story, such as Mani's trial, his shackling and imprisonment, his final words and actions, meetings with disciples and their testimony, his ultimate death and what happened afterwards to his body and the community—all these were core to the passion narrative, but their detailing and analysis would take this chapter well beyond its allotted length. I think readers will find more than enough to consider in what follows. What I present here is really a draft of what might be termed 'Part 1' of the sort of extended study that this topic richly deserves.

The final kephalaion in the 2 Ke codex is  $\kappa 347$  which finishes on page 442 at line 6 (see further my chapter elsewhere in this volume on 'The Final Ten Chapters' for details of this and discussion). This is part-way through the twenty-eighth quire. It is evident that the version of the 'Last Days' cycle found here starts immediately afterwards, or rather that the scribe has left a blank space of approximately seven lines in length before beginning to write anew. There is no sign of any kind of heading. Consequently, in the text edition it will begin at 442, 14, and then continues through quires twenty-nine to thirty-one. Preservation is rather poor throughout; but, in particular, much of the latter part of quire thirty and virtually all of what must have been thirty-one are almost completely destroyed—until one reaches what appears to be the very final leaf of the codex. Here there are certainly found concluding comments followed by what looks to be some kind of a colophon, although we have not yet been able to read that (and perhaps it will prove simply to be impossible). In any case, despite some difficulties with the codicology for the final part, it is most economic to presume that the codex concluded at the end of quire thirty-one and thus on page 496. Among the readable comments on the final leaf we find:<sup>45</sup>

I have written these chapters ... the lessons and the interpretations that the apostle [uttered] from time <to time>, place to place (and) land to land ...

Thus, what we are dealing with is a section of text in the codex which has no chapter number or title, and cannot be termed a kephalaion (it lacks the traditional features of such); but which continued for approximately forty-eight

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45 2 Ke 495(?), 3–5. Some of this information has previously been made known by Funk 1997. That was a very valuable first attempt to discuss and even solve some of the most vital questions. However, our conclusions, being based now on more extensive study and better resources, differ from Funk's in certain important respects. Of especial note is that we believe that there must have been a thirty-first quire (at minimum), in order to account for those remnants of the codex now found in Berlin.

pages (442–490), or perhaps a little less,<sup>46</sup> before the concluding comments and the colophon. It should be noted that the running header for the codex (*The Chapters of the Wisdom of my Lord Manichaios*) continues throughout.

What can we say about the status of the text? Clearly it has been made a part of the whole production, i.e. it is not an entirely independent text copied in to the codex by the scribe (in the way that the Nag Hammadi codices or Hom contain separate works). If we treat the final comments on p. 495 ('I have written these chapters') as belonging to the original design of the *Kephalaia* by an 'author', then this text must be supposed a kind of epilogue or frame which was intended to balance the 'prologue' with which 1 Ke begins (to 9, 10 and then followed by K1). However, I remain most uncertain about this notion of authorial intent, and doubtful about any search for a supposed 'author' of the work. It seems so evident that the *Kephalaia* (at least as we see it in the two Medinet Madi codices) was an evolving work that I doubt whether it should really be termed a 'book' at all. For me it is a kind of genre, more akin to the *ḥadīth* of Islam; and thus these final comments are not to be treated as those of an author but rather as those of a redactor, quite probably one among many. In this case the framing sequences (prologue and epilogue) are not necessarily intrinsic parts of the work, and it seems that the version of the 'Last Days' cycle found here could just as well have been culled from some other source of the community's tradition. Can support for this hypothesis be drawn from the stylistic features of the text?

### The Style of the 2 Ke Version and Its Introduction

The 'Last Days' cycle in 2 Ke is rather poorly preserved throughout. On many pages there are just a few lines that can be read with any kind of certainty, and thus only a relatively small number of the better pages preserve proper continuity of narrative or argument from top to bottom. The latter part, most of quire thirty and almost all of thirty-one, is especially poor. This is not to say that the text is without value. Far from it, there are a great many things to be learnt. However, it does demand very careful study and comparison with the

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46 Funk 1997: 159 suggested approximately four pages for what he termed the 'Final Note of the author'. In our present reconstruction the concluding comments begin at least by page 491. However, given the extremely poor condition of these final leaves, where virtually nothing can be read from the greater part of quire thirty-one, we doubt whether any actual 'start' to this closing section can be identified.



other available versions of the cycle; and there are inevitably certain matters that can not be answered with certainty.

Given these limitations, I have found no evidence of any kind of title, nor any sub-headings that ascribe certain passages to such and such an authority (the style that is characteristic of both the *Mani-Codex* and the *Acts*). Rather, the text runs as a basically continuous narrative in chronological sequence, starting with the antecedents or intimations of the coming passion, and then presenting the events of Mani's last days (i.e. trial, imprisonment and death) in detail. Narrative elements are interrupted by sections of purported direct speech, such as preaching or prayers of Mani, or dialogues between him and the king, or scenes of plotting and offence amongst the courtiers and priests.

The exact relationship between this text and that of 'The Section of the Narrative about the Crucifixion' will need careful analysis, but we can note here at the start that the style in the Hom version of the cycle is by comparison less immediate. It is indeed a kind of homily on the basic text, where the author can utilise portions of received narrative and upon those build his own freer rendering with additional comment. For example, when Mani has finally died, the three female catechumens attend to his body:<sup>47</sup>

His mouth remained still. [O children of] righteousness, bless those women! [Give] them thanks and give them adoration. Speak ... because they closed the eyes of our father ...

The narrative is stopped (after: 'His mouth remained still') and what is added is authorial comment and exhortation to the audience, it is not part of the primary text. In comparison, although the version of the cycle in 2 Ke is less well-preserved, it gives the impression of being more direct. In the Hom version, not only does the authorial voice interrupt and add comment, on occasion he interposes himself in advance of the narrative and puts it into the third person. Compare the following:

Hom 50, 29: (Sisinnios will) become] leader (*archēgos*) after him ...

2 Ke 470, 15 / G212: (Sisinnios will) become leader (*archēgos*) in my church [after me ...]

If indeed the 2 Ke version can be shown to have priority, this immediately would make it of especial interest, exciting and worthy of the most exacting study. Of

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47 Hom 59, 21–24.

course, these comments are not intended to suggest that our 'new' version is some kind of unmediated account of historical events. The passion narrative was so crucial to the Manichaean community, and embedded in its liturgical life, that one must suppose any version to have been built up of layers of tradition and also by a process of continuous reflection. The collective memory of any community is apparent in the emphases placed on events (the death of Shapur and coronation of Hormizd seems to have become established as the opening marker for the cycle), hours ('At the eleventh hour of the day he rose from the body ...') and days ('On the Lord's Day he entered Bēlapat ...'). We find these elements in all versions of the cycle as a kind of architecture upon which the narrative could be hung. What is needed is to find the keys to understanding how the literary structure of the cycle developed in its various forms, and the ritual life and practice of the community is the obvious place to look.

As has already been stated, when the final kephalaion was concluded on p. 442 the scribe left a substantial space of blank papyrus and then began the 'Last Days' text with no apparent title. The first few lines are poorly preserved and it is difficult to tell whether there was any direct attempt to link the preamble (442, 14–20) to what came before (i.e. the sequence of chapters presented as Mani's teachings about selected topics; or as his dialogues and debates whether with catechumens, nobles, other sages or even the king himself). Probably this 'preamble' was only a rather generalised statement to the effect that the apostle has established his disciples firmly in the world on a basis of truth and purity.

The content of the text to follow then receives its proper introduction in the lines 442, 21–443, 2. It begins with some kind of an assertion 'to write ... the crucifixion of the apostle' (unfortunately the majority of this crucial passage is very difficult to read, probably impossible). Certainly this is the theme, the way that it is ordained for all the apostles in their own due time to be crucified by the kings of this world. We can compare 'The Section of the Narrative about the Crucifixion' where the account of Mani's death is followed by details of the sufferings of other apostles (cf. Hom pp. 68–70), and similarly in the Parthian fragment M4570 (entitled 'Discourse on the Crucifixion'). In the Coptic *Bēma* psalm 225 the Magians are termed 'the brothers of the Jews, the murderers of Christ'.<sup>48</sup> It was Jesus' crucifixion that provided the most notable exemplar for Mani's passion narrative, so that individual episodes in the latter were directly drawn into parallel with the former (intimations of the end, final journey and entrance to the city, trial and accusation, and so on). This is clearly true of the 2 Ke text; but in our codex we can not tell if the account of Mani's death was

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48 2Ps 15, 11–12.

followed by details of Jesus', due to the very poor preservation of the later pages when this should occur (by comparison to the other examples cited above).

### Episode One: At the Royal Palace in Hamadān

The narrative itself then begins with the first intimations of the coming calamity presented in an important episode (443, 3–445, 2) set at Hamadān (ΑΜΑΞΑΘΑΝ)<sup>49</sup> during the reign of Hormizd I. Here it is recounted how Mani and his companions made to approach the king, who was staying there in his palace with his court. Then follows an elaborate sequence of greetings between the apostle and King Hormizd which are passed through a series of intermediaries, both Mani's own disciples and members of the king's circle of dignitaries.<sup>50</sup> Various persons are named, but the crucial point occurs when Bahram (ΒΑΡΞΑΡΑΝ) the king of Gilān (ΚΙΛΑΝ) does not accept the greeting (ΑΧΡΙΑΣΜΟΣ) from Mani. This is presented as a calculated rebuff or snub by the future King Bahram I who will soon come to succeed his brother Hormizd to the Sasanian throne, and who will be responsible ultimately for the death of the apostle. The episode concludes with a dialogue between Mani and his disciples about these events, which leads to a direct comparison to the life of Jesus, presumably on the theme of betrayal. Finally Mani demands silence about these matters, for what is ordained to happen will happen.

This episode does not seem to be paralleled in the extant literature, certainly not in the Coptic versions as presently known.<sup>51</sup> Notably, it is absent from 'The

49 Compare Armenian Aḫmatan; also Aḫmeta (Ezra 6:2) etc; cf. the discussion of the name and etymology in Brown 2011. The correctness of this identification is strengthened by the reference to the king's palace and the various sub-kings, nobles and so on who are there with him. Hamadān had been the royal summer residence since the time of the Achaemenids, and this is a valuable reference from the time of the first Sasanian kings. We should also note that Ibn al-Nadīm (quoted in Reeves 2011: 37) names the city as the home of Mani's father Fatiq; i.e. Patīg, Greek Pattikios.

50 For comment on the elaborate rituals associated with greeting the Persian king see, e.g., Daryae 2013: 5–6.

51 There is a fragmentary Parthian text where Hormizd seems to be represented as paying homage (*namāž*) to Mani, cf. Sundermann 1981: 129 (text 22, pp. 127–130). Given that Bahram is also named in these fragments (*wrh'n*, cf. p. 127, n. 2), it is possible that they could reflect something of the same tradition as is found in 2 Ke; but unfortunately they are too poorly preserved to be certain about this matter either way. It has been suggested that the episode referred to in the Parthian is reflected in traditions that are better preserved in Sogdian and Turkish texts, cf. Shimin, Klimkeit and Laut 1987: 47–48; Sims-Williams 1990. However, these latter texts show no useful connection to what we find here in the Coptic.

Section of the Narrative about the Crucifixion', which also begins during the reign of Hormizd I but with what reads as a very different address by the apostle to the king.<sup>52</sup> In that version of the cycle the first lines are a direct statement of the death of Shapur and Hormizd's accession; matters that are notably absent in the 2 Ke text so far as I can see.<sup>53</sup> This raises questions about the relationship between the two Coptic versions of the cycle, for—as we shall see later—the two texts do directly overlap at certain important points. However, first, we should give more detail about the contents of the 2 Ke narrative.

### Excursus on the Middle Persian Text M3

Modern 'synthetic' accounts of Mani's last days often begin with the Middle Persian text M3, certainly as regards the apostle's confrontation with Bahram I<sup>54</sup> (which then leads on to his imprisonment and ultimately his death). Not only is the passage remarkably complete and coherent, but it provides a wonderfully evocative scene of the apostle's rejection by the king, the conflict between his own concerns and those of the court, and what appears to be a sense of impending doom. The passage is also presented as an eye-witness account by Nūhẓādag (Mani's interpreter?),<sup>55</sup> together with Kuštai (his personal scribe)

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52 The relevant passage occurs at Hom 42, 17–33 (and probably continuing on to p. 43). Insofar as one can understand the line of the narrative, it appears that Mani had an audience with King Hormizd after his accession and where he requested some kind of protection. It is granted that the apostle can go to the Assyrians (ἸΑσσυριοί) where he will be free from oppression. This would place Mani in Bēt Āramayē / Babylonia (see 1 Ke 186, 25–26) during this reign, prior to the travels recounted from Hom 44, 9–45, 9 which culminate with his entrance into Bēt Lapaṭ. A person named Mousak or similar (the exact reading is uncertain) plays a role in this sequence; but it is unclear whether as some kind of guardian or guarantor, or as a companion to Mani.

53 There is a brief reference to King Shapur at the start of the Hamadān episode, but it lacks the same definitive quality found in Hom 42, 11–16.

54 Tardieu 2008: 28–29, quite remarkably, combines M3 and Hom 46, 12–17 into a single seamless narrative.

55 The name Nūhẓādag means 'son of Noah' and mixes Semitic and Middle Persian elements; see Henning 1942(b): 950 and n. 9, further references in Durkin-Meisterernst 2004: 247b s.v. *nwhz'dg*. He is described as a *targumān*, with the term usually translated here as 'interpreter'. This word also has the meaning of 'narrator'. Perhaps, instead of understanding the text as referring to Nūhẓādag as Mani's interpreter, the meaning is that N.N. bar Nūh was present at the occasion with those other persons and is the authority for the tradition cited? I am grateful to Leyla Rasouli-Narimani for this suggestion.

and a certain Abzakhyā the Persian. These figures not only provide authentication; they may also highlight Mani's status, an Aramaic speaker, as an outsider. The narrative opens with the king at dinner, when the courtiers enter to say that Mani has come and is waiting at the door. The apostle is made to wait. Then:<sup>56</sup>

And (the king) stood up from his meal; and, putting one arm around the Queen of the Sakas and the other round Kirdīr the son of Ardavān, he came towards the lord. And his first words to the lord were: "You are not welcome!". The lord replied: "Why? What wrong have I done?". The king said: "I have sworn an oath not to let you come to this land". And in anger he spoke thus to the lord: "Ah, what need of you as you go neither fighting nor hunting ..."

One necessarily observes that the king is nowhere named in the text. The first editors presumed him to be Shapur (Šābūr); it was W.B. Henning<sup>57</sup> who identified him with Bahram, and this has become standard in scholarship ever since. There are two further points that should also be noted. The first is that this episode does not occur in any of the Coptic versions of the 'Last Days' cycle, for it is not found in either 'The Section of the Narrative about the Crucifixion'<sup>58</sup> or in the 2 Ke text. Of course, our understanding of the contents of the cycle remains fragmentary at this stage, neither of these Coptic texts are complete, and there are obvious reasons to suppose that variant accounts of the events could have circulated (although I must stress that we do not yet know if that is true, or at least to what degree). The story about Mani at the king's summer residence in Hamadān is also unparalleled, although that is more of a framing event for the cycle than a piece of its core architecture. The other point concerns the king's intimate relationship with the Queen of the Sakas in the text M<sub>3</sub> (and also with Kirdīr son of Ardavān). Whilst it is true that Shapurduxt

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56 From M<sub>3</sub>, text and translation (adapted) in Henning 1942(b): 949–950. On Kirdīr the son of Ardavān see further my contribution on 'The Final Ten Chapters'.

57 Henning 1936: 9.

58 For a detailed attempt to evidence real parallels between M<sub>3</sub> and the Coptic text see (with relevant cross-references and support from other scholars) Sundermann 1986(d): 258. The substance of the argument focuses on the oath sworn by the king in M<sub>3</sub>, compared to Hom 45, 26–27. However, I am more concerned with the setting of the scene (at the dinner table etc.) and the persons involved, the witnesses cited but most particularly the king's companions. There is no evidence for any of these narrative elements in the Coptic versions, and that is the point that seems to me most important.

would have been the sister to Bahram I, one must nevertheless wonder what exactly she and Kirdīr are doing in this scene.

The 'Last Days' cycle in 2 Ke may suggest an alternate setting for the text M<sub>3</sub> and, in doing so, answer these questions. After the initial story about Mani and the slight given him by Bahram at Hamadān, the theme of the 'impending crucifixion' is continued (from 445, 2–27) with an excursus about previous trials and persecution suffered by the apostle, before this section concludes with some final remarks by Mani to his disciples about Bahram the king of Gilān (i.e. the setting is still during the reign of Hormizd I). In this excursus it is apparent that the apostle was not always treated well by King Shapur<sup>59</sup> (despite the general tendency of Manichaean sources to elevate the great king's favour to him). But of especial interest is the following passage:<sup>60</sup>

Once [again ...] Narseos the Caesar, the son of Shapur the king ... this persecution of the apostle. He (bound him in) fetters and chains. He joined his ... (He forced him to drink?) some wine. He bound him. He did not die. He ... affliction ...

Here, despite a number of lacunae in the Coptic text, the meaning is clear. The subject is Narseh, another son of Shapur who in 293 C.E. deposed Bahram III and finally succeeded to the Sasanian throne.<sup>61</sup> But at this earlier stage he was King of the Sakas and husband to Shapurduxt.<sup>62</sup> I think that this could provide a better setting for the text M<sub>3</sub>, where the king rises from his dinner and puts his arm around the Queen of the Sakas; after all, 'king' (šḥ) may as easily (more easily?) refer to the (*Sakān-*)šāh together with the *Sakān-bānbišn* as to the *šāhān-šāh*. If this is so, then it might also make better sense of the king's oath 'not to let (Mani) come to this land'. The king in M<sub>3</sub> would be Narseh, and the land would be Sakastān rather than the whole of *Ērān*.<sup>63</sup>

59 2 Ps 19, 12–13 states directly that there were six years from 'the day of the great persecution to the day of the cross', which must place the start of this event within the last years of Shapur's reign.

60 2 Ke 445, 2–7 / G309.

61 See now Weber 2012. The conclusion of 'The Section of the Narrative about the Crucifixion' recounts a final period of peace for the Manichaean church during the leadership of Innaios, which is usually placed during the reign of Narseh (cf. Hom 83, 25).

62 On the latter see Weber 2012: 270–271.

63 There is, admittedly, the important tradition that Mani was banned from the entire Sasanian realm by Shapur, thus providing the pretext for Bahram to arrest and kill him when he returned. Cf. Bīrūnī ed. Sachau 1879: 209; also quoted in Reeves 2011: 43. This will be discussed further at a later stage.

### Episode Two: A Lunar Eclipse at Hormizd-Ardašir

This episode (445, 28–446, 23) concerns a lunar eclipse at the time of the apostle's sojourn in a certain city, the name of which is a little difficult to read but is probably Hormizd-Ardašir (ϩⲟⲣⲓⲙⲏⲥⲧⲁⲕⲱⲁⲗⲁⲣ). This locality is known to feature in Mani's last journeys and is recorded elsewhere as ϩⲟⲣⲓⲙⲏⲥⲁⲕⲱⲁⲗⲁⲣ.<sup>64</sup>

There is no clear information about the chronology in the extant text, and thus it is not certain whether this incident also took place during the reign of Hormizd I. It is of some note that none of the extant sources make explicit reference to the accession of Bahram I to the throne, which must surely have been regarded as an event of considerable (negative) import. Possibly this is an accident of the preservation of the available texts. In any case, in the episode the disciples question Mani about this lunar eclipse,<sup>65</sup> and (given the context in the 'Last Days' cycle) one must presume that an ominous occurrence was in some way linked to the impending calamity of the apostle's own imprisonment and death; but the details of his answer to them are poorly preserved.

### Episode Three: By the Banks of the Tigris

This episode fills the remainder of quire twenty-eight in the codex (446, 23–448, 30). It takes place in an 'unworked (ἀργός) village'<sup>66</sup> on the banks of the 'great river', presumably the Tigris.<sup>67</sup> The name of the place may have been given in the text at 446, 25; but, even if so, it can not now be read. Nor is it said when exactly this occurred, although one is strongly tempted to place the episode at the time of Mani's last journeys as detailed in 'The Section of the Narrative about the Crucifixion':<sup>68</sup>

64 Thus Hom 44, 11.14; and see also M4579 (Sundermann 1981: 69–70, text 4a.12), 'whrmzyd 'rdxšyhr.

65 There was a substantial Manichaean (and anti-Manichaean) literature about eclipses, which were matters of especial significance for the community given the status that they accorded to the sun and the moon. This passage is of interest for its terminology; see further Gardner 2013(b): 77–79.

66 It is not entirely clear what this means. Is it the same as a 'deserted village'? E.g. Isidore of Charax refers to a κῶμη ἔρημος named Galabatha (near the confluence of the Balikh and the Euphrates). Alternatively, one might consider Manichaean prohibitions against farming and whether the description could make sense in those terms (i.e. as a positive thing).

67 See perhaps Hom 43, 24; 44, 15; 1 Ke 152, 24 ff.; also Daniel 10:14.

68 Hom 44, 13–20. Note that in 2 Ke it seems that the previous episode was similarly set at Hormizd-Ardašir.

He came from Hormēsdakshahar (Hormizd-Ardašīr, i.e. Ahvāz on the Kārūn river) until he reached Maisanos (Mesene / Mēšān). From Maisanos he came to the river Tigris. He embarked for Ctēsiphon. And when he had departed and was travelling on the way, he cast allusions to his crucifixion, saying to them: "Look at me and have your fill of me, my children, because bodily I may [be far away (?) from] you".

In our episode a great crowd gathers to see and hear the apostle on the riverbank, and Mani begins his speech with direct reference to 'the saviour' (i.e. Jesus) and by quoting Luke 17:22.<sup>69</sup> Unfortunately, much of his exposition of the passage is lost, and I have not been able to identify the apostle's saying quoted in the Hom text (above) anywhere in the fragmentary remains from the 2 Ke codex. But the background meaning of the two quotations is essentially the same: Take the opportunity whilst Jesus / Mani is still with you, because the time will come when it will no longer be possible. Here, in this new version of the cycle, we are given a fairly extended sermon from the banks of the Tigris in which Mani bestows peace on his church, and it undoubtedly has this final quality appropriate to an awareness of the approaching end (see Luke 17:25 and parallels such as Matthew 16:21 which were obviously in mind here).

### **The Problem of Baat and the Final Journeys before the Entrance to Bēlapat**

The basic themes and the sequence of events in the 'Last Days' cycle as represented in 2 Ke are mostly clear to this point. The first three episodes, each in a specific location and with a defined narrative setting, are not present (as such) in 'The Section of the Narrative about the Crucifixion'. The latter text begins with a different tradition about an audience of Mani with King Hormizd, apparently intended to assert the king's favour to the apostle. This is then followed by a rather general passage of exaltation, before the narrative proper begins with a summary account of Mani's travels prior to his entry to Bēlapat. It may be that the topography of his journey in the Hom can be reconciled with the sequence of events given in much greater detail in our codex, but at the same time certain important points such as Mani's desire to go to Kušān (which appears to

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69 2 Ke 447, 6–8 / G307. The quotation is remarkably close to the canonical text, rather than (say) *Gospel of Thomas* logion 38.



have been refused) can not be found in the 2 Ke version.<sup>70</sup> Thus it is difficult to see either of the two accounts as a simple summary or expansion of the other.

We now turn to a key but problematic section of the cycle: This is the transition between Mani's travels in the south, preaching to his followers and making allusions to the forthcoming events, and his arrival in Bēlapat to face the king, Kartīr and the other accusers. The figure of Baat is also introduced at this point. The section is key because it is here that we should find the events or process that led to the climax of the passion narrative; that is, the trial, imprisonment and death of the apostle. In the 2 Ke codex the transition material occurs at the start of quire twenty-nine, from 449, 1–452, 7; in Hom it is from 44, 20–45, 9; and one must also compare the Parthian fragments M6031 and 6033. All these passages are poorly preserved, and together they raise a series of difficult issues. What I will do is outline the problems as I see them, this as part of the process of trying to reach some satisfactory conclusions. There could also be relevant material in the *Acts* codex that needs to be examined if at all possible.

It was Henning who first sought to reconcile the account in the Coptic Hom with the Parthian fragments,<sup>71</sup> and thus to establish the route of Mani's final journey to Bēlapat. His argument, that from Ctesiphon Mani turned north-east to Artemita (Kholassar), then journeyed south to Bēlapat across the plain at the foot of the hills (i.e. rather than returning to the Tigris and south along the river) via Gaukhai (*gwx̄y*) in Bēt Darayē, has remained the basis of all subsequent studies. Scholars, no doubt inspired by the evocative title of Henning's paper ('Mani's Last Journey'), have tended to treat this as a single continuous trip; but there is an obvious question about the chronology.

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70 This episode occurs at Hom 44, 10–14 (κοιῶσαν). It seems that Mani reached Hormizd-Ardašīr from where he hoped to travel to Kušān, far to the east. This has been interpreted as an attempt to distance himself from the king and his enemies at court. I understand the text to imply that the apostle set out on his journey, was somehow prevented or forbidden, and thus returned to Kūzestān, back to Hormizd-Ardašīr and then west to Mesene. It is possible that the episode occurred in the 2 Ke version; but one would expect to find it immediately before Mani's travels along the Tigris (i.e. our 'episode three'), and I can find no trace of such a narrative there.

71 Henning 1942(b). The Parthian fragments were edited in this article under the number T ii D 163. See also Sundermann 1981: 71 with improved readings (texts 4a.13 and 14). It is important to note that the sequence of columns preferred by Henning, whereby Mani appears to reach Gaukhai after Ctesiphon, has no codicological basis. As Henning 1942(b): 942 n. 4 himself comments, one could reverse the order. If so, the sequence of events would indicate that Mani's sojourn in Bēt Darayē preceded his visit to Ctesiphon, which would then be followed by his journey with Baat (destination not preserved).

Firstly, although both the Coptic versions of the cycle (2 Ke and Hom) begin during the reign of Hormizd I, they indicate that Mani received a favourable hearing from that king.<sup>72</sup> However, the king only lived one year before he was succeeded by his brother Bahram I, who probably reigned from 274–277 C.E.<sup>73</sup> No extant Manichaean text actually details the accession (or death) of this reviled figure. Although this is probably only an accident of preservation, the fact that we can not place its occurrence within the narrative of the 'Last Days' cycle does cause difficulties for the dating of events. We know that the community commemorated the apostle's death on Monday 4th Adar, which could only have occurred on the 2nd of March 274 or 26th February 277 C.E. If we accept the above regnal years for the king, the true date must be the later one. This is because at the conclusion of 'The Section of the Narrative of the Crucifixion' it is stated that these events took place during the three years of King Bahram,<sup>74</sup> by which I understand that Mani's death (as the climax) must have occurred towards the end of the reign rather than at the start. Now, since it is clear that the actual passion of twenty-six days in prison at Bēlapat started just seven or ten days after the apostle's arrival there, it is clear that Mani arrived at the city only a little more than a month before his actual death.<sup>75</sup> This is what we can know for certain about the timing of Mani's 'last journey'.

In each of the extant texts that preserve details of this 'transition section' of the cycle, that is Mani's travels between his allusions to the coming crucifixion whilst journeying along the Tigris and his actual arrival in Bēlapat, the figure of Baat is introduced at this point. All the texts about this person are poorly preserved, which causes a number of problems to be discussed below; but in the most coherent passage (from Hom) we read:<sup>76</sup>

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72 Whilst, strictly speaking, this is only implied by the stories at the start of these two versions of the cycle, it is stated explicitly at 2 Ps 43, 7–8.

73 There is a major on-going scholarly discussion about the regnal dates of the early Sasanian kings, in which information from Manichaean sources about the dates of the apostle's life, preaching and death plays a major part. For our purposes here I have accepted the so-called 'late dating', following the authoritative summary in Sundermann 2009(a). Many other scholars follow the 'early dating', which would place Bahram's reign from 271–274 C.E.; e.g. Daryaei 2012: 191, 392. This leads such scholars to the oddity of placing Mani's death during the reign of Bahram II; compare similarly: (e.g.) Edwell 2013; Bosworth 1999: 45–46 (noting the odd contradiction between nn. 135 and 137). On the later king, see now Weber 2009 (note that she dates his accession to the throne from 276 C.E.).

74 Hom 85, 7–8. Ṭabarī records the length of his reign as three years, three months and three days (ed. Bosworth 1999: 45).

75 These matters will be discussed in much greater detail below.

76 Hom 46, 10–19.

As soon as the king (Bahram) saw him (Mani), [his face] convulsed with angry laughter. He spoke to him (a torrent) of words: “Look, for three [whole] years [you] have been travelling with Baat. What law is it that you have [taught] him, so that he has left our (law) behind him and taken up yours for his own? He (returned?) to *t-hermēneia*: Why did you not go with [him]—as I ordered you to go with [him]—nor again come with him?”. My [lord (Mani)] understood immediately that the matter was being stretched for an excuse ...

Here again we find the reference to three years, and the most obvious interpretation of this passage is that Bahram had restricted the apostle’s movements during his reign to the company of Baat<sup>77</sup> (generally identified as a vassal king, see further below), which order Mani had obviously disobeyed in some way (or at least could be accused of having done so). Apparently, he had also succeeded in converting Baat to his own teachings. The chronological question, therefore, is whether Mani’s earlier travels through Hormizd-Ardašīr and the lower Tigris were already during this restricted period, or whether we need to place the whole span of the king’s injunction within what I have termed the ‘transition section’.

The second issue (after chronology) is the matter of tracing Mani’s journeys before he arrived at Bēlapat; and reconciling or explaining any apparent differences in the available accounts. The ‘Section of the Narrative about the Crucifixion’ probably implies, by its use of the verb τελο ἀρῆνῆ, that he sailed up the Tigris to Ctesiphon.<sup>78</sup> It then states, as we have seen: ‘And when he had departed and was travelling on the way (μαρε εἰς πιαῖτ), he cast allusions to his crucifixion ...’. It is not really clear whether this occurs after Ctesiphon, in which case one might more literally translate ‘and was walking on the road’, or during the journey north up the river. In either case, the next toponym to be read is Pargalia (παραγαλία), which Schaefer identified with ‘Phalcara’ on the Peutinger map, and placed north of Ctesiphon on the Tigris near the mouth of the Lesser Zab river.<sup>79</sup> The relationship of the two names is not especially convincing, and the suggestion has not been accepted universally; but neither has there been any better alternative. After Pargalia is found the first reference in the Hom version of the cycle to Baat (‘he went (?) with Baat to *t-hermēneia*’),<sup>80</sup>

77 Sundermann 2009(a) cites the New Persian raft o āmad ‘going and coming’ (i.e. ‘intercourse’, ‘company’) for the slightly convoluted Coptic formulation cited above.

78 Hom 44, 16.

79 Hom 44, 21 and note ad loc.

80 Hom 44, 22.

which I will discuss further below; and then finally we find the name Kholassar,<sup>81</sup> after which the text is mostly destroyed until we come to Mani's entrance to Bēlapat. Kholassar is generally accepted to be Artemita north-east of Ctesiphon on the river Diyala; and so, if Pargalia is indeed Phalcara, one must suppose that Mani had turned back on himself for some reason and was now

81 Hom 44, 27. The text reads (following both Polotsky 1934 and Pedersen 2006): ⲁⲕⲟⲗⲁⲥⲥⲁⲣ ⲁⲛⲏⲛⲁⲗⲗⲁ[ . The general assumption has been that the second spelling is an alternative form for the first; one might thus reconstruct ⲁⲗⲗⲁ[ⲥⲁⲣ, following Isidore of Charax (ⲕⲁⲗⲁ-ⲥⲁⲣ) from whose account the commonly accepted identification with Artemita is derived. However, Tardieu, in his review of Sundermann 1986–1987, suggested that 'n-Xala ... est Ḥulwān, gr. τὰ *Khála*'. This is discussed by Pedersen in his textual notes (see for further details) who appears doubtful, in that the text would then have omitted Mani's intermediate journey from one place to the next. I am not so sure; a scribal omission at this point would be easy to imagine. I think that the sudden switch in spelling is problematic, and Ḥulwān could be a logical next stage on the journey. I have an alternative suggestion as well, although it is only an exploratory hypothesis. From the facsimile it would appear possible to read ⲁⲛⲏⲛⲁⲗⲗⲁ[; in particular the left-hand lower corner is rather sharp for an -ⲁ (though one might also expect more of a 'hook' at the top for a -ⲁ). This rather inevitably leads one to consider 'from Chaldaea / the Chaldaeans' (Ⲭⲁⲗⲃⲁⲓⲁ / Ⲭⲁⲗⲃⲁⲓⲟⲥ). The location could fit the context well-enough for southern Mesopotamia, although the generic term would have more currency at this period and make better sense (and thus necessitating assimilation of the plural article after ⲁⲛⲏⲛ(ⲛ)-, but see Hom 39, 29). Interestingly, in the *Acts of Archelaus* XL, 5 Mani is accused of being a barbarian Persian, who only knows the Chaldaean language (sed Chaldaeorum solam); cf. tr. M. Vermes 2001: 105, and n. 212 for the suggestion that this here means Syriac. One should note that a Sogdian text S015502 may refer to Mani's *Letter to the Chaldaeans* (*xrdy'n(?) brwrt'(k)[w]*), this following the reading of Sundermann 2009(b): 265 and n. 36. Further, the term is found in the Coptic Manichaean corpus, in both the *Synaxeis* codex (see Funk 2009: 123) and also at 1 Ke 448, 1 (at present unpublished, my thanks to Wolf-Peter Funk for discussing this with me). In the first of these instances the term seems to be used for inhabitants of Babylonia who adhere to the ancient faith, in contrast to the Hebrews; in the second, which is very poorly preserved, the context may well be astrological with the Chaldaeans as people who make prognostications about certain events. Of course, this matter raises a whole series of other questions about the term 'Chaldaean'; e.g. note the use of Kaldāniyyūn in early Islam by a writer such as Ḥamza al-İṣfahānī (10th century C.E.). He regarded them as adherents of a generic ancient paganism still surviving amongst the Sabaeans (and thus the two terms are synonymous), cf. Crone 2012: 25. For the moment, what is interesting about this hypothesis is that, if correct, it would indicate that after Kholassar / Artemita Mani then left this entire region to go somewhere else, and this would accord well with the thesis I develop below about the identification of *t-hermēn(e)ia* (see 44, 22). The text at l. 27 could then be talking retrospectively about the start of the journey first indicated in l. 22. However, a journey through Ḥulwān could lead to the same conclusions.

travelling south-eastwards. Of course, W.B. Henning discussed these matters in detail in his famous 1942 article; and, by combining the above information with that in the Parthian fragments M6031 / 6033, was able to suggest how the apostle would have completed his journey overland via Gaukhai to Bēlapat. However, as we have already noted, Henning's reconstruction depends on reading the sequence of columns in M6033 in a certain order so that Mani's sojourn in Ctesiphon and journey with Baat appears to precede his visit to Gaukhai, the latter then being placed on the apostle's final itinerary travelling southwards.

All the above details have been 'known' for many decades, are repeated in every modern account of the events, and indeed no progress has been made in these matters in recent times. Now, the version of the cycle in 2 Ke adds another piece of information. Immediately before the point where Mani enters Bēlapat, we find:<sup>82</sup>

When he had returned to ... Ozeos (Susiana, i.e. Kūzestān) he reached to the border of the city of Elam.

The name Elam (ⲓⲗⲁⲙ) brings to mind the ancient empire of that name; and in later times it referred to a state or district, which roughly corresponds to Kūzestān or Susiana. Its chief city was Susa. The Greek form Elymais is well-known from the Parthian period, but again it referred to a semi-independent state rather than a *polis*. From the fifth century C.E. 'Iam (Bēt̄ Huzayē or Kūzestān) was a province of the Church of the East, whose metropolitans sat at Bēt̄ Lapaṭ (i.e. Bēlapat or Gondēšāpūr). Consequently, it is not entirely clear what our text means by Elam 'the city', especially as it is clearly distinguished from the region (Kūzestān or Susiana, here given as Ozeos as in other Coptic Manichaean texts). However, it may be that the matter is clarified by an important passage in the curious text entitled 'Salmaios' Lament'. Here we appear (at face value) to have a direct reminiscence of the same event from this important disciple of Mani's:<sup>83</sup>

When we went in ... [to the city] of Susa, the tyrant Bahram entered and sent for our father ... At that hour ...

<sup>82</sup> 2 Ke 452, 2–3 / G336.

<sup>83</sup> Hom 93, 19–22. Probably one should read *polis* 'city' (of Susa); indeed, the space in the lacuna between ll. 19–20 could fit '... we went in [to the border of the city] of Susa ...'. It is possible that one should also refer to Hom 43, 5–6. Although much of the text is destroyed, the transcript of the remnants could easily be restored to read a reference to Elam immediately prior to Bēlapat; viz. ⲓⲗⲁⲙ ... ⲉⲣⲉ ⲡⲁⲗⲁⲓⲥ ⲉⲛ̅ Ⲳⲏⲗⲁⲡⲁⲧ.

If it is correct to put these two texts in parallel, then we have clear evidence that the Manichaean community identified this as the moment when Mani was summonsed to appear before the king; and thus that his 'arrest', as it were, occurred in Susa (ϸΟΥϸΩΝ) prior to his entrance into Bēlapat. This is an important revision to the standard understanding of Mani's last days. On the one hand it contradicts the notion that Mani entered Bēlapat voluntarily and ostentatiously, and raises important questions about the relationship between his arrest and the accusations made by Kartīr and the Magians.<sup>84</sup> On the other, it provides some basis to the narrative in the *Acts of Archelaus* where the king sends soldiers to apprehend the apostle and bring him to trial and punishment.

We can now turn to the important but rather mysterious figure of Baat (βαατ,<sup>85</sup> b't),<sup>86</sup> who appears in all three of our sources for the 'transition section'. In both the Coptic sources we also find repeated references to *t-hermēn(e)ia* (ϸΕΡΜΗΝΕΙΑ or ϸΕΡΜΗΝΙΑ) in association with him and his dealings with Mani. Most scholars have followed Henning's edition of the Parthian fragments, according to which Baat has the title of *šahrdār* (*šhrd'r*), i.e. a high-ranking noble, perhaps a provincial ruler or vassal king. The classic study of the topic (of course without access to 2 Ke) is that of Klíma,<sup>87</sup> who attempted to identify this person with various other figures known to history such as a certain Bāṭī bar Ṭōbī who appears in the Talmud in the presence of Shapur I. He also suggested

84 A consequence of this is that it casts serious doubt on Henning's tentative reading of M6031 (generally followed by later scholars) '... that majestically he enters and leaves the wide Royal (?) Gate'; cf. Henning 1942(b): 949. Compare also Hom 45, 11–14 + ff.

85 Polotsky's edition of Hom 46, 13 also gives the name βαατ in a context where Baat is to be expected. Given the doubtful nature of the reading I am not inclined to give this apparent variant any value. Probably the scribe wrote βαατ here too, although admittedly it is difficult to read. Further, for ease I give the spelling Baat throughout. Henning, in his edition of the Parthian, gives Bāt.

86 The figure of Baat appears in two Parthian texts: M6033 (i.e. Henning 1942(b)), which I discuss here; and also M4574 (Sundermann 1981 text 4a.19 and see especially p. 80 n. 2). In the latter the context is uncertain; but it is lacking in topographic information and need not detain us at this stage. There is the further question as to whether the same person occurs as the 'lord Ptw' in Sogdian fragments published by Sims-Williams 1981: 238–239 (also 1990). Although the identification is often accepted (thus Sims-Williams and Durkin-Meisterernst 2012: 158a s.v. *ptw*), this material can also be omitted for the moment. The identity of this person remains uncertain; and, in any case, the Sogdian text again adds no direct information of relevance about the details of Mani's last journey. However, the Parthian text M4574 and the Sogdian references will be relevant as regards the broader issues of relations with the Magians, the nobility and the king.

87 Klíma 1958.

that *t-hermēneia* referred to ‘a sort of solemn lecture given occasionally by the Prophet ...’. Klíma quotes Coptic Manichaean sources where the Greek loan word ἐρμηνεία (‘interpretation’) was used as a kind of category for Mani’s teachings, perhaps rather similar to our contemporary use of ‘exegesis’. This is true enough in itself, but it remains something of a leap from that usage to see it as a formal title for Mani’s lectures. Nevertheless, Klíma’s suggestion has mostly been followed by subsequent scholars.<sup>88</sup> One final point to note, in this brief summary of past studies of the topic, is the association of the name Bat with Armenia.<sup>89</sup>

Despite all this work on the topic much remains unclear or uncertain. Who was Baat and why did he play such a pivotal role in the last years of Mani’s life? Was this really what we might think of as some kind of ‘house-arrest’ or internal exile, one that went terribly wrong for King Bahram and his advisors when the prisoner converted his guardian? The sources need a critical reexamination; and, as we will see, it is possible to make some useful progress.

In the readable lines of ‘The Section of the Narrative about the Crucifixion’ the first reference to Baat is as follows, (following my own reassessment of the Coptic text):<sup>90</sup>

He departed from these [places at] that [time]. He went to Pargalia. He ... that place. He went with Baat to *t-hermēneia*. [He] gathered [to him] his children (i.e. ‘followers’) and all the presbyters. He ordered them about each matter, (saying to them?): Give heed to my books; see [to my ...];

88 E.g., Hom 44, 22 ed. and tr. Pedersen 2006: ‘He went with Baat to the expl[anation (of his own wisdom)]’. Incidentally, my own informal comments quoted there by Pedersen should be ignored. Some scholars have even understood *t-hermēneia* as not just the lecture, but the place where it was held, i.e. a ‘lecture-hall’ (which actually makes better sense of the usage in the Coptic texts where it certainly appears to read as a toponym, as we shall see). Thus Greenlees 2007: lv–lvi.

89 This was already noted by Henning 1942(b): 945 n. 1; but see further Sims-Williams and Russell 2011.

90 Hom 44, 20–28. It will be apparent that my readings differ at points to the critical editions of Polotsky and Pedersen. Of importance, at the start of l. 23 I think that the verb can only be ϣροϣε̅. Then one should certainly read [ττ]ροϣ at the start of l. 24. The correct option for the place of departure appears to me uncertain, see the discussion above on Hom 44, 27. In l. 28 there may be another toponym, indicating Mani’s destination, the name ending -ⲛⲥⲁ according to the text edition. The most likely readings are -lēsa or -mēsa, or otherwise a final -l or -d to give e.g. -mēsl or -mēsd. Of these, the last option suggests some formulation with the royal name Hormizd (as in the Coptic form for the city of Hormizd-Ardašir as used by the Hom scribe, i.e. ϣΟΡΜΙΧΔΑΚΩΔΑΡΔΑΡ).

look after my widows and my orphans. (He departed?) to Kholassar. From Khal- (i.e. Khalasar, or Khala i.e. Ḥulwān, or 'the Chaldaeans') [he went to ...]. His disciples ...

In general, following a succession of places named on Mani's travels, the obvious thing would be to understand *t-hermēneia* as yet another geographical location (ⲁϳⲄⲠⲕ ⲁⲧⲡⲀⲤⲒⲘⲓⲁ, ⲁϳⲄⲠⲕ ... ⲁϳⲈⲤⲓ[ⲏⲏⲓⲁ]). In any case, it is clear that the instructions given by Mani that follow must relate somehow to the question of his going there. Either they are something he proclaimed at that place (this could support an understanding of the term as some kind of lecture); or they are orders he gave as a consequence of his going away from his followers to this other place (or possibly as a consequence of his not going).

The second reference<sup>91</sup> is in a destroyed context on the next page of the codex, a few lines before the important announcement of Mani's entrance to Bēlapat, 'the place of crucifixion'. Here one reads that 'he came with Baat in *t-hermēneia*' (ⲉⲓ ... ϣⲎ-,<sup>92</sup> in contrast to the previous ⲄⲠⲕ ... ⲁ- 'go ... to'). An understanding of the term as a lecture would necessitate this being the second time that Mani has gone to this occasion with Baat, as the journey to Kholassar has intervened. But, if it is a geographical location, the reference could simply be in continuity to the journey indicated on the previous page. They had departed to *t-hermēneia* and now they are there.

The third reference,<sup>93</sup> already cited, occurs after the apostle has entered Bēlapat. The king confronts him in anger. Mani has been travelling with Baat for three years. Again, the crucial sentence is poorly preserved, but it must surely mean something very like: 'He (Baat) returned<sup>94</sup> to *t-hermēneia*: Why did you not go with him ...'. If this basic sense is correct, that Baat went there without Mani, and that the king had ordered the latter to go but he did not, it will be impossible to reconcile with Klíma's interpretation of *t-hermēneia* as occasional lectures given by the apostle! This is the crucial point to consider,

91 Hom 45, 5.

92 The usage is somewhat strange. One might rather expect ⲉⲓ ⲁⲗⲐⲎⲎ ⲁ- 'came in to' or ⲉⲓ ⲁⲄⲁⲘ ϣⲎ- 'came out from'. I can not suggest a better reading of the visible traces in this admittedly rather poorly preserved line; but, given the context prior to Mani's arrival in Bēlapat, one should consider an emendation to ⲁϳⲈⲓ ⲏⲏ Ⲅⲁⲁⲧ <ⲁⲄⲁⲘ> ϣⲎ ⲐⲈⲤⲓ[ⲏⲏⲓⲁ].

93 Hom 46, 10–19.

94 I think that ⲏⲧⲁϳⲏⲁϳⲓ is the most likely reading, with the third person ('he') subject almost certain. This is best understood as 'he returned' (ⲏⲧⲁϳⲏⲁϳⲓ), for which spelling compare 44, 9. Incidentally, I can only think that that line should read: 'When he turned from the ferry ...' (i.e. ⲏⲧⲁ]ⲤⲈ<ϳ>ⲏⲁϳⲓ ϣⲎ ⲏⲧⲁⲓⲐⲈ).



what conceivable meaning could there be to the king's question, other than that Mani had failed to go with Baat to *t-hermēneia*?

In general, scholars have separated the king's accusation as a new sentence ('Why did you not go ...')<sup>95</sup> from the previous clause about *t-hermēneia*; which appears easy enough only because the subject and verb preceding *t-hermēneia* are recorded as unreadable and thus that clause can be ignored as without coherent sense. But I find it very difficult to imagine how it could have read other than the way that I have suggested.<sup>96</sup> In virtually every single instance in these texts we find Mani, Baat and *t-hermēneia* together with verbs of coming and going.

We can turn now briefly to the Parthian fragments first edited by Henning. His understanding, based on his attempt to reconstruct a coherent journey for the apostle as read from his two sources (i.e. the new Parthian text and the passage from the Coptic Hom as edited by Polotsky a few years earlier), was that Mani travelled from Ctesiphon via Kholassar to Gaukhai. Thus the relevant passage comes near the start at the bottom of column A and followed by a lacuna. Henning translates:<sup>97</sup> '... at the time when the Pious One (i.e. Mani) left the city of Ctesiphon and together with King Bāt ...'. This is of some interest because it may attest to the two being in each other's company at a point slightly earlier than the first occurrence read in the Hom codex (which follows the sojourn at Pargalia). However, caution is necessary; a careful reading of the text shows that it does not explicitly say that Mani and Baat left Ctesiphon together. They could have met later, as might be thought to be suggested by the Coptic version.

I turn now to the relevant passages in the version of the 'Last Days' cycle as preserved in the 2 Ke codex. There are here found a series of references

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95 See, for instance, the translation by Pedersen 2006. An extreme example of avoiding the issue occurs in Tardieu 2008: 29, where the crucial line is simply glossed as: "How do you explain that?"

96 Of course, there remains the problem as to why the king accuses Mani of having failed to travel there with Baat when we have read in the first two references that he did go. One can suggest possible solutions, e.g. that Baat had returned there for a second time but Mani had not; or that the king somehow thought that the apostle had disobeyed him even if he had not. In any case, what is entirely impossible is the idea that the king could accuse Mani of disobeying him by failing to go to his own lectures with Baat. That is incomprehensible on all levels.

97 Henning 1942(b): 943. The tradition is ascribed in the text to ptyg, i.e. Pattikios. It is striking how the epithet used here for Mani (*qyrbkr*) recurs in the *Acts of Archelaus* traditions as the slave Cubricus who later 'changed his name' to Mani.

both to Baat and to *t-hermēnia*; and, as in the Hom version, they occur both in the 'transition section' and then after Mani's entrance to Bēlapat during his confrontation with the king. Clearly this was a matter that was central both to the events leading up to the passion, and to the charges laid against the apostle. However, again, the extant text is poorly preserved and it will take very careful study to finalise the readings. For the moment, as the text edition is still in progress, I will summarise only such of the new information about which we can be reasonably certain.

First, Mani is closely associated with Baat, as we find the characteristic notice 'with Baat' (מִן בַּאֲט) just as in both the other texts. The repetition of this phrase in all the sources is a curious thing, and adds weight to the idea that this person had been assigned to the apostle in some kind of official capacity. Second, there is the dominant concept of travel, expressed in verbs such as 'to go' (בִּזְכַּק) and references to 'the way' or 'road' (פּוֹלֵס). Third, Baat, travel, and *t-hermēnia* all seem to be linked together and at the heart of the issue. Then, as regards the general context within which these specific events are framed, there are the repeated references to accusations made by Kartīr the Magian (καρτεριος μαγογυσιος) and Mani's other enemies at court, together with the charge that the apostle has led people astray so that they follow after him rather than the king. The latter is made explicit in a particularly striking passage that begins:<sup>98</sup>

Mani is the one who has led astray the entire world. He took the men and the women [and they] followed after him. He says to the people: "Do not [(do the)] works of the king".

The climax occurs during Mani's confrontation with the king.<sup>99</sup> Immediately after discussion of this problem about Baat and *t-hermēnia*, the king demands

98 2 Ke 451, 2–6 / G335. Mani's name is, notably, given here as ΠΑΜΑΝΙΚΑΙΟΣ. Compare, for instance, the tradition cited by Bīrūnī ed. Sachau 1879: 208 (also quoted in Reeves 2011: 42). Bahram gave orders to search for Mani, and when he had found him he said: "This man has come forth calling people to destroy the world. It will be necessary to begin by destroying him, before anything of his plans should be realised".

99 I paraphrase here what can be understood from the fragmentary text found at 2 Ke 455, 8–456, 1 / G331 + 332; which must be compared to the crucial passage in Hom 46, 10–17 (quote above), and also 47, 4–48, 2. It is clear that both versions of the cycle are dealing here with exactly the same episode. Although their treatments differ in certain important and interesting respects, at points the wording overlaps to the extent that lacunae in one text can be completed by reference to the other. The same tradition about Mani's confrontation is also recorded in *Bēma* psalm 225, where again can be found many of the very same sentiments and themes, even phrases. Just for example, compare 2 Ps 16, 15 'God

of Mani not to renounce 'the law of Zarades'. This is then followed by Mani's characteristic claim to divine authority. The essence of Mani's stance is that the truth he has received comes from God not from mankind, and it is God that he must follow not the dictates of this world. Bahram is incredulous, he is king of the entire world! Mani replies: God reveals to whomever he pleases.

The real problem in our understanding of all this is the meaning of *t-hermēn(e)ia*. There are, it seems to me, two real options. The first is that the word intended is indeed the Greek loan word ἐρμηνεία (with the appropriate feminine article). This is certainly what the Coptic looks like, but the basic problem is that the word first appears in the Hom codex in the midst of a series of toponyms, (i.e. Mani goes to / departs from Ctesiphon, Pargalia, *hermēneia*, Kholassar etc.). It is then repeatedly, in all of our sources, referred to in association with concepts of travel ('go', 'come', 'road'). Then there is the additional problem that there are no proper parallels that can be cited for the idea that the term referred to (e.g.) a lecture given by Mani. The same difficulty applies to any other understanding of the word as ἐρμηνεία; one has to cite similar instances of such a usage. I know of no relevant source that uses this term to refer to meetings, rituals, lectures, proceedings or whatever, i.e. some event that Mani and Baat might have gone to, whether religious or judicial.

However, if it is decided that the word must indeed be ἐρμηνεία, and that all this talk of travel can be taken in a purely abstract sense (thus 'the path of interpretation'), there is one possibility that should at least be aired. This is that the Greek word could conceivably be regarded as a translation for the Middle Persian *zand* 'interpretation'. In both of our Coptic texts King Bahram links Mani, Baat and *t-hermēn(e)ia* to renouncing (we might say 'deviating from', to continue the metaphor) the 'law (*nomos*) of Zarades'.<sup>100</sup> Now, Manichaeans were widely known as *zandiks* / *zindik*s, with the earliest attestation generally thought to be the Middle Persian inscription by Kartīr himself (*zndyky*). For instance, Mas'ūdī states that the name first appeared at the time of Mani for the following reason: Zarathustra had once brought to the Persians a book called the Avesta, together with a commentary called the *zand*. Thus, whenever anyone 'introduced into their religion anything that was at variance with the revelation, namely the Avesta, and turned towards the allegorical interpreta-

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it is who teaches whom he pleases ...' with 2 Ke 455, 27–456, 1 / G331+332 '(God) reveals to whomever he wants'.

100 The fragmentary text M4525 may also indicate that adherence to or rejection of the Mazdayasnian scriptures was the focus of the confrontation, see Sundermann 1981: 72 and n. 1 (text 4a.15): 'Auch dies sprach der König zu unserem Vater: "Dies *Nask* ...".'

tion, namely the *zand*, the Persians called him a *zandī*.<sup>101</sup> This etymology (and similar) is given in a substantial number of ancient and some modern sources, although its correctness is much debated.

Nevertheless, although such a theory has a certain appeal,<sup>102</sup> I still find it difficult to suppose that our texts could switch in such a way between entirely literal descriptions of Mani's travels and something so abstract or even metaphorical. And, of course, if we are correct in understanding Bahram to have castigated Mani for not going with Baat to *t-hermēneia* at Hom 46, 15 ff. then this must be incorrect.

The other option is to understand *t-hermēn(e)ia* as a simple toponym, which is what the context would immediately suggest. The Coptic Manichaean sources often provided the article before toponyms (e.g. ΤΒΑΒΥΛΩΝ, ΤΠΕΡCΙC, thus presumably ΤΠΑΡΓΑΛΙΑ and perhaps therefore ΘΕΡΜΗΝ(Ε)ΙΑ).<sup>103</sup> The problem then is to identify this place called 'Hermēn(e)ia'. There are really two conceivable possibilities, though both have their difficulties. The first is to suppose that this was a now unknown place—presumably in the general area of Babylonia—that Mani visited between Pargalia and Bēlapat, but the

101 Here I follow and quote from De Blois 2013. Other relevant references should be consulted there. It must be emphasised that De Blois rejects this etymology as spurious, and asserts that it would seem 'more likely' that the Middle Persian *zandīk* was borrowed from the Aramaic *zaddīk* 'righteous', the term the Manichaeans used for the elect.

102 Indeed, Mani is often described as ἑρμηνευτής. Note, for instance, Hom 61, 16–17, where Mani is called: 'The interpreter of the land of great Babylon'. For more on this point, see Dilley, chapter 5 in this volume.

103 It is notable that in this corpus the article is almost always feminine (India / Ἰνδῆτογ is the known exception); and utilised for major districts, countries or cities that would have been familiar in the Graeco-Coptic context. Unusual or 'foreign' (perhaps 'non-Hellenistic?') toponyms do not have the article; e.g. ΚΙΛΑΝ, ΒΗΛΑΠΑΤ. My thanks to Wolf-Peter Funk for discussing this with me. Now, if this distinction holds broadly true, it has an interesting consequence for our study here in that the problematic name Pargalia would appear to be a clear exception to the rule. We noted above that Schaeder suggested an identification with the Phalcara of the Peutinger map; but why should it be given an article when e.g. ΚΤΗΣΙΦΩΝ is not? It may be that the -ΙΑ ending made the name seem familiar to the scribe; but I wonder whether in fact there is a textual corruption here. It will be seen that I regard this section of the text (Hom 44, 20–22) as referring to Mani's journey and destinations looking forward; and that the details of the actual journey are recapitulated afterwards in 44, 27–28, following his instructions given to the community at 44, 23–26. In other words, the apostle's sojourn in Pargalia does not need to have occurred inbetween Ctesiphon and Kholassar. If this is so, the way would be open to some restoration such as: 'He went to Par<thia (ΠΑΡΘΙΑ) ...>'. However, I cannot at present suggest anything convincing that would explain the second element of -galia.

significance of which (given that it clearly caused a major problem) we do not understand. This has always seemed to me an unlikely solution.

The second possibility is to understand Armenia.<sup>104</sup> This has an immediate attraction in that there are known connections between the name Baat and Armenia, and conceivably if Baat was some kind of regional vassal or provincial ruler there it might provide a rationale for the whole story within the politics of Bahram's court. The very same name is recorded for the 'family head' of the Šaharuni dynastic house in Armenia in the fourth century C.E.<sup>105</sup>

There are obvious difficulties. One cause for caution lies in the logic of supposing that Mani travelled to Armenia and back at some point within what are otherwise a coherent set of journeys all set far to the south.<sup>106</sup> However, if one were to understand the travels recorded in this 'transition section' as having taken place over three years then this issue might not seem so difficult. Really, the major problem is that the standard Greek spelling was Ἀρμενία; and this usage is confirmed in the single recognised instance of the name recorded among the edited portions of the Medinet Madi library: ἀρμενια in the *Acts* codex.<sup>107</sup>

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104 It is certain that the Manichaean community had contact with Armenia during the lifetime of the apostle, for the Sogdian text M915 refers to his 'Letter to Armenia (*ʾrmyñ (f)[rwrtyy]*)' and the Middle Persian fragment M1524 appears to quote from the same (following Boyce 1960: 73). A 'Letter to Armenia' is also number eight in Ibn al-Nadīm's listing of Mani's *Epistles*. Further, a fragmentary passage near the end of the extant portions of the *Mani-Codex* (146, 6) refers to Ἀρμενία. See also Mgaloblishvili and Rapp Jr. 2010: 269; and Russell 1998. For some background citations see Shapira 1999/2000.

105 See Russell in Sims-Williams and Russell 2011 (ii. 'Armenian Bat'). He comments further (rather speculatively): 'Mani's mother belonged to the Kāmsarakān family, a branch of the noble Parthian house of Kārēn which had become established in Armenia. It is possible that Bat may have been a family friend as a fellow nobleman, as well as a disciple, and an Armenian'. For the traditions about Mani's mother, used here by Russell, see Ibn al-Nadīm (cited in Reeves 2011: 36, '... his mother was a descendant of the Arsacid royal line'); and especially the Chinese *Compendium* ed. Haloun and Henning 1952: 190, '... Mani, the Buddha of Light, was born in the country of Su-lin (i.e. Assuristan) at the royal palace of Pa-ti (Patīg) by his wife Man-yen (Maryam?) of the house Chin-sa-chien (Kāmsarakān?)'.

106 One could note that Mani had hoped to travel to Kušān according to Hom 44, 11; which would have been an even longer journey.

107 Cf. the sole published leaf as edited by Pedersen 1997: 194 (transcript of plate 99, l. 8 in Giversen's 1986 facsimile of the Homilies & Varia). I think that one can better read ἀρμενια; but, in any case, the initial ἀ- is almost certain.

However, the 2 Ke manuscript makes apparent that the orthography was less fixed than one might suppose. In K342 is found a highly interesting list of countries, amongst which we can read in sequence:<sup>108</sup>

... and Abarshahar (Abaršahr) and India and Goushan (Kušan) and Kilan (Gilān) and Armenia (?) and the land of ...

In this list I have placed a question-mark after 'Armenia', not because I doubt the identification, but because of the spelling. As is so often the case, the text is poorly preserved; but I read: 𐭒𐭓.𐭕𐭓𐭓𐭓𐭓. Here the use of -𐭓- is without any doubt. Unfortunately, the initial vowel (ε- or λ-) can simply not be read with any certainty. It is quite attractive to read 𐭒𐭓ε- at the start, the problem then being the apparent lack of space for the -𐭕- (i.e. for 𐭒𐭓ε𐭕𐭓𐭓𐭓𐭓). The papyrus fibres are mostly destroyed at this point and it may indeed be possible; but 𐭒𐭓λ- can also not be excluded.

Nevertheless, careful examination of the *t-hermēnia* usage through the 2 Ke 'Last Days' cycle provides further data. Certainly, the majority of the references, in so far as they can be read, support the spelling 𐭕𐭓𐭓𐭓𐭓. This corresponds to the Hom usage, except for the detail (inconsequential for our purposes here) that it ends -𐭓𐭓 rather than -ε𐭓. However, I find one vitally important exception (there may also be others, but it is difficult to tell given the preservation). Right in the middle of Mani's audience with the king, and when the matter of Baat and *t-hermēnia* is the point of argument, the apostle concludes one speech by declaring:<sup>109</sup>

... in truth I went [(with Baat?)] to Armenia, the way that you said (i.e. "... just as you told me to do").

In this instance one must read 𐭕𐭓𐭓𐭓𐭓, with the initial λ- entirely certain and the second vowel as an ε- rather than 𐭓-. I believe that this settles the issue. There are major consequences to this conclusion. Henning's reconstruction of Mani's last journey must now be abandoned, and the possibility of a substantial period of exile in the north has to be brought into discussion of Mani's final years. Scholars should also consider whether this curious 'confusion' about the name in our Coptic sources can tell us something about the scribal tradition and the translation history for the Medinet Madi codices.

108 2 Ke 421, 25–26 / G301.

109 2 Ke 455, 6–7 / G331.

We have spent a considerable amount of time on these issues regarding Baat and *t-hermēn(e)ia* / Armenia because they appear to have been absolutely central to the narrative. Before we continue through Mani's arrival in Bēlapat, it is worth making a brief comparison with the *Acts of Archelaus*, where more difficulties will be found; but also some points of interest. In brief, this source relates how Mani had been imprisoned by Shapur, but escaped and went to a certain Castellum Arabionis. From there he travelled to a place variously named in the Greek and Latin versions as Karchar, Kaschar or Kalchar.<sup>110</sup> It is in the latter place that the dispute with Archelaus takes place. After his ignominious defeat Mani returns to the Arabion castle, where he is apprehended and brought back to the king and to his death.

Now, modern scholars have almost uniformly regarded this whole narrative as fabricated, although there have been extensive discussions about the identity of the places named. For myself, there is such an intriguing mixture of fact and fiction in the *Acts of Archelaus*, and the names within it so often betray a certain (twisted) authenticity, that I am not sure that this landscape should be dismissed so easily. Certainly, one can ignore obvious polemical motifs such as Mani's bribing of the prison guard, his duplicitous behaviour and cowardly, self-serving motives. But even the idea that Mani was first imprisoned under Shapur is not in itself improbable when we consider some of the sources discussed earlier in this chapter. In any case, the identity of the two main sites named in the narrative should be considered.

The Castellum Arabionis might easily be supposed a fantastical invention, but the reading of the papyrus documents from Dura Europus (especially the archives of the *cohors xx Palmyrenorum*) has greatly increased our knowledge of the Middle Euphrates area. In particular, in PDura 100 and 101 there is found the toponym 'Castell. Arab.', and this is of obvious interest for our purposes. Indeed, it has led Pennacchietti<sup>111</sup> to identify our site with Tell 'Arabān in

110 In the Latin manuscripts, and followed in the Coptic, it is Carchar (*in Carcharis civitate Mesopotamiae* [I, 1]); whereas most of the Greek witnesses give Κάρχαρ. For discussion of the various forms and the identifications that have been proposed, see Lieu in Vermes 2001: 16–23; also BeDuhn and Mirecki 2007. Of course, if what is meant is (and this is surely the most obvious solution) the Aramaic *karḫā* 'town', 'fortified settlement', then it could be any of the very many places throughout the region with this designation; or (better?) simply and deliberately unspecified. One might note that a Christian Arabic source such as Sāwīrūs (Severus) b. al-Muqaffā' prefers merely: '... a city in the province of Syria' (quoted in Reeves 2011: 53).

111 Pennacchietti 1988; Pennacchietti and Cracco Ruggini 1997. The argument is discussed by T. Gnoli 2007: 80–83. Whilst not all aspects of Pennacchietti's argument have received

the mid-course of the river Habur (Χαβώραξ), 150 kilometres upstream of the confluence of the Habur with Euphrates; and the river Stranga of the *Acta* with the Habur. This issue is discussed by BeDuhn and Mirecki in their introduction to a recent volume of papers devoted to the *Acts of Archelaus*,<sup>112</sup> who reject the identification as too far north and not consistent with the description given in that work. Instead they suggest that the Castellum Arabionis would be better identified with the site of Dūr 'Arabāyā, which is an almost exact Aramaic rendering of the name. This is south of the Lesser Zab river just north of Samarra on the Tigris, and a little further north of Ctesiphon.

It is apparent that this reasoning is based not simply on the internal evidence of the *Acta*, but also on the information provided in the 'Last Days' cycle as preserved in the Hom codex. Here, as we have seen, Mani travelled north up the Tigris first to Ctesiphon and then to a place called Pargalia and then to Kholassar. Already in the 1930s Schaefer had suggested that Pargalia should be equated with the Phalcara of the Peutinger table, and BeDuhn and Mirecki are struck by the correspondence in location between the site of Dūr 'Arabāyā and this Phalcara / Pargalia.

If we turn now to the other important location in the *Acta*, Karchar or Kaschar, we find a number of proposed identifications. The text states that it is 'a city in Mesopotamia'. We also learn that the Castellum Arabionis was in Persian territory about five days distance (perhaps 200 kilometres approximately?) across the river Stranga. There is the problem of the shifting border between the Roman and Sasanian empires during the third and fourth centuries, combined with the question as to whether this description should fit the time-frame of the actual events (270s C.E.) or that in place at the time when the *Acta* was written (perhaps 330s C.E.). Nevertheless, most contemporary scholars now reject the once-popular identification of the site as Kaškar on the lower Tigris (across the river from the Islamic period city of al-Wāsit),<sup>113</sup> due to the fact that it was not in Roman territory.<sup>114</sup> Instead, it has become fairly standard to suggest Carrhae

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universal acceptance (Gnoli is particularly critical), the identification of the Castellum Arabionis of the *Acts of Archelaus* with Tell 'Arabān (nowadays Tell 'Aḡāḡa) has been followed by a number of scholars.

112 BeDuhn and Mirecki 2007: 11–12, 21.

113 Note that the course of the river has shifted since antiquity, and the site of Kaškar is no longer beside the Tigris.

114 Interestingly, at 2 Ke 470, 10 / G212 we appear to be given the designation of Sisinnios as a native or inhabitant of Kaškar (ΣΙΣΙΝΝΙΟΣ ΠΗΛΑΧΑΡΗΝΟΣ); see also Tardieu 1991: 6. As the latter points out, this is one of a number of pieces of evidence that point to this city and district as a prominent locale for the Manichaeans; and thus, conceivably, this fact could have



(Harran), perhaps more because it is well-known and fits this territorial setting than for any other good reason. It does seem strange that a city renowned for its pagan population would be the site of Mani's debate with the Christian bishop Archelaus. But, more to the point, it is difficult to believe that the Greek Κάρχαροι would have been corrupted to Κάρχαρ, especially when there are a whole series of toponyms recorded through Mesopotamia derived from the Syriac *karḳā* 'town'.<sup>115</sup> Consequently, I find the identification of Karchar / Carchar with Carrhae improbable.

For the Castellum Arabionis there are, as we have seen, two coherent suggestions made in recent discussions of the matter: Tell 'Arabān on the Habur and Dūr 'Arabāyā on the Tigris. The river Stranga of the *Acta* could possibly fit either of these.<sup>116</sup> However, if one looks back further into the scholarly literature one finds something rather interesting. Prior to the discovery of primary Manichaean texts in Coptic and Middle Iranian, and before Henning's classic discussion of 'Mani's Last Journey' as based upon such, it was common to give greater weight to the geography found in the *Acts of Archelaus*. A number of prominent scholars of this earlier generation identified the Arabion castle with a site that plays a crucial role in the Armenian Bartholomew legend, variously named as Arebanos, Albanopolis, Urbanopolis and so on.<sup>117</sup> For instance, Conybeare<sup>118</sup> references Armenian sources to place it high on the Greater Zab river by the site of the St. Bartholomew monastery near the modern town of Başkale. He locates the Karchar of the *Acta* 'in Mesopotamian Armenia, not far from Van'; and Archelaus himself as bishop of an Armenian

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influenced the tradition of the *Acta* (or at least in some of the sources) in its identification of a site for the debate between Mani and Archelaus.

- 115 Similarly BeDuhn and Mirecki 2007: 10–11. There is, for instance a Karkh close to Dūr 'Arabāyā. Herzfeld 1907: 61 places the old quarter of Karkh at Shnās and Dūr 'Arabāyā at Eski Baghdād, see further the interesting account of Bell 1911: 212 n. 1. Alternatively, note e.g. the Charcha of Ammianus Marcellinus, *Res Gestae* 18.10.1, 25.6.8; or the Χαρχάς of Evagrius *Ecl. Hist.* 6. 21. Charcha appears as Arcaiapis on the Peutinger table; it is beside the Tigris and south-east of Amida (modern Diyarbakir). Cf. Lipiński 2000: 146–148.
- 116 BeDuhn and Mirecki 2007: 12–13 assert strongly that it is the Tigris, citing the Armenian version of Ps.-Callisthenes where the name Stranga is used in the story of Alexander, Darius and the frozen river. See also Pennacchiotti 1999. On the other hand T. Gnoli 2007: 81 n. 49 looks to the Habur, deriving Stranga from the Greek στραγγή 'meandering'. BeDuhn and Mirecki, also Gnoli, note the Arang, a river from ancient Iranian tradition; but I do not see how this demonstrates either case. Cf. Brunner 2011.
- 117 Cf. Russell 1998: 22.
- 118 Conybeare 1898: cii–ciii. This author's identification was accepted at least as late as Runciman 1955: 27 and n. 1.

see. The Stranga would be the Greater Zab. Markwart also accepted the identification with Urbanopolis, and discussed what seems to be a curious intersection in the hagiographical traditions concerning Mani and Bartholomew.<sup>119</sup> For the location he pointed to the Arīwan in Bēt Garmē referred to in Syriac ecclesiastical sources.<sup>120</sup> In fact, the location of the Castellum Arabionis within ancient Greater Armenia was so widely accepted that even as late as the 1960s Widengren could take it almost for granted: 'The *Acta Archelai* ... make it clear that he (i.e. Mani) could rely on strong support in the Armenian border regions of north-western Iran ...'.<sup>121</sup> Here Widengren identifies the Arabion with 'contemporary Arewan'. He does not extrapolate what he exactly means by this.

In the Sogdian text 18224<sup>122</sup> there is an account of the mission by Mani's disciple Mar Gabryab to Revān (*ryβ'n*) in Armenia. This place-name is discussed by Sundermann, who identifies it as modern (Y)erevan, known already to Islamic authors as Rewān.<sup>123</sup> Both the site and the etymology are to be derived from the ancient Urartian fortress (eighth century B.C.E.) of Erebuni; and, as sources are limited from between the Achaemenid and late Sasanian periods, the Manichaean text is notable as the earliest literary reference to the modern form of the name. It also indicates the continuing importance of the site, although Sundermann stresses that the 'king' of the Sogdian narrative is not that of the Armenians but rather a minor local ruler otherwise unknown to history.

A rather enthusiastic synthesising of the texts might suggest that prior Manichaean success in this locality could have provided a suitable environment

119 See also Russell 1998 on the interplay with the Bartholomew tradition; and Pennacchietti 1988: 507.

120 Markwart 1905: 233–235; also named Maḥōzī d'Arīwan (*mḥwzy d'rywn*). He identifies the Stranga with the Tigris, and for Karchar he appears to suggest Karkā d'Bēt Selōk (modern Kirkuk). The exact placing of this Arīwan has been debated in the various commentaries, but is generally placed near to the Lesser Zab. Of course, there is another locality to be considered (also noted briefly by Markwart); that is, Rawāndūz, north-east of Arbil on a tributary of the Greater Zab. The common etymology is Rawān diz, i.e. 'castle of Rawān'. Again, one can suppose an attractive derivation for the 'Castellum Arabionis'; and, notably, this site lay directly at the intersection of the ancient roads through the mountains. See e.g. the interesting description and comments by Rawlinson 1842: 22–24; also Nikitine 1934.

121 Widengren 1965(b): 36.

122 Sundermann 1981, text 3.4.

123 Sundermann 1981: 45–46. See further the discussion in Kettenhofen 2012; also Mgaloblishvili and Rapp Jr. 2010: 269. Russell 1998 argues against the historicity of the episode.

for Mani's subsequent stay there (identifying Revān with Arabion);<sup>124</sup> but I would not like to go so far on this basis. Nevertheless, what this discussion does show is how a reading of *t-hermēneia* as Armenia in our Coptic sources has the potential to reintegrate the primary texts belonging to the religion with those of the Christian polemical tradition about Mani's life. In this way a coherent framework can be provided, where the apostle's final journey to Bēlapat was preceded by an extended sojourn in Greater Armenia. Whether there was any truth to the claim of the *Acts of Archelaus* that Mani entered the Roman empire at this time cannot be known.

Thus, the final question, as regards this crucial 'transition section', is: Why did Mani go to Bēlapat? Contemporary scholars tend to skirt around this issue. The *Acta* claim that he was apprehended at the Castellum Arabionis, from where he was brought before the king (unnamed there).<sup>125</sup> We have provided evidence that he was in fact arrested in Susa. One would expect Manichaean sources to put the matter in the most positive light possible. For instance, in *Bēma* psalm 225 we find simply, following the accusations of the Magians:<sup>126</sup>

When he heard these words, the foolish man, the king of the pitiless  
ones, was astonished, the evil-fated, the evil-doer:  
he sent, he called my shepherd,  
he says wrathfully in a mighty voice ...

This passage shows an interesting tendency to take the blame from the king and focus it on the priests, which is reminiscent of some Christian narratives about Pilate and the Jews (inherited by the Manichaeans). Of course, it lacks the historical, narrative purpose of the 'Last Days' cycles, (though, importantly, the psalm does reflect many of the same traditions in some detail). Still, if we compare 'The Section of the Narrative about the Crucifixion' we find no proper explanation as to why Mani entered Bēlapat (although admittedly the lines

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124 Unfortunately there do not seem to be any Greek or Latin renderings of the name of the city from this period that might help to support this, unless one were to bring in to it the whole Urbanopolis problem.

125 *Acts of Archelaus* 55. This conclusion to the narrative, where Mani takes flight and returns to the castle, is narrated very rapidly and does not convince (i.e. as regards its authenticity). It appears more as a means of achieving closure to the story. However, the details of the apostle's death, where Mani is flayed and his body hung before the gate of the city, whilst not entirely accurate does contain elements of authentic tradition; cf. 2 Ps 17, 21; 19, 29–31.

126 2 Ps 15, 27–30. In this psalm it is the Magians who seize Mani (15, 9–10) and then take their accusations to the king.

immediately preceding this are badly damaged).<sup>127</sup> When he has arrived the Magians (or is it the general populace?) appear astonished and angry:<sup>128</sup>

When the Magians observed [him], they asked: "Who indeed is this who has entered?". They were told: "It is Mani". When they heard ... they were full of anger ...

The accusations are then told to Kardel / Kartīr, passed through the proper authorities and thus finally to the king, who summons Mani (as in psalm 225).

Again, we can compare the relevant section in 2 Ke. It is interesting, and perhaps of considerable importance, that in this 'new' version of the cycle the accusations made by Kartīr and the Magians start long before Mani enters Bēlapat. In fact they begin before the first mention of Baat and Armenia; though after the episode where we find Mani beside the Tigris making allusions to his coming passion. Members of the king's family also seem to be involved in the accusations, which have a secular as well as a religious character. Unfortunately, I do not yet find (or understand) any explicit explanation as to why Mani came south, or in some way opened himself to the accusation that he had broken the conditions of his exile.

For the moment the matter must be left here. However, if one can be permitted to indulge in some speculation, the following scenario can be trialled. This is that the common modern understanding of Mani's 'last journey', which is so heavily dependent on 'The Section of the Narrative about the Crucifixion', has telescoped events so that they appear to occur over a much shorter period of time than was in fact the case; and also to focus, rather improbably, certain features of the 'plot' (if that is not too strong a word) or charges against Mani to a point after the apostle's entrance into Bēlapat. In principle, it seems more likely that the process took rather longer, and indeed there are strong indications that Mani's troubles had been on-going for several years, since the time of Shapur I:<sup>129</sup>

127 Hom 45, 2 may be a reference to the matter: 'For [he understood] that if he should come to [that] place ...'. But nothing else can be derived from the passage about this.

128 Hom 45, 11–14. Alternatively, and perhaps with better sense, translate: 'When the Magians observed (the people) asking, "Who now is this who has entered?"; they told them, "It is Mani!". When they heard (etc.): One should also compare the Parthian fragments. In Henning's edition (1942(b): 949) Mani 'ostentatiously' enters into Bēlapat, whereupon Kartīr and his friends begin to plot against him. However, I am not convinced that these lines are properly understood, so I prefer not to put too much weight on the reading.

129 2Ps 19, 12–15. Note that Bahram's grief for his sister, which is a feature of the 'Last Days'

[From] the day of the great persecution to the day of the cross there are six years;  
I spent them walking in the midst of the world like captives in the midst of strangers.

If this is so, it may well be that Bahram first sent Mani into 'internal' exile with the vassal-king Baat in Armenia. The timing coincides with a brief period of Sasanian ascendancy there; and indeed Narseh, whom we know to have persecuted the apostle, was appointed king of Armenia, probably by Bahram I himself after his accession to the imperial throne.<sup>130</sup> One might imagine that Baat was given custody of the apostle subject to the authority of Narseh, and that Mani then travelled north with (?) him about the start of Bahram's reign. However, he succeeded in winning over Baat and his subsequent failure to fulfil the terms of his exile would have provided an appropriate cause for the king to act against him. This would also give a possible context for the *Acts of Archelaus*. Whether the Castellum Arabionis was in Sasanian Armenia depends on the identification, for which various possibilities have been suggested. There are good reasons to accept a site very much to the north, and at minimum 'on the road' to Armenia. One could even speculate that the apostle might have hoped to try his fortunes at some point across the border in the Roman empire. But then, for whatever reason, the apostle returned to his home territory in the south (perhaps hoping for security amongst his many followers there). At this point one can well imagine, once notice of this was brought to the king, that Mani would have been forced to come to Bēlapat to answer the charges against him.

Although this is all hypothetical, one can hardly avoid referencing Birūnī:<sup>131</sup> Shapur banished Mani from his empire, faithful to the law of Zarathustra that false prophets be expelled. He imposed upon him the obligation never to return. Hence Mani journeyed to India, China and Tibet, and preached his gospel there. Afterwards he returned, was arrested by Bahram and killed for having broken the stipulation, as he had thereby forfeited his life.

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cycle in both the Hom (46, 25) and 2 Ke (450, 8 / G338) codices, could thus conceivably be the same event as the death of Shapur's 'son' in the *Acts of Archelaus*.

130 See my earlier comments on 2 Ke 445, 2–7 / G309; although I suggested that the referenced persecution took place during Narseh's reign as King of the Sakas. For an authoritative discussion of Narseh see Weber 2012.

131 Thus Birūnī ed. Sachau 1879: 209 (also quoted in Reeves 2011: 43).

### Mani's Trial in Bēlapat

In a strict sense the passion narrative proper only starts at this point; but, for the moment, and having illustrated what the issues are and what can be gained by such an endeavour as this, I need to draw the discussion to a close. I will finish with a brief introduction to the problem of dating Mani's passion in the light of the new evidence provided by the version of the cycle preserved in 2 Ke. This event, naturally, was core to the community's liturgical life and at the heart of the emotional response made by believers. In the pattern established by the events of the passion (entrance to Bēlapat; trial before Bahram and the antagonism of Kartūr; the apostle's imprisonment, death and ascent) we can see clearly a kind of 'holy week' and a 'holy month', with very obvious similarities to narratives dear to other religious communities. The Manichaeans were particularly and explicitly conscious of the parallels with Jesus, Jerusalem, the Jews and their priests, Pilate and the Roman authorities, the agony of the cross. Thus the memorials of the day-by-day events established a framework for remembrance and ritual life.

Textual evidence for these 'memorials' are to be found embedded in Manichaean literature, with the most famous examples in 'The Section of the Narrative about the Crucifixion':<sup>132</sup>

This is the memorial from [the day of] his crucifixion until the hour when he came forth: [On the] Lord's Day he entered Bēlapat; on the second day (i.e. Monday) he [was] accused; on the third they ... he fortified his church [until the] Sabbath. They searched for him and bound him. [Afterwards ...] all his enemies. On the [Sabbath they] sealed his chains; they took [him in to the prison]. They bound him on the eighth day of [Meshir.

132 I quote here Hom 60, 1–17; see also 45, 19–22. According to Sundermann, such *Apomnēmoneumata*, still extant in Coptic and Parthian versions, are amongst the oldest community traditions to be found in Manichaean literature. His preference for the Greek term is derived from the anti-Manichaean 'abjuration formulae', where is found mention of the title of a book τῶν ἀπομνημονεύματων. He regarded this as evidence of a collection of traditions on the life of Mani and his disciples, and the Coptic term πῆρικεγε 'The Memorial' (thus Hom 60, 2) as the exact equivalent of the same. See Sundermann 1988; also 1987: 263–265. For discussion of the cited Greek references, see e.g. Lieu 1983 (also in 1994: 229, 236, 270). Lieu suggests an identification of the work ('Book of Recollections') more broadly with that literary tradition represented amongst our available sources by the Medinet Madi Acts codex and the 'Cologne' *Mani-Codex*.

Until] the day when he went to the heights shall make twenty-[six] days he was bound in chains of iron. At the eleventh [hour] of the day he rose from [the body] up to the dwelling-places of his greatness [in] the heights. He met his Form ... of the lights. He came forth and leapt to the heights [with (?)] the power who had come for him.

However, a new detail is added in the 2 Ke version where it is stated explicitly that Mani entered Bēlapat on the Lord's Day (i.e. a Sunday) in the month of Tōbe,<sup>133</sup> which is the fifth Egyptian month of the year. What can we conclude from this, and does it help with any of the much-discussed problems concerning the chronology of Mani's life?

It is agreed that the dates of Mani's passion were of vital interest to his community as they underpinned the liturgical calendar, with his death at the eleventh hour of the fourth day of the Aramaic month of Adar widely attested from diverse sources. This was recorded as a Monday, which helps us but does not entirely solve the question of the year of his death (most likely the 2nd March 274 or the 26th February 277). Prior to the death the community commemorated twenty-six days of his torment. In the Coptic tradition the month of Adar was glossed as the Egyptian Paremhatēp (Phamenoth), the seventh month of the year. Since Mani's death occurred on a Monday, the date of his 'chaining'—from which would be calculated the twenty-six days of his passion—would have to be reckoned as the 8th of Meshir; and indeed this date is to be found in the Hom codex (cited above). This was then a Wednesday; but that fact is problematic as the sources all speak of Mani entering Bēlapat on the Sunday, and then being accused, tried and chained at the end of one week i.e. the following Saturday / Sunday. How does one get to the following Wednesday?

The new information that Mani arrived on a Sunday in Bēlapat in the month of Tōbe does one important thing. It means that the twenty-six days simply can not be calculated from Mani's chaining on the following Saturday or Sunday after he entered Bēlapat; because, if so, Mani would have arrived there already in Meshir (as the twenty-six days are dated from the 8th). This provides vital support for the supposition that those 26 days must indeed be calculated from the following Wednesday, although it remains unclear to us what exactly was the significance of the Wednesday rather than the previous Saturday or Sunday. A. Böhlig tried to answer this question by suggesting that the first 'chaining' on Saturday / Sunday was only a kind of civil

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133 2 Ke 452, 8–9 / G336.

confinement and that the real punishment began on the following Wednesday; and something like this now seems to be the only possible solution.<sup>134</sup> Thus:

- A. Entrance to Bēlapat Sunday (this must be 28th Tōbe in the Egyptian calendar).
- B. Accused on the Monday.
- C. 'Strengthened his church' until the Saturday.
- D. Condemned and chained on the Saturday / Sunday (both days are recorded).
- E. Dates of the 26 days begin on Wednesday (8th Meshir).
- F. Died on Monday (4th of Paremhatēp = 4th Adar).

### Concluding Comment

Here I must draw to a close what is really only 'Part 1' of this research project. Many of the most vital episodes concerning Mani's trial, imprisonment and death have hardly been introduced. That must wait for another time. The ultimate goal, of course, is to develop a coherent thesis about the development of the 'Last Days' cycle in all its versions, both within and without the Manichaean community. This task has hardly been begun, given that some of the most important extant sources still await critical editions and given the many evident problems concerning core issues. The present chapter is no more than a partial attempt to prepare the groundwork.<sup>135</sup>

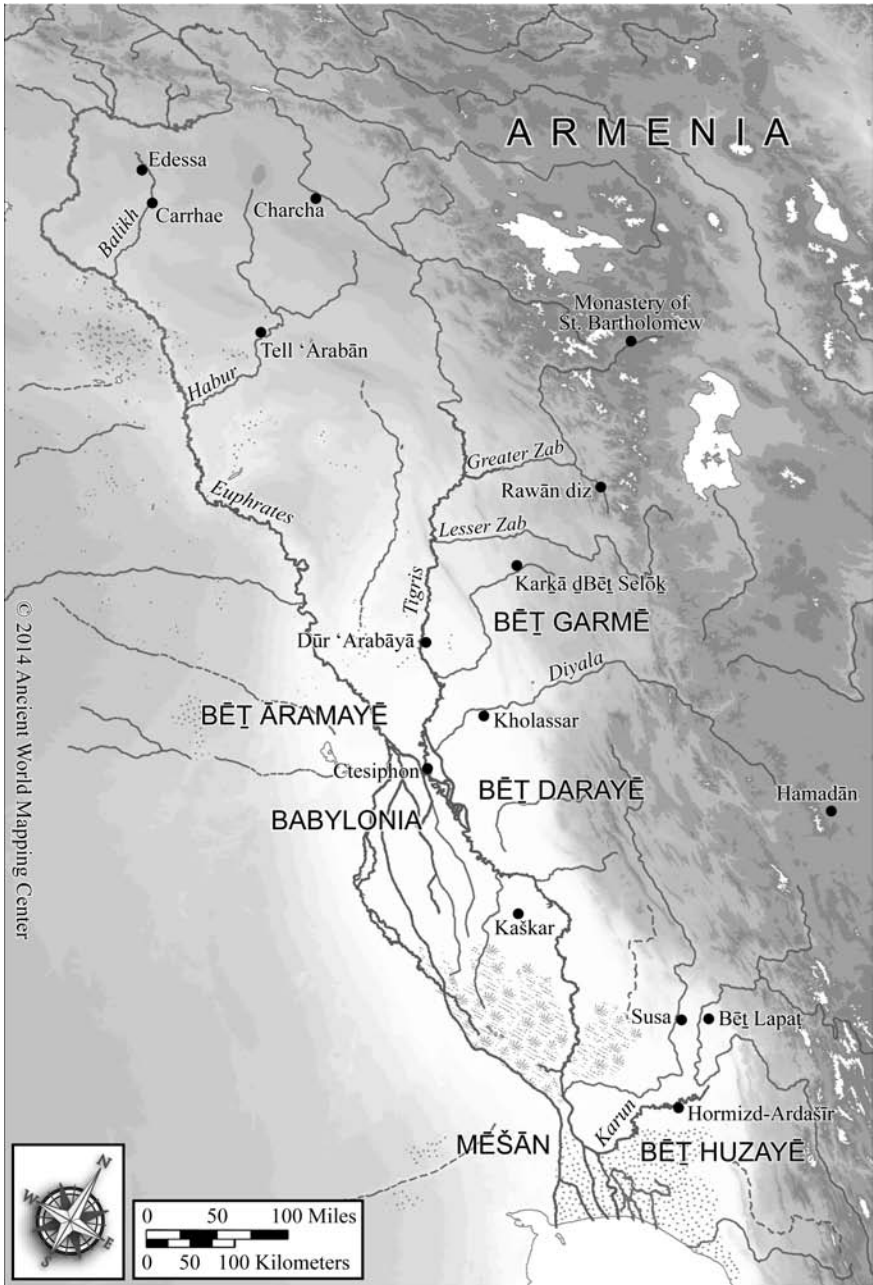
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134 For further detailed discussion of the available sources see Sundermann 1987: 76–77. There will be found the conclusion that Mani's period in Bēlapat to his death must have totaled thirty-seven days. Our new textual confirmation that he entered Bēlapat already in the month of Tōbe corresponds to this calculation.

135 As regards prior scholarship, see Sundermann's discussion of those sources available to him 1986: 259–261. He argues that the Coptic version, as represented in the Hom, was one that was abbreviated and systematised; compared to the evidence provided by the Parthian fragments. But a proper, synoptic, comparison of all the sources still needs to be attempted.



Map



*Mesopotamia as the Arena for Mani's Last Journeys*

**Table of Place Names with Their Linguistic Equivalents and  
Identifications as Discussed in Chapter Seven**

Place name (in 2 Ke, Hom, <i>Acta Archelai</i> et al.)	Equivalents and / or identifications (some accepted, others speculative or doubtful)
Abarshahar (ΑΒΑΡΩΔΕΣΑΡ)	Abaršahr
Arabion castle ( <i>Castellum Arabionis</i> )	Tell 'Arabān in the mid-course of the Habur (?) (or) Dūr 'Arabāyā on the Tigris (?) (or) Arebanos / Albanopolis in Armenia (?) (or) Revān (Erebuni / Yerevan) in Armenia (?) (or) Rawān diz north-east of Arbil (?) (or) Arīwan in Bēt Garmē (?) (or unknown / fictional)
Amahathan (ΑΜΑΘΑΘΑΝ)	Hamadān
Babylon (ΒΑΒΥΛΩΝ)	Babylonia
Bēlapat (ΒΗΛΑΠΑΤ)	Bēt Lapaṭ (also) Gondēšāpūr
Chaldaea / Chaldaeans (ΧΑΛΔΑ[ ])	Chaldaea (or) read χαλα[ for Khalasar (i.e. Kholassar) (or) Khala for Ḥulwān
Ktēsiphōn (ΚΤΗΣΙΦΩΝ)	Ctesiphon / Ṭisfūn
Diodoris	(unknown village)
Gaukhai (gwxu)	Gaukhai in Bēt Darayē
Hermēneia (ΕΡΜΗΝΕΙΑ)	Discourse by Mani or lecture-hall (?) (or) Armenia (otherwise: ΑΡΜΕΝΙΑ)
Hormēsdakshahar (ΖΟΡΗΝΣΔΑΚΩΔΕΣΑΡ) (City of) Ilam / Elam (Ἰλαμ)	Hormizd-Ardašīr ('whrmzdyd 'rdxšyhr) (i.e.) Ahvāz on the Kārūn Susa (?)
India / (Land of the) Indians (Ἰνδοῦ)	India
Karchar (or: Kaschar, Kalchar)	<i>karḳā</i> ('town', 'fortified settlement')—various (e.g.) Charcha (Arcaiapis)

(cont.)

Place name (in 2 Ke, Hom, <i>Acta Archelai</i> et al.)	Equivalents and / or identifications (some accepted, others speculative or doubtful)
	(or) Karḳā d̄Bēt Selōk̄ (i.e. Kirkuk) (otherwise) Kaškar on the lower Tigris (?) (or) Carrhae / Harran (?)
Kholassar (Χολασσαρ)	Kholassar (also) Artemita on the Diyala
Kilan (ΚΙΛΑΝ)	Gilān
Koushan (ΚΟΥΦΑΝ / ΓΟΥΦΑΝ)	Kušān
Maisanos (ΜΑΪΣΑΝΟΣ)	Mesene / Mēšān
(Land of) Ozeos (οζεος)	Susiana (also) Bēt Huzayē / Kūzestān
Pargalia (ΠΑΡΓΑΛΙΑ)	Phalcara near mouth of the Lesser Zab (?) (or unknown)
Parthia (ΠΑΡΘΙΑ)	Parthia
Persia (ΠΕΡΣΙΣ)	Persia / Persis
(Queen of the) Sakas ( <i>Sakān-bānbišn</i> )	(i.e.) Sakastān / Sistān
(Land of the) Salanōn (ΣΑΛΑΝΩΝ)	Zarang / Drangiana (or: The parts of the) Alans
Sousōn (ΣΟΥΣΩΝ)	Susa
Stranga (river)	Habur (?) (or) Greater Zab (?) (or) Tigris
Tigris or 'the great river' (†ΓΡΙΣ or ΠΝΑΘ̄ ΝΙΕΡΟ)	Tigris

PART 3

*Manichaeism and the History of Religions*





## 'Hell Exists, and We Have Seen the Place Where It Is': Rapture and Religious Competition in Sasanian Iran\*

*Paul Dilley*

In Kephalaion 342 of the Chester Beatty *Kephalaia*, Mani presents a list of his apostolic predecessors who, like himself, have experienced visions of otherworldly realms. When they return, these teachers bear testimony to disciples about the existence of heaven and hell, and leave written records of their journeys. This passage has close similarities to the section of the Greek *Mani-Codex* in which Baraies cites revelations of antediluvian seers, including Adam and Enoch, in order to demonstrate the veracity of Mani's own visions, concluding with a quotation from the *Living Gospel*. While κ342 also mentions these figures from Jewish tradition, it does so almost as an afterthought, instead focusing on Zarades, Buddha, and Jesus, the apostolic triumvirate from the *Šābuhragān*. Both passages, I suggest, are expansions of one or more key passages from Mani's own writings: The CMC is focused on Judaeo-Christian traditions, perhaps related to the concerns of Manichaean missionaries within the Roman empire; while 2 Ke reflects the religious diversity of the Iranian cultural and political spheres in late antiquity.

The Sasanian context of κ342 is also apparent from its close textual correspondences with Kartīr's account of his otherworldly vision, which I explore in the first part of this chapter. According to Mani, all of the apostles<sup>1</sup>

... were seized from this place, they were [taken] up, they went, they saw, they came (back), *they bore witness (that truly?) the land of light exists and that we have come from it. Also, hell exists, and we have seen the place where it is.*

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\* Parts of this chapter were presented at the 7th World Syriac Conference at Kerala, India, in September 2010. The discourse of otherworldly visions in Sasanian Iran as it relates to the Syriac Acts of the Persian Martyrs is covered in more detail in my 'Introduction' to Brock and Dilley, forthcoming. I also wish to thank Richard Salomon for his advice on aspects of Buddhism in northwest India.

1 2 Ke 423, 16–18 / G299.

Similarly, Kartīr exhorts his readers: ‘... *for they should know for certain that there is a heaven and there is hell*, and he who is virtuous goes forth to heaven and he who is sinful is cast into hell.’<sup>2</sup> Does this striking verbal resonance suggest a shared polemical strategy against some unnamed group that denied the existence of otherworldly realms?<sup>3</sup> Skepticism regarding the afterlife and retribution is widely attested in the Roman empire, sometimes as an explicit position taken by Epicureans and Sadducees.<sup>4</sup> More generally, however, the denial of heaven and hell was associated with sinful behavior.<sup>5</sup> Kartīr also correlates heaven and hell with piety, and his concern to bear witness regarding otherworldly realms is best understood as a more general assertion of the need to follow his teaching. Mani’s competing visionary narrative in K342 similarly ties it to the successful ascent of his followers, and provides a substantial confirmation of the emerging scholarly consensus identifying Kartīr’s vision as, at least in part, a response to his claims.<sup>6</sup>

Mani also refers to various accounts of otherworldly revelations by Zarades, Buddha, and Jesus, situating his own revelation as the culmination of these distinguished predecessors. As I will demonstrate in ‘Part II’, similar apocalyptic journeys are indeed found in roughly contemporaneous Graeco-Roman, Jewish, Christian Mandaean, Mazdayasnian, and Buddhist literature. While it is unlikely that Mani was familiar with the specific texts identified in this chapter, he (or the compiler of the *Kephalaia*) was pointing to a shared interest in heaven and hell among these diverse groups. Scholars have long been aware of the common appeal to otherworldly journeys within Rome and Iran.<sup>7</sup> But these studies are usually diachronic, with the goal of tracing influence from privileged beginnings: Wilhelm Bousset’s famous study ‘Die Himmelseise der Seele’, for example, identified an Iranian origin for accounts of the

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2 Kartīr, inscription 37 (MacKenzie 1989: 61).

3 Zaehner argued that Kartīr’s message is directed against the Zurvanites, proposing later evidence for their denial of heaven and hell (Zaehner 1955: 23); his thesis is rejected in Skjaervø 1997: 315. For a critique of Zurvanism as a modern scholarly construction, see especially Shaked 1994(a).

4 Bauckham 1998: 226–230. Although this attitude was widespread, it does not necessarily follow that it had increased significantly throughout the society of the early Roman empire, as argued in Cumont 1922.

5 This denial is ascribed to Cain in a Palestinian Targum, a move that “condemns all eschatological skepticism as antinomian” (Bauckham 1998: 230).

6 See e.g. Russell 1990(a) and Skjaervø 1997, with references. The most complete discussion is now found in Skjaervø 2011, which builds on his earlier work.

7 The *Religionsgeschichtliche Schule* generally ignores Buddhism, in contrast to this chapter, which considers it an important component of Sasanian religious culture.

soul's ascent, charting its subsequent diffusion throughout the Mediterranean world.<sup>8</sup> Geo Widengren later traced the pattern of heavenly ascent, commission, and descent by prophets and apostles to ancient Mesopotamia, specifically the royal enthronement ritual entronement.<sup>9</sup> This penchant of the *Religionsgeschichtliche Schule* to offer sweeping chronological studies, explaining later developments in terms of presumed origins in the remote past, has come under sustained scholarly criticism.<sup>10</sup> As Michael Puett argues in his study of spiritual ascent in early China, with reference to Bousset's claims of Iranian origin for heavenly ascents: 'Even if the authors did get the notion from earlier sources or from another culture ... this does not explain why they appropriated it'. He further notes that 'claims for ascension are made only at certain times in certain contexts'.<sup>11</sup>

In this chapter, I propose a synchronic approach to analyzing apocalyptic language and literature in the early Sasanian empire and its peripheral regions, rather than attempting to uncover ancient Iranian, or Mesopotamian, origins. The discourse on otherworldly realms served as a common idiom to establish the authority of a community's doctrine and rituals. As I argue in 'Part III', Mani and Kartīr asserted not only that heaven and hell exist, but also that the rites performed by the *electi* and *mōbeds*, respectively, would guarantee the salvation of the king and his relative. Their rivalry was connected to patronage: Mani sought support for the daily ritual meals of the *electi*, while Kartīr sought support for the fire temples, and their associated rites, which he founded throughout the empire. Both rituals could be carried out on behalf of the souls of the royal family. Manichaean and Buddhist hagiography suggests that similar competitions for patronage occurred at various courts within Sasanian Iran, in which Mani and others 'demonstrated' the existence of heaven and hell to gain the support of regional elites.

In this context, Mani's various appeals to otherworldly realms are informed by the long tradition of apocalyptic discourse, especially in Judaeo-Christian

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8 Bousset 1901. For Richard Reitzenstein's tracing of 'gnosis' and the 'redeemed redeemer' to ancient Iran, see my comments in chapter 5.

9 Widengren 1950. He associates these ascents with the conferral of a heavenly book, in contrast to the raptures discussed in this chapter, which are concerned to verify the existence of otherworldly realms.

10 See e.g. Colpe 1961 and King 2003; the need for a more nuanced approach is emphasized in Crone 2012(b). Despite these critiques, 'histories' of heaven and hell remain popular: e.g. Bernstein 1996; Bremmer 2001; Kappler 1987; Segal 2004; Wright 2002.

11 Puett 2004: 204.



literature, but develops it in new directions.<sup>12</sup> Some apocalypses functioned as records of inner spiritual quests, or manuals for practices of ascent; while Mani's visions were rooted in the practice of daily prayer, as I argue below, they were not intended to enable his followers to experience similar raptures themselves. Nor did these spectacular ascent-performances unfold within his own community, but in a court setting, before princes who encountered and consulted with various ritual experts. In contrast to the usual scholarly claim that apocalypses were especially popular among marginalized groups, the evidence from Sasanian Iran suggests that revelations about heaven and hell attracted the attention of the highest class, including the king himself.<sup>13</sup> Mani, the 'good interpreter', boasted that he was at the climax of a lengthy progression of apocalyptic seers, including Zarades and Buddha, in a bold act of cultural hermeneutics which simultaneously acknowledged rival claims to otherworldly vision and asserted his own primacy in this area.<sup>14</sup>

### κ 342, the *Šābuhragān*, and Kartīr's Vision

In the following section, I explore a series of connections between κ342 and the CMC, both of which list Mani's apostolic predecessors, describing their rapture and visions, and then conclude with a first-person narration in which Mani affirms his own visionary experience. I hypothesize that the similarity between the two passages is because they are reworkings of the *Coming of the Apostle* chapter from the *Šābuhragān*, a Middle Persian text dedicated to Shapur in which Mani outlined his religious system.<sup>15</sup> In a sense, the account

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12 I adopt the following broad definition of the so-called apocalyptic perspective: '... framed spatially by the supernatural world and temporally by the eschatological judgment ... it provides a resolution in the imagination by instilling conviction in the 'revealed knowledge' that it imparts. The function of apocalyptic literature is to shape one's imaginative perception of a situation and so lay the basis for whatever course of action it supports' (Collins 1998: 41–42). While no stand-alone apocalyptic text by Mani has survived, other texts, such as the κ342 and the CMC, certainly demonstrate this 'apocalyptic perspective'.

13 See the review and critique of this position in Townsend and Vidas 2012.

14 As BeDuhn notes (see below, chapter 9): 'His desire to relate and compare himself to these others, rather than distance himself from them, produced a self-conscious attention to their parallelism of origin, structure, and purpose'.

15 For an overview of the current state of knowledge regarding the *Šābuhragān*, including its chapters, see Reck 2010.

of his revelation and vision provided the necessary authority for his teaching.<sup>16</sup> In exploring their connected passages, it also becomes clear that both K342 and the CMC are echoed in the description of Kartīr’s vision. The similarities in their description of the soul’s post-mortem journey, as well as the very strategy of recording their vision as a ‘sign’ for the general validity of their teaching, can be partly explained as Kartīr’s response to the *Šābuhragān*.<sup>17</sup>

Mani’s account in K342 of his own vision in light of his predecessors is introduced by a more general reflection on previous apostles, and the various geographic locations in which their ‘laws’ were revealed:<sup>18</sup>

I will [tell] you each one of the apostles by name, they who came and appeared in this world. Zarades was sent to Persia, to Hystaspes the king. He revealed the truly-founded law in all of Persia. Again, Bouddas the blessed, he came to the land of India and Kušān. He also revealed the truly-founded law in all of India and Kušān. And after him Aurentes came with Kebellos to the east. They also revealed the truly-founded law in the east. (N.N.) came to Parthia. He revealed the law of truth in all of Parthia. Jesus the Christ came to the west.

This list includes individuals frequently named as Mani’s predecessors, including Zarathustra, Buddha, and Jesus; as well as surprising additions, namely Aurentes and Kebellos, the latter likely a reference to the Jain term *kevalin*.<sup>19</sup> The claim that each apostle had a ‘law’ is interesting and important; the ‘law of Zarades’, for example, is quoted in the previous chapter, K341, and may have referred either to scripture, or the ritual practices described therein. The passage then shifts from a discussion of the apostles’ laws to their visionary experience of heaven and hell:<sup>20</sup>

For they were seized from this place, they were [taken] up, they went, they saw, they came (back), they bore witness (that truly?) the land of light

16 Note the theory that apocalypticism primarily concerns the transmission of alternative wisdom, thus Rowland 2002.

17 Similarities might also result from the Mani’s knowledge of the ‘law of Zarades’, which was evidently used by Kartīr; see my chapter 5 in this volume.

18 2 Ke 422, 28–423, 11 / G302 + 299. An earlier version of this passage’s Coptic text, based on his reading of the facsimile edition, was published in Tardieu 1988: 164.

19 Gardner 2005; Deeg and Gardner 2009. The apostle to Parthia may be Elchasai (cf. Hippolytus, *Refutation of All Heresies* 9, 13), although the possibility of this reading has not yet been confirmed, given the highly fragmentary state of the text.

20 2 Ke 423, 15–424, 5 / G299–300.

exists and that we have come from it. Also, hell exists, and we have seen the place where it is. They (came forth and) dwelt (?) in the world. They made disciples of the people. They (taught them what is good?), they ... from them. They were taken to the land of light, this city of good fortune. Their witness exists till now in their writings, in all these countries ... Also, Adam and Seth, Enosh and Sem and Enoch and Noah and Shem; all these men: The angels came from the land of light and seized them. They were taken up. They were taught about the land of light, how it is; and they were also taught about hell and the place where it exists. They came back (?), they came to this place again. And when they came they spoke. They bore witness about the land of light and hell, that they exist. They did that which was entrusted to them by God. Indeed, these who became disciples of them: They did good deeds, and they came forth from their body and they went to the land of light, the city of the well-favoured. Their testimony exists till now in their writings.

Mani thus places a visionary experience of heaven and hell at the very center of apostolic activity, alongside their respective laws. After 'bearing witness' to the existence of these otherworldly realms, they recruit disciples, who in turn do good deeds, and themselves reach heaven, presumably at death. According to this passage, the writings of Zarades, Buddha, Jesus, and the other apostles provide evidence for their otherworldly journeys.<sup>21</sup> Mani also mentions additional predecessors, namely antediluvian heroes, such as Adam and Enoch. Finally, he describes his own vision of the land of light, emphasizing that he too is an eyewitness.<sup>22</sup>

I, myself, whom you are looking at: I went to the land of light. Indeed, I have seen the land of light with my eyes, the way that it is. [Again], I have seen hell with my eyes, the way that it is. I have (been sent here) by God. I came; I have revealed this place (i.e. the land of light) [in this] world. I preached the word of God; and I ... of God in the world from the north to [the south. A] multitude of people have heard me. They have believed ... How many among them have done good deeds! They came forth [from their] body and they went to the land of light, they ... they are established, being there until today.

21 This seems to conflict with the statement at 1 Ke 7, 30–33 that Jesus, Zarades, and Buddha did not write their own books, but left this task to their disciples.

22 2 Ke 424, 7–17 / G300.

In κ342 Mani thus posits a close relationship between the apostles' laws, their otherworldly visions, and salvation. The existence of heaven and hell is a key means of affirming the law: Those who follow it ('how many among them have done good deeds!') will go to heaven, while sinners, it is implied, will go to hell. Mani's language in this passage suggests that he presented his entire message as encompassed in a single revelation that was legitimated by an otherworldly journey.<sup>23</sup>

The report of apostolic journeys in κ342 has close parallels to the testimony of Baraies in the CMC:<sup>24</sup>

Each one of the forefathers demonstrated his own revelation to his own elect, which he chose and assembled in that generation in which he appeared, and, having written it down, transmitted it to posterity ... So therefore, each one of them, according to the period and course of his apostleship, spoke about what he had seen and has written it as a memorial, and also about his rapture (ἀρπαγής).

Like the anonymous narrator in κ342, Baraies outlines Mani's predecessors ('forefathers'), noting that they chose a group of elect to whom they transmitted a written record of their revelation.<sup>25</sup> He even presents a number of quotations that he ascribes to these documents.<sup>26</sup> While his presentation of apostolic raptures does not present them as testimony about heaven and hell, his quotations suggest that this was a key component of the revelations. In one, the archangel Michael addresses Enoch:<sup>27</sup>

For this reason I was sent to you, that we may point out to you all the works and reveal to you the land of the pious, and show you the land of the impious and what the place of punishment of the lawless is like.

Although κ342 does not cite these apocalypses, it does share with the CMC a nearly identical list of antediluvian visionaries: The former text names Adam,

23 For example, Baraies, in the CMC, lists the 'rapture' and the 'revelation' as complementary aspects of Mani's apostleship (CMC 70, 8–16).

24 CMC 47, 3–12 and 48, 8–15.

25 CMC 44, 19–72, 7.

26 For a detailed analysis of the traditions behind the citations of Baraies, see Reeves 1996; for the rhetorical strategies in this passage, see Frankfurter 1997, who suggests that they are fabrications of the author rather than quotations from actual works.

27 CMC 59, 6–15.

Seth, Enosh, Sem, Enoch, Noah, and Shem; the latter Adam, Sethel, Enos, Sem, Enoch, and Paul.<sup>28</sup> Despite its omission of Paul, κ342 similarly speaks of the apostles being ‘seized’ (ἀγταρπιουγ), which echoes the language of 2 Cor 12:4, a passage explicitly cited by Baraies (ἡρπαγή).<sup>29</sup> Like κ342, the list of apostles in the CMC ends with a first-person account by Mani of his own revelation, in this case explicitly cited by Baraies as from the *Living Gospel*:<sup>30</sup>

And from him (the Father of Truth) everything true was revealed to me, and I belong to his truth. I have seen [the truth of the aeons which he revealed] and I declared the truth to my companions; I preached peace to the children of peace; I proclaimed hope to the immortal race; I chose the elect and showed the path to the height to those ascending according to this truth.

The major difference between the apostolic lists in κ342 and the CMC is that only the former lists the trio of Zarades, Buddha, and Jesus, and indeed expands it further with Kebellos, the Aurentes, and the apostle to Parthia. The CMC, by contrast, is restricted to the antediluvian visionaries and Paul, an omission which may reflect a different emphasis in mission to the Roman empire, as opposed to the focus in 2 Ke on the Iranian world.<sup>31</sup>

The apostolic list in κ342 especially suggests a connection with the *Šābuh-raqān*, which, according to Birūnī, named Buddha, Zarathustra, and Jesus as Mani’s predecessors.<sup>32</sup> A larger group of apostles is preserved in ‘Abd al-Jabbār: Before Zarathustra, Buddha, and Jesus are listed Adam, Seth, and Noah;<sup>33</sup> similarly, one of the Middle Persian fragments includes the antediluvian figures

28 Thus the 2 Ke passage distinguishes between Shem and Sem, as do other Manichaean texts, has Seth for Sethel (on the latter see Stroumsa 1984: 73–77; Reeves 1996: 112–114), and lists Noah but not Paul.

29 2 Ke 423, 15 and 25 / G299; CMC 61, 1–14. For τωρη as a synonym for ἡρπαγῶ, see Crum 1939, s.v.

30 CMC 66, 18–67, 11.

31 Although the trio may have been mentioned at the bottom of CMC 47, which has not been preserved, the list of apostles nevertheless seems to begin with Adam at CMC 48, 19. Thus Jesus is replaced here by Paul whose account of rapture in 2 Corinthians 12:2–4 made him particularly appropriate. Conversely, Hermes and Plato are mentioned in Ephrem’s list of apostles, and Orpheus in Augustine’s, but are absent in extant Iranian sources.

32 Birūnī, *Āthār*, tr. Reeves 2011: 103. The same trio is listed by Marwazī; and at 1 Ke 7, 30–33, in which it is stated that the three apostles did not write texts themselves, leaving the task to their disciples.

33 ‘Abd al-Jabbār, *Mughnī*, tr. Reeves 2011: 102. Note also Shahrastānī, who includes Adam,

Shem, Sem, Enosh, Nikotheos, and Enoch.<sup>34</sup> While there is clearly some variation within these lists, 2 Ke shares with the *Šābuhragān* the combination of antediluvian patriarchs with Zarades, Buddha, and Jesus. Finally, like the citation of the *Living Gospel* in the testimony of Baraies from the CMC, and even more closely parallel to κ342, the list of the apostles in the *Šābuhragān* concludes with Mani’s affirmation of his own revelation. According to Bīrūnī, he identifies himself as the apostle to Babylon: ‘Now this revelation has descended and this prophecy is promulgated during this final era by me, Mānī, the apostle of the God of truth to Babylonia.’<sup>35</sup>

The common structure of an apostolic list followed by Mani’s first-person assertion of apostleship is probably derived from the section of the *Šābuhragān* entitled: *On the Coming of the Prophet*.<sup>36</sup> Several Middle Persian fragments with related autobiographical statements, for example on topics such as his connection to Babylon and his role in the redemption of light,<sup>37</sup> have been plausibly assigned to the same section by Sundermann.<sup>38</sup> According to Bīrūnī, it also included Mani’s dating of his major revelation to the third year of Ardashir, that is, when he was twelve.<sup>39</sup> The same dating is probably followed in the first chapter of 1 Ke, similarly entitled *On the Coming of the Apostle*.<sup>40</sup> In this passage, Mani reports how his Paraclete / Twin revealed to him a number

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Seth, Noah and Abraham (Reeves 2011: 104). Despite Mani’s general anti-Jewish polemic, he perhaps claimed the latter patriarch because of an association with Chaldea.

34 M299a, ed. Henning 1934: 27–28.

35 Bīrūnī, *Āthār*, tr. Reeves 2011: 103.

36 Of course, the work was meant to present this revelation in the best possible light: ‘The evidence provided by Bīrūnī suggests that the work featured a first-person promotional announcement by Mani advertising his religious credentials’ (Reeves 2011: 98).

37 Thus M3414.

38 The other fragments detail Mani’s conversation with his family about his revelation (M49); and his first missionary efforts in the regions of Babylonia, Bēt ‘Arbāyē, and near the Roman empire (M464a). These are published in Sundermann 1981: texts 5.1–5.6, where they are identified with the *Šābuhragān* based on parallels with some of the eschatological fragments in MacKenzie 1979. Interestingly, this material recalls the extant sections on Mani’s early mission in the CMC.

39 Ibn al-Nadīm seems to harmonize this with the account in the CMC, asserting that Mani had two revelations, one at age thirteen, another at age twenty-four.

40 There is no date given in the passage mentioning Ardashir and Shapur (1 Ke 15, 24–16, 2). While the *Šābuhragān* is not known by name in sources from the Roman empire, this passage from the Berlin *Kephalaia* suggests that it was reworked, if not explicitly cited. The substantial number of Middle Persian fragments discovered at Turfan suggests its central importance for the eastern Manichaean tradition.

of 'mysteries' regarding creation through mixture, the purification of the light elements through ships and the return of the darkness to the abyss, the creation of Adam and the tree of knowledge, the past apostles, elect and catechumens; and, finally, 'the mysteries of the sinners and their deeds, and the punishment that lies hidden for them'.<sup>41</sup> By way of conclusion, Mani emphasizes that he is now an eyewitness to the entire cosmos: 'I have seen the all through him, I have become a single body and a single spirit'.<sup>42</sup> He thus describes his revelation as a single event which is concluded by a vision of heaven and hell.<sup>43</sup>

Of course, Mani is said to have had multiple visions during his career, and the CMC even suggests that he had two primary revelations.<sup>44</sup> One of these is dated to April 240 C.E., when Shapur became co-regent with Ardashir, on Mani's twenty-fourth birthday. Mani notes that the Twin drew him (εἰλκυσεν) away from the 'law' of the baptists, revealing to him details about his status as an apostle.<sup>45</sup>

Who I am and what my body is, in what way I have come and how my coming into this world happened, and who I have become among those distinguished for superiority, and how I was born into this fleshly body, or through what woman I was delivered and born into this flesh, and by whom I was begotten.

Although the summary of the remaining content of this revelation is not as extensive as κ342, it included cosmology (the identity of the Father 'in the heights') and anthropology / soteriology (the nature of his own soul). The language of rapture is not explicitly used in the passage, but some kind of otherworldly vision is implied, as Mani refers to 'the boundless heights and unsearchable depths'.<sup>46</sup> Just as in κ342, Mani describes a revelation featuring the central points of his message, followed by a vision of heaven and hell.

The following testimony in the CMC, attributed to Timotheos, also relates an encounter of Mani with his Twin, perhaps a second revelation in which he sought confirmation of the first. In this account, the Twin assures him:

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41 1 Ke 15, 1–19, tr. Gardner and Lieu 2004: 74.

42 1 Ke 14, 31–15, 24. This uses language from Christian tradition, possibly alluding to *Gospel of Thomas* 22: 'When you make the two into one ... then you will enter [the kingdom]'.

43 Presumably a description of heaven was included in the section on elect and catechumens.

44 The contradictory evidence in both eastern and western sources regarding Mani's primary revelation(s) is collected and judiciously analyzed in Sundermann 1986(b).

45 CMC 21, 2–16.

46 CMC 23, 13–14.

‘These signs that you requested from me will be made known through me, so that they will also be revealed to you quite clearly’.<sup>47</sup> The following passage is fragmentary, but clearly the ‘sign’ offered to Mani includes a vision of: ‘The height and the depth, the rest and the punishment’; that is, of heaven, hell, and the fate of the soul.<sup>48</sup> This corresponds quite closely to Kartīr’s inscription, in which he asks for a ‘sign’ from the gods, and is granted a vision of heaven and hell, and the fate of his soul.<sup>49</sup> And, just as Kartīr places his vision in the context of his disputes with the ‘heretics’ and ‘persecution’ of other religions,<sup>50</sup> Mani requests a revelation so that ‘no one may conquer me in wisdom’.<sup>51</sup> His Twin later assures him: ‘... for it is through the signs of the truth that those of the lie are defeated’.<sup>52</sup> Finally, after the revelation, Mani proclaims that he is now ‘strengthened’ and ‘encouraged’;<sup>53</sup> while Kartīr states: ‘I became more confident about this worship and the rites which are performed in the empire’.<sup>54</sup> Thus Mani and Kartīr present the motivation and consequences of their visions in virtually identical terms; as we shall see, their understanding of otherworldly realms also substantially overlapped.

According to Ibn al-Nadīm, the *Šābuhragān* included information about the post-mortem fate of individuals, no doubt related to his visions of heaven and hell.<sup>55</sup>

These are the three paths apportioned for the souls of humans. One of them leads to paradise (lit. ‘the gardens’) and they (who travel on it) are the elect. The second leads (back) to the world and (its) terrors, and they (who travel on it) observe the religion and provide assistance to the elect. The third leads to *jahannam* (i.e. hell), and they (who travel on it) are the wicked people.

47 CMC 40, 7–11. For the allusion to Mark 8:12 and parallels, and to John 3, see Part II.

48 CMC 43, 1–3.

49 Kartīr, inscription 21; for the Avestan background of the ‘sign’, see Skjaervø 2011.

50 Kartīr, inscription 11.

51 CMC 37, 2–4. For more on the metaphor of war to describe disputes over ‘wisdom’, see my contribution in chapter 2.

52 CMC 41, 3–5. Note the proclamation of ‘error’ in a Coptic psalm: ‘That I may [wound] the children of men, that they might not trust the one who tells them: “Death exists; life exists; also the land of truth exists”’ (2 Ps 221, 17–18). See my discussion of this passage in Part II, in relation to Mandaean ascent literature.

53 CMC 41, 8–10.

54 Kartīr, inscription 21 and 36.

55 Ibn al-Nadīm, *Fihrist*, tr. Reeves 2011: 218. Another passage by Ibn al-Nadīm suggests that each topic had a separate chapter (Reeves 2011: 101).



Similarly, Mani declares in κ342 that those who do good ‘went to the land of light’; and in the *Living Gospel* he asserts that he showed the elect ‘the path to the height’. The *Šābuhragān* is also presumably the source for his detailed account of the ascent of the soul: The ‘wise guide’ is said to approach the souls of righteous elect and catechumens, bringing a cup, garments, headcloth, crown and garland of light; he upbraids the souls of sinners.<sup>56</sup> After being led to the judge, the soul is washed in the ‘column of glory’, and transported through the moon and the sun to the realm of light, where it is welcomed by the Mother of the Living and gazes on the Father of the Lights.<sup>57</sup>

Comparatively few extant Manichaean texts give details about hell. According to the Parthian fragment M6020.1, the soul of ‘the man who breaks faith with the buddha and apostle and leaves the church and violates the commandments will be led, in great shame and fear, before the just judge’. Instead of ascending the column of glory, he suffers terrible punishments there:<sup>58</sup>

And time and again they cut off his ears, and time and again they hack his tongue into slices, and in the same manner they cut all his limbs. And time and again they pour molten copper into his mouth and give him glowing-hot iron to eat and drive iron nails into his into his ears—who can wholly describe the wicked, horrible distress and suffering which that unfortunate unbeliever who soils the pure religion must undergo?

Other sources suggest that the Manichaeans taught that sinners would be reincarnated in a way that corresponded to their crime: For example, the *Acts of Archelaus* note that those who reap will be re-incarnated as barley or some other plant; the wealthy, for their part, will be re-incarnated as beggars.<sup>59</sup>

There are remarkable similarities between the Manichaean accounts of the soul’s ascent and Kartīr’s vision, and more generally the Avestan traditions adapted by him. As we have seen, Kartīr requests the vision as a ‘sign’, so that

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56 The full account is in Reeves 2011: 216–219. Another important description is found in κ141, entitled *How the Soul Comes forth from the Body* (1 Ke 343, 27–345, 3).

57 A similar journey is alluded to in the Coptic *Aufstiegspsalmen*, recited at meals in honor of the deceased, which as a corpus describe the soul’s ascent past hostile demons, before being met by a divine form (sometimes described as the Twin) and three angels, who lead it to paradise (Richter 1997: 30–59). On connections between Coptic funerary hymns and the Parthian *Hymns to the Living Soul*, which I discuss in chapter five in connection with Manichaean Zarathustra traditions, see Boyce 1954(b): 1–6.

58 Henning 1965: 31–33; with slight modifications from Sims-Williams 2009.

59 *Acts of Archelaus* 9.

he can gain confidence in the rites he oversees in the empire. The ensuing journey is apparently not undertaken by the mage himself, but by certain \**rehīg* (children?), and his ‘double’ (*hangirb*).<sup>60</sup> Kartīr’s ‘double’ (*hangirb*) is greeted by a prince, and then a woman approaching from the east on a luminous path (the *dāēnā* / *dēn*).<sup>61</sup> They pass a prince with scales, presumably a judge; another prince approaches, who shows them a vision of hell, a bottomless pit with ‘snakes and lizards and other noxious creatures’. There is a bridge over this pit, which Kartīr’s ‘double’ crosses with the help of another prince, and followed by the woman. They then ascend past various palaces, thrones, and meals to ‘the heights’; and finally sit down and are brought a meal of bread, meat, and wine.

Significant parallels with Mani’s vision have already been enumerated by Skjaervø: for example, Kartīr’s double recalls Mani’s Twin; and the woman on the luminous road is similar to the virgin of light, who leads the soul up the column of glory to heaven. He also notes more generic common themes such as a ladder reaching up to the heights, or a final ‘great war’.<sup>62</sup> Other remarkable shared themes might be identified: both Kartīr and Mani present a cosmic highway, on which luminous souls are conveyed past the sun and moon and into paradise; and they use similar descriptive terms for heaven and hell, such as ‘the height’ and ‘bottomless pit’. Most basically, as we have seen, Mani asserts in κ342 that heaven and hell exist, echoing Kartīr, and both affirm that only those who follow their respective ‘laws’ will attain to the heaven.

In sum, I have used κ342 as a linchpin to revisit and expand upon the numerous similarities between Kartīr’s inscription and Manichaean writings. For all the shared motifs in their description of post-mortem fate, and in particular the ascent to the land of light, what is most interesting is the similar manner in which they frame their visions: Both sages request a sign, in order to gain confidence, and are granted a revelation of heaven and hell; at the conclusion of this, they affirm that heaven and hell exist, and that those who follow their law or rituals will attain to the former. Perhaps the simplest explanation for these

60 It is described in Kartīr, inscription 25–34. The identity of the \**rehīg*, and the nature of the preparations for the journey, are still under discussion: see e.g. Schwartz 2007, Grenet 2011, Skjaervø 2011, and especially Skjaervø 2013.

61 For additional connections between the *dāēnā* as presented in a Manichaean Sogdian fragment and Zoroastrian literature, see Reck 2003, who also adduces Iranian motifs in the Coptic Manichaica, which employs a varied terminology (e.g. *μωφην, ζικων*) that would repay further study. The connection to Sasanian royal imagery is demonstrated in Skjaervø 2011: 272–275.

62 Skjaervø 1997.

striking parallels is that Kartīr was familiar with the *Šābuhragān* and recorded his vision in response to it, especially the chapter *On the coming of the Apostle*. While similar phrases exist between the Middle Persian fragments of the *Šābuhragān* and Kartīr's Naqš-e Rostam inscription (KNRm),<sup>63</sup> it is the parallel materials in K342 and CMC that even more clearly resemble the wording of the latter's vision. In fact, it is possible that Kartīr's very act of *writing* an account of his double's ascent to heaven, based on a primarily oral Avestan tradition, was a response to Mani's own emphasis on writing to provide a memorial for his followers. So too Kartīr describes his own heavenly vision as a 'memorial', so that the reader might be 'more liberal and true to the gods and the lords and his own soul and ... more confident in this worship and the rites and the Mazdayasnian religion ...'.<sup>64</sup>

Despite these convergent motifs and shared concerns, the accounts of rapture and otherworldly realms produced by Mani and Kartīr have their distinctive features, and drew primarily upon Judaeo-Christian and Iranian traditions, respectively. Kartīr did not simply reproduce Mani's otherworldly images, or Mani Kartīr's. Rather, the discourse on otherworldly realms served as a common idiom through which Mani and Kartīr sought to establish the authority of their very different teachings. This idiom was widely recognized in early Sasanian Iran and its peripheral regions, as I will demonstrate in the following section.

## Part II: Otherworldly Visions in Sasanian Iran

Given Mani's rivalry with Kartīr, it is striking that he acknowledges Zarades along with Buddha and Jesus, apostolic predecessors who experienced rapture, and bore witness concerning the existence of heaven and hell. By fashioning himself as their successor, Mani both acknowledged their authority and claimed it for himself. In the following section, I argue that Mani's assertion in K342, namely that there were written records of heavenly journeys ascribed to Jesus, Buddha, Zoroaster, or to their followers, is in fact accurate. I also discuss similar accounts of rapture among Jews (the antediluvian patriarchs), Mandaeans, Platonists and Sethians, all groups with a significant presence within the Syro-Mesopotamian borderland between the Roman empire and Sasanian

63 Mani notes the 'matters of the gods' (*xīr ī yazdān*) revealed to him by his Twin; while, in his Naqš-e Rostam inscription, Kartīr similarly declares that the gods informed him about the 'matters' (MP *xīr*) pertaining to heaven and hell (Skjaervø 1997: 318 n. 22, with references).

64 Kartīr, inscription 37.

Iran. The common message of these texts was two-fold: First, that good deeds will aid the soul in its ascent to heaven; second, that bad deeds will be punished in hell, often in a spectacular manner related to the crime, known in Latin as the *lex talionis*.<sup>65</sup> Both concepts are closely related to Mani's assertion in K342 that the 'sign' of heaven and hell, the eyewitness account of their existence, motivates the visionary's followers to perform good deeds and achieve salvation.

My exploration of these traditions differs in several ways from previous studies on the connections between Iranian and Mediterranean notions of heaven and hell. First, these are overwhelmingly diachronic, concerned with tracing direction of influence. Thus, Bousset and later Cumont argued that the ultimate origin of the otherworldly journey was ancient Iran; others, most recently Tardieu, have asserted that the trail of influence is in the opposite direction.<sup>66</sup> My own analysis is largely synchronic, focusing on the common interest in otherworldly journeys within the Sasanian empire. When possible, I have used texts that are known to have circulated before or during Mani's lifetime; but some, such as the Mandaean and Buddhist texts, are difficult to date. Second, although this section tracks a similar belief in the existence of heaven and hell, especially as confirmed by raptures, it is important to remember that Mani's assertion to be the culmination of earlier apostles elided important differences between his own teaching and theirs. As Skjaervø notes, despite some common motifs, there were also key dissimilarities between Mani and Kartir's teachings, especially with regard to the value placed on life in the world.<sup>67</sup> These dissimilarities are just as important to my overall argument, because they motivate the common appeal to otherworldly realms: Supporting a particular religion, with its distinctive ethical practices and rituals, will assure the patron's place in paradise.

### *Jews*

Mani lists a number of antediluvian patriarchs from Jewish tradition in K342, and in the CMC Baraies even quotes some passages from apocalypses he attributes to Adam, Sethel, Enosh, Shem, and Enoch. These are of varying length, but all involve ascent of some kind, described as rapture, under the guidance of angels, just as in the Jewish pseudepigrapha to which they are

65 For a diachronic approach to retribution in the afterlife, see Bernstein 1996.

66 Bousset 1901; Cumont 1949: 219–234. Dieterich, for his part, attempted to identify and trace a continuous Orphic tradition as the influence on the *Apocalypse of Peter*.

67 Skjaervø 1997: 340–342.

related. As we have seen, the quotation from Enoch's *Apocalypse* includes a reference to tours of heaven and hell:<sup>68</sup>

For this reason I was sent to you, that we may point out to you all the works and reveal to you the land of the pious, and show you the land of the impious and what the place of punishment of the lawless is like.

While this and other citations do not match any known work of Enoch, as Reeves has shown, it is clear that they incorporate reworked Enochic traditions, including the heavenly tours of *1 Enoch* 39–41 and 71.<sup>69</sup> It also follows the basic two-fold nature of revelation: Pious works, and the consequences of following them (or not) as reflected in post-mortem fate.

As with ascent texts, Babylonian Jewish depictions of hell datable to late antiquity are few. The punishment of sins through *lex talionis* is found in a passage from the Babylonian Talmud<sup>70</sup> in which the rabbis discuss the punishment for Israelite spies who slander the promised land. One rabbi declares that their tongue was stretched out to the navel, with worms going in and out of both, an image which strongly recalls a punishment in the *Book of Ardā Wīrāz*. Does this mean the rabbis borrowed it from Mazdayasnian sages? As Shai Secunda notes, there are similar depictions (though not exact correspondence) in Palestinian Jewish literature, including the 'tours of hell' tradition in the pseudepigrapha; so the motif is also explainable as a development internal to the tradition.<sup>71</sup> But the origin of the motif is less important than the interest in divine retribution, expressed here in the Talmud in a way that echoes the other religions of Sasanian Iran.<sup>72</sup>

### *Mandaeans*

While none of the extant Jewish pseudepigrapha, except those quoted in CMC, exactly replicate Mani's pattern of otherworldly vision followed by testimony and the gathering of followers, it is found quite clearly in Mandaean sources.

68 CMC 59, 6–15.

69 Reeves 1996: 183–206.

70 *Soṭah* 35a.

71 Secunda 2013: 116–121; see further his discussion of rabbinic parallels to the Avestan *daēnā* at 121–125.

72 Thus Secunda 2013: 710. The medieval Hebrew apocalypse *Gedulat Moshe* includes an extensive section on punishments following the *lex talionis*; some of these, such as hanging by the hair for adultery, and hanging by the tongue for blasphemy, are identical to those in the *Apocalypse of Peter*.

In one account, the figure of Anōš-Uthra, loosely related to the ante-deluvian patriarch Enosh, reports on his vision in language recalling κ342:<sup>73</sup>

He (Anōš) creates faithful ones among the Jews and shows them: ‘There is death and there is life, and there is darkness and there is light, and there is error and there is truth’; and he converts the Jews to the name of the high king of light.

This is an extraordinary parallel, all the more so because it comes from the ‘Enōš-Apocalypse’, which Reitzenstein provocatively dated to first-century Palestine, and even placed in relation to Q.<sup>74</sup> It is difficult to date Mandaean literature, and in any case it has a varied chronology; while few would agree with Reitzenstein, there is a general consensus that its older strata reflect the religious environment of Sasanian Mesopotamia, for example Iranian loan words for a number of ritual and other terms.<sup>75</sup>

Scholars have also connected Mandaean depictions of otherworldly realms to Iranian conceptions of the afterlife.<sup>76</sup> Ascents are attributed not only to Anōš but also to Šitil his father, and Šem son of Noah, all ancient sages found in the CMC.<sup>77</sup> In addition, the intriguing human-book hybrid Dēnānuxt, or ‘speaking in accordance with religion’,<sup>78</sup> experiences a rapture guided by the Dīn-Mlikh-Uthra, after which he declares: ‘I saw death and I saw life, I saw darkness, I saw light, I saw error, I saw truth’.<sup>79</sup> Like the proclamation of Anōš, this statement closely recalls a passage in the Coptic Manichaean *Psalm-Book*, in which ‘error’ states her purpose of distancing humans from the truth:<sup>80</sup>

That I may [wound] the children of men, that they might not trust the one who tells them: “Death exists; life exists; also the land of truth exists”.

73 *Right Ginza* 29, 12 ff.

74 Reitzenstein 1919; Reitzenstein and Schaeder 1926. The significance of this story deserves further exploration in the context of Mandaean anti-Jewish polemic, on which see Shapira 2004.

75 See e.g. Jacobsen-Buckley 2006; Häberl 2012.

76 Brandt 1892, Bousset 1901 and Rudolph 1965; with different emphases. The most recent overview of Iranian-Mandaean connections is found in Rudolph 2008.

77 Reeves 1996: 123–124, 143 and 167, respectively; with biography.

78 Andreas apud Lidzbarski 1925: 205.

79 *Right Ginza* (Petermann 1867: 210–211), trans. Widengren 1950: 65; see also his discussion of Dēnānuxt’s ascent (pp. 62–70).

80 2 Ps 221, 17–18; discussed in Säve-Söderbergh 1949: 147–149, with additional Mandaean parallels.

The proclamations of Anōš and Dēnānuxt are also related to the apostolic message in κ342 that ‘the land of light exists’ and ‘hell exists’, with ‘light’ and ‘dark’ appearing as shorthand for these concepts. The direction of influence between Mandaean and Manichaean ascent traditions remains uncertain, but what is important is their shared concept of otherworldly revelation, which involves not only a visionary journey, but also bearing witness and recruiting followers.

### *Christians*

Mani’s list of visionary seers in κ342 includes Jesus, who is, in some ways, a curious selection. While there are multiple visions of heaven and hell in early Christianity, they are usually ascribed to the apostles: Paul, for example, is explicitly invoked and cited in the CMC, although he is not listed in κ342. In κ112, Jesus’s teaching on heaven and hell is listed among his five revelations. This closely echoes the 2 Ke passage, except that there is no mention of his rapture: ‘Second: He revealed to them about the aeons [of greatness], how they exist; and he taught them about [the nature] of darkness, how it too exists.’<sup>81</sup> There is a close scriptural parallel to the Manichaean emphasis on Jesus’s testimony regarding the existence of heaven (though not hell) in John 3, the dialogue with Nicodemus. Nicodemus mentions the ‘signs’ done by Jesus, who then declares:<sup>82</sup>

Very truly, I tell you, we speak of what we know and testify to what we have seen; yet you do not receive our testimony. If I have told you about earthly things and you do not believe, how can you believe if I tell you about heavenly things? No one has ascended into heaven except the one who descended from heaven, the Son of Man.

Jesus also describes otherworldly realms frequently in non-canonical Christian literature, though usually without appealing to his own journeys through them, or to a rapture led by a heavenly guide. Thus, for example, in the *Apocryphon of John*, the risen Jesus reveals to John in great detail the nature of

81 1 Ke 268, 6–8.

82 John 3:11–13. According to John 3:32–33, this witness is rejected by all. In north Africa, Faustus argues that Christian scriptures have been corrupted by Jews, except for the gospels, because of the emphasis on a spiritual kingdom of heaven (the biblicalized term for the realm of light), in contrast to the ‘carnal’ focus of the Old Testament (Augustine, *Contra Faustum* 4, 1).

the *pleroma*.<sup>83</sup> Only in the Askew Codex (also known as the *Pistis Sophia*) is Jesus presented as a heavenly traveler: In book 1, he describes to the apostles the structure of the heavenly aeons based on his ascent through them, in a garment of light, after the resurrection; he similarly relates how he aided Pistis Sophia when he passed through the realm of chaos (i.e. hell). In book 3, Jesus describes in great detail the post-mortem ascent of the soul, with close similarities to Manichaean teachings, as already noticed by F.C. Baur's student, K.R. Köstlin.<sup>84</sup> Jesus recounts diverse sins and their punishment in chaos by archons, usually by affliction through fire of various duration; some sinners, such as murderers, are cast into the outer darkness and destroyed. Others are reincarnated, sometimes according to the *lex talionis* as in the *Acts of Archelaus* discussed above: For example, the thief is reincarnated into a lame, blind body.<sup>85</sup>

Thus the 'Jesus' apocalypse in the *Pistis Sophia* relates to the primary concerns of Mani's apostolic list in κ342: The testimony of heaven and hell as places of reward and punishment, respectively. This concern is quite widespread in early Christian apocryphal literature, which includes numerous journeys to otherworldly realms by the apostles.<sup>86</sup> Perhaps the oldest catalogue of punishments in hell, with numerous images of gruesome torments following the *lex talionis*, is found in the *Apocalypse of Peter*, dated to the second century. The *Apocalypse of Paul* draws on some of these accounts in its own description of hell, which follows a tour of heaven. It has an extensive manuscript tradition in Syriac, though when, precisely, it became popular among Christians in the Sasanian empire is unknown.<sup>87</sup> There is no direct evidence that Mani or his followers were familiar with either text, but we know that Manichaeans used the apocryphal *Acts of Thomas*, which has a related catalogue of torments in hell.<sup>88</sup> For their part, the Christian texts, while primarily related to earlier Jewish traditions, were initially produced and read in the Graeco-Roman world, where philosophers and others made similar claims on heaven and hell.

83 More specifically, for 'gnostic' literature on the ascent of the soul, see Richter 1997: 16–27.

84 Köstlin 1854. These include the general prominence of light-imagery; the sun and the moon as bearers of light; and the role of the light-virgin, who functions as a judge.

85 *Pistis Sophia* 139–140; 144–147.

86 See e.g. Himmelfarb 1993 and Rowland 2002.

87 Desreumaux 1993 and Debié 2005.

88 *Acts of Thomas* 53–57.



### *Platonists and Sethians*

One of the earliest accounts to assert the reality of heaven and hell as places of reward and punishment antedates Judaeo-Christian apocalyptic tradition: The myth of Er in Plato's *Republic*.<sup>89</sup> In this text, the soul of the hero, Er, who has died on the battlefield, observes the mechanics of post-mortem fate while his body is on the funeral pyre. Although there is no reference to an ascent, he observes the immediate punishment of the wicked, followed by the reincarnation of good souls after spending time in the heavens; and he also beholds the cosmic structure of the eight spheres. Finally, he is sent back to be a messenger (ἄγγελος) to humans about post-mortem fate. The Platonic text thus follows the pattern of vision and testimony outlined by Mani in K342 as explicitly as any Jewish or Christian texts. Significantly, by the early Roman empire, Er was identified with Zoroaster by Clement of Alexandria, who quotes a prologue from a work attributed to the latter, which is essentially a synopsis of the passage in the *Republic*; the Neoplatonist Proclus also knew this work, which he specifies as Zoroaster's four books *On Nature*.<sup>90</sup>

This 'Platonic' Zoroaster is reflected in the apocalypse *Zostrianos*, found at Nag Hammadi, which features a heavenly ascent by the eponymous seer who is identified with Zoroaster in the colophon. On the one hand, the text has 'platonizing' features; on the other, it is clearly related to other Sethian apocalypses, which Dylan Burns has plausibly argued were produced in Syria at the turn of the third century, in communities related to Mani's.<sup>91</sup> It begins with Zostrianos wandering in the wilderness, seeking his own death; among his intellectual concerns is the nature of the 'existence' of various heavenly entities.<sup>92</sup> In order to cure his insanity, he is taken on an extensive heavenly journey, with several angelic guides; although Zostrianos does not tour hell in the extant passage, when he returns to earth he warns against punishment: 'Great is the aeon of the aeon of the living, and the [punishment] of those who are unconvinced'.<sup>93</sup> Zostrianos / Zoroaster spreads his revelation, calling out to the 'holy seed of Seth', who are 'sinless, elect souls', and exhorting them to:

89 Plato, *Republic* 10, 614–621.

90 Clement, *Miscellanies* 5, 14.103.2. For the complex debate regarding authorship, see, e.g., Stausberg 2007.

91 On the platonizing aspects, see Turner 2001 *passim*; on *Zostrianos* as a platonizing Sethian apocalypse, see Burns 2014, esp. 70–74.

92 However, his questions do not concern the existence of heaven and hell as such, but platonizing language about the mode of existence (ὑπαρξις) of various divine entities.

93 NHC VIII 131, 21–24, ed. Barry, Funk, Poirier, and Turner 2000.

‘Behold the light; flee from the darkness.’<sup>94</sup> *Zostrianos* thus follows quite closely the description of Zarades in K342: After his otherworldly journey, he preaches to the elect, exhorting them to pursue heaven (light) and avoid hell (darkness). Mani might have been referring to this text, or to Mazdayasnian traditions, or to both. It is uncertain whether such writings circulated in the early Sasanian Empire, but given the court’s purported interest in recovering Iranian tradition, it is certainly possible.<sup>95</sup>

### *Mazdayasnians*

Mani notes Zarades among his list of predecessors whose journeys to heaven and hell have been recorded in writing. Indeed, Zarathustra’s ascent to the realm of light is chronicled in a Sogdian fragment containing the Ashem Vohu prayer, which has been variously identified as Mazdayasnian or Manichaean.<sup>96</sup>

At that time, when the king of the gods, the famous, skilful supreme god, was residing in the sweet-smelling paradise in good thought, there came thither the perfect, righteous Zaratuštra, paid homage to him, from the left knee to the right, from the right knee to the left, and addressed him thus: “O God, beneficent law-maker, justly deciding judge ...”.

According to the later Pahlavi *Zādspram*, Zarathustra experienced various revelations, including one in which he is led to the assembly of the seven Amesha Spentas to converse with Ohrmazd.<sup>97</sup>

The two most important late antique accounts of otherworldly journeys in Middle Persian are Kārtīr’s vision and the *Book of Ardā Wīrāz*. Interestingly, both feature a prominent *mōbed*, rather than Zarathustra himself; presumably, like Mani, they were thought to follow his example in some way.<sup>98</sup> As I argued in Part I, Mani and Kārtīr’s visions must be viewed in relationship to one another, reflecting their shared familiarity with each other’s documents (i.e. the *Šābuhragān* and the ‘law of Zarades’). The *Book of Ardā Wīrāz*, written in Middle Persian, is the other major source for Mazdayasnian teachings on heaven and hell in late antiquity. The narrative unfolds in a half-mythical

94 NHC VIII 132, 3–4, ed. Barry, Funk, Poirier, and Turner 2000.

95 On this point, see my discussion in chapter 2, in this volume.

96 Sims-Williams 1976: 46–48, fragment 4, with bibliography.

97 *Zādspram* 21; note that this takes place in Iran on the river Dāityā. For depictions of Paradise, see *Zādspram* 30, 35, 52; *Bundahišn* 13, 30 34; *Pahlavi Rivāyat* 48.

98 Lucian asserts that the *magoi*, as ‘successors of Zoroaster’, led others to hell and back by means of chanting (*Menippus* 6).

period, when Iran is in the midst of political and religious confusion following the conquest of the wicked Alexander. Because of his righteousness, Wīrāz is nominated to go on a spiritual journey in order to confirm the Masdayasnian religion, as in Kartīr's inscription. He also witnesses the fate of a righteous soul after death, including the appearance of the maiden, who represents its good thoughts, words and deeds; and also the Činwad bridge, which it must cross. Angelic guides lead his soul on its way, including Srosh the pious and Adar.<sup>99</sup> Thus, like Kartīr's vision, the tour of Wīrāz is said to alleviate his uncertainty, and given the widespread uncertainty his testimony to others about the vision is implied, though not explicitly stated at the end.

In contrast to the journeys of Mani and Kartīr, the *Book of Ardā Wīrāz* devotes significantly more space to its description of hell. Wīrāz sees various cruel punishments, for example the violation of various menstrual purity laws. Thus, he relates:<sup>100</sup>

I saw the soul of a man, into whose jaws they ever pour the impurity and menstrual discharge of women, and he ever cooked and ate his own seemly child. And I asked thus: "What sin was committed by this body, whose soul suffers such a punishment?". Srosh the pious, and Adar the angel, said thus: "This is the soul of that wicked man who, in the world, had intercourse with a menstruous woman".

While there are no exact correspondences between the *Book of Ardā Wīrāz* and the *Apocalypse of Peter* or the *Apocalypse of Paul*, the similarity of their accounts of hell have long been recognized. In contrast, scholars have overlooked significant Buddhist parallels, which underline the interest in heaven and hell across diverse groups active within the Sasanian empire.

### *Buddhists*

In the *Šābuhragān*, Mani acknowledged Buddha, alongside Jesus and Zarades, as one of his apostolic predecessors; in 2 Ke his land is described as India and Kušān. Between 241 and 242 CE, before his arrival at Shapur's court, Mani travelled to India, probably starting from the port city of Dēb in the Indus delta. The areas where he travelled, such as Turan, had recently come under Sasanian domination, but previously had been ruled by the Kušān dynasty, patrons of

99 For a detailed comparison with Kartīr's journey, see Skjaervø 2011.

100 *Book of Ardā Wīrāz* 22.

Buddhism, which existed there in diverse and still poorly understood forms.<sup>101</sup> Pure Land Buddhism, with its emphasis on the otherworldly Sukhāvātī (the land of bliss), seems to have originated in the Kuṣān empire during the first two centuries C.E.<sup>102</sup> While later Chinese Manichaean texts echo Pure Land imagery, this does not seem to be reflected in their earliest Parthian form;<sup>103</sup> nor does any Pure Land text include a description of heavenly rapture.

Yet other northwest Indian literature from the first centuries C.E. confirms that there were written accounts of Buddha’s otherworldly journeys, as Mani asserted in κ 342. While it is unlikely that Mani was familiar with such texts, some of his Parthian-speaking disciples may have been, and these traditions were surely communicated orally as well as textually. The famous Sanskrit poet Aśvaghōṣa, who has been linked to the Kuṣān court, described Buddha’s ascent to heaven in the *Saundarananda*, his work on prince Nanda, the half-brother of Buddha.<sup>104</sup> Nanda’s embrace of Buddhism is hindered by his continued desire for his wife Sundarī; Buddha thus takes his hand and guides him through the heavens, where they see nymphs. Nanda then forgets about his wife and takes up asceticism so that he will be able to re-ascend to the heavens. While Aśvaghōṣa’s account recalls the heavenly ascents of Judaeo-Christian and Mazdayasnian traditions, Buddhist doctrine is incorporated into the description: Buddha teaches Nanda that heaven too is transitory.<sup>105</sup>

In another text produced in northwest India during the first centuries C.E., the *Mahāvastu*, Buddha reveals the nature of hell to his followers.<sup>106</sup> He addresses disciples in the Jeta grove:<sup>107</sup>

101 The numismatic record suggests that this support was far from exclusive. For local Buddhism in Sind, see BeDuhn in chapter 3.

102 At least one foundational text, the Larger *Sukhāvātīvyūhasūtras*, was composed in Gāndhārī or another Prakrit (Kōtatsu 1996: 10–11).

103 Mikkelsen 2009: 203–206.

104 For Aśvaghōṣa’s historical, cultural, and literary context, see Salomon’s, forthcoming. The text and English translation of the *Saundarananda* are in Johnston 1928.

105 Such Buddhist accounts of paradise had their Brahmin counterparts: Gignoux has pointed to a parallel between the inscription of Kartīr and the *Katha Upaniṣad*, in the dialogue between death (Yama) and a young brahmin, Naciketas. Yama teaches him the fire ritual, which allows entry into paradise. When Naciketas describes the uncertainty among mortals about post-mortem fate, Yama informs him at length about the way of life leading to heaven (Gignoux 1974: 68–69).

106 English translation in Jones 1949–1956.

107 *Mahāvastu* 9.

Thus ... do the beings in the eight great hells and the sixteen secondary hells endure thousands of different torments. Therefore, one must strive after knowledge, win it, be enlightened, be fully enlightened, do good, and live the holy life. In this world no sinful act must be committed.

The many vivid tortures resemble Iranian and Mediterranean counterparts in several respects: Their extreme nature, evoking unimaginable pain; the merciless guardians, similar to avenging angels of Judaeo-Christian apocalypses; and, finally, the spectacles of retribution in which the punishment fits the crime. For each punishment, Buddha asks: 'As the maturing of what karma are beings reborn there?'. In one example, he explains: 'Those who in this world have cut up living creatures with knife, axe or hatchet, are themselves cut up as the maturing of such karma'.<sup>108</sup> While such punishments clearly resemble the *lex talionis* in the *Apocalypse of Peter* and the *Book of Ardā Wīrāz*, they are also explainable entirely as developments within Indian religious tradition, with the Buddha explicitly appealing to the law of karma for each of them.<sup>109</sup> Other punishments are for specifically Buddhist sins, such as violence against animals.<sup>110</sup>

All these groups maintained extensive traditions about hell and heaven, sharing, in particular, a concern for retribution and reward; yet there are important differences. While Mani's descriptions of otherworldly realms certainly drew on Jewish, Christian, and Sethian apocalypticism, they were deployed in different contexts in the early Sasanian empire than were his source texts in the Roman empire.<sup>111</sup> And whatever the relationship of Kartīr's vision to Graeco-Roman accounts such as Ps.-Zoroaster *On Nature* or *Zostrianos*, he shared, with

108 *Mahāvastu* 14. Note, however, the frequent qualification that this is only the 'principal cause', and that the sinners are here because of 'various other wicked and sinful deeds'.

109 For the *lex talionis* in Hinduism, see Yelle 2010.

110 'The volume of blinding smoke that is everywhere in this hell, acrid, pungent and terrifying, pierces outer and inner skin, flesh, sinew and bone, penetrates the very marrow of the bones ... As a maturing of what karma are beings reborn here? Those who in the world smoke the openings of the dens, burrows, enclosures, and traps of ... monkeys, rats, and cats, and the holes of serpents, guarding the exits, or who suffocate bees with smoke, ...' (*Mahāvastu* 16–17).

111 Thus the *Acts of Archelaus* describes Mani's visionary ascent not as a court performance before magnates, but rather as a failed ritual also known from the Graeco-Roman magical papyri, as demonstrated in Mirecki 2007. In this sense the apocalypses from the Roman Empire function as a 'third term' of comparison with respect to Mani, Kartīr, and their Sasanian counterparts. For the importance of this 'third term' in comparative studies, see Smith 1990 and Frankfurter 2012.

Mani, an assumption that such revelatory displays were an essential aspect of obtaining and sustaining patronage. It is to their rivalry that we now turn.

### Part III: The Court Context of Otherworldly Discourse

In this section, I argue that, in lockstep with the widespread literature of otherworldly journeys in the Iranian cultural and political spheres, religious experts appealed to their own visions in order to secure patronage from kings, nobles, and local rulers. I begin with an extended analysis of Mani and Kartīr’s rivalry, building on foundational studies by Hinz, Russell, and Skjaervø, while incorporating additional evidence from 2 Ke and various other sources.<sup>112</sup> I suggest that the similarities between Mani’s *Šābuhragān* and Kartīr’s vision, identified in Part I of this chapter, reflects an ongoing competition for patronage during the reign of Shapur I, in which both sages argued that their rituals would benefit the soul of the shah and his family. I then explore accounts of Mani’s mission both within and beyond the Sasanian empire, including areas of Buddhist influence, which depict him winning support from princes by offering them visions; similar narratives exist in Buddhist hagiography about Kanishka. These accounts suggests that heavenly tours were a kind of performance, through which Mani, Kartīr, and other sages offered a ‘sign’ authorizing themselves and their teachings.

#### *Mani and Kartīr at the Court of the Persian Kings*

When Mani was introduced to Shapur’s court in 242 C.E., Kartīr was probably already active there.<sup>113</sup> The two sages would have become acquainted while travelling together in the shah’s entourage: Kartīr states that he participated in Shapur’s campaign against the Romans, supporting the priests and fire temples at Tarsus, Antioch, and other defeated locations.<sup>114</sup> Similarly, in the very first kephalaion, Mani claims to have travelled in Shapur’s *comitatus*.<sup>115</sup> The subsequent sentence, which is ambiguous and partly lacunose, refers to the ‘many years’ that he spent in Persia, Parthia, Adiabene, and the western borderlands to the Roman empire.<sup>116</sup> While this might refer to Mani’s independent missionary travels, it is also possible that he travelled with Shapur both within Iran and

112 Hinz 1971; Russell 1990(a); Skjaervø 1997 and 2011. See also Gignoux 1991.

113 He claims service under Ardashir in KNRm and KSM; see MacKenzie 1989: 71–72.

114 Kartīr, inscription 15.

115 1 Ke 15, 33–34. Compare Plotinus’s travels with Gordian III (thus Lieu 1992: 78).

116 1 Ke 16, 1–2.

on his campaigns against Rome; the latter is explicitly alleged by Alexander of Lycopolis, an early opponent of the Manichaeans writing in Egypt sometime in the late third century C.E.<sup>117</sup> Although Mani's universalist message is often assumed to have appealed to Shapur as a tool for uniting his vast empire, it also resonates closely with the shah's claim to sovereignty over both 'Iran' and 'non-Iran'; itself echoed by Kartīr's support of priests and fires in both 'Iran' and 'non-Iran'.<sup>118</sup> Even while attached to Shapur's retinue, Mani would have had the opportunity to spread his message, as is evident from K76, describing how the apostle was often forced to leave his disciples in order to answer the king's summons.<sup>119</sup>

It is difficult to evaluate the relative position of Kartīr and Mani under Shapur. Efforts to present Mani as Shapur's favorite are not supported by extant Manichaean texts, though a few later Islamic authors do suggest this.<sup>120</sup> At some unknown date, Mani apparently left the imperial retinue on a more permanent basis in order to spread his message across the empire, aided by the king's letters of support.<sup>121</sup> His alleged success with members of the dynastic family, namely Mihršāh, shah of Mesene, and Shapur, shah of Turan, suggests that this did not reflect a negative break.<sup>122</sup> On the other hand, there are indications that Mani's relationship with Shapur may have worsened during the latter part of his reign.<sup>123</sup> Kartīr, for his part, claims Shapur 'made me absolute and authoritative in (the matter of) the rites of the gods, at the court and from province to province, place to place, throughout the Magian land'.<sup>124</sup> Indeed, Kartīr is the only priest mentioned in Shapur's trilingual inscription, suggesting a privileged position when it was carved sometime between 260 and 262.<sup>125</sup> And yet we do not know how he achieved this influence during the previous two decades. Presumably, the king supported both, favoring a situation of ongoing competition for patronage.

117 Alexander of Lycopolis, *Against the Teachings of Mani* 2.4, 21–22.

118 Kartīr, inscription 14–15. Mani offers an extended metaphor comparing the legislation of the king of heaven to a king gathering his army at 2 Ke 426, 25–427, 6 / G298 + 295.

119 1 Ke 183, 10–188, 29.

120 Ya'qūbī, *Ta'rikh*, tr. Reeves 2011: 31; Bīrūnī, *Āthār*, tr. Reeves 2011: 182.

121 Attested in sources both eastern (Sundermann 1981: 106–107) and western (Hom 48, 2–5).

122 Although the precise date of Mani's encounters with these princes is unknown, Sundermann 1986(c): 56–58 dates the conversion of the Turan-shah to between 240–242 on his return trip from India, and before meeting Shapur. However, compare the discussion by BeDuhn in chapter 3 of this volume.

123 Cf. 2 Ps 19, 12–15.

124 Kartīr, inscription 2, tr. MacKenzie 1989: 57.

125 ŠKZ 49.

Shapur must have provided other forms of patronage to Mani beyond the letters of recommendation, especially if he was part of the king’s retinue for a substantial period of time. This might have included support for the elect, as well as Mani himself, through provision of the ritual meal. In return, Mani would have performed soul-masses on behalf of the king’s deceased relatives: Some of the *Psalms of Heracleides*, accompanied by alms, were recited on behalf of deceased Manichaeans during the elect’s ritual meal, to help navigate the various stages to the kingdom of light.<sup>126</sup> Similarly, at the end of his inscription, the likeness of Kartīr is served bread, meat, wine, which, as Skjaervø notes, probably correspond to the daily ritual offerings in the sacrifice for the souls, as is described in Shapur’s inscription: ‘one lamb, one and a half modios of bread, four *pas* of wine’.<sup>127</sup> Panaino argues that such offerings, which are attested on behalf of both dead and alive members of the royal family already in the Achaemenid period, may have been understood to accrue to the individual, whether dead or alive, in heaven; Kartīr’s double in paradise is enjoying such offerings on his behalf.<sup>128</sup> Mani and Kartīr thus oversaw competing ritual programs carried out on behalf of the royal family: The prayers of the elect on behalf of the departed were part of their daily meals to free the light particles; and the royal sacrifice was connected to the fire temples established by the *mōbed*.

Shapur’s son and successor Hormizd I, who reigned from 272–273 C.E., also appears to have supported both Mani and Kartīr.<sup>129</sup> This king gave Kartīr the title ‘*mōbed* of Ohrmazd’, which according to the *Denkārd* is granted to those with the privilege of spiritual visions.<sup>130</sup> Although the vision is datable to the reign of Shapur, perhaps this new title reflected an official acknowledgment of it. Under Bahram I, Kartīr held the same title, and thus maintained an influential position at court. The precise dynamics behind Mani’s fall from favor, arrest, and death remain obscure, and are based largely, though not exclusively, on Manichaean sources.<sup>131</sup> According to a Parthian text, Kartīr was plotting against Mani, but when and how is uncertain.<sup>132</sup> Sogdian fragments record Mani being questioned by a *mōbed*,<sup>133</sup> and a key section of the Hom describes Mani’s entry

126 Richter 1997: 60–96.

127 Skjaervø 2011, ‘The Journey’.

128 Panaino 2009.

129 Hom 48, 9–13.

130 See Grenet 2002: 15.

131 For a new overview and analysis, see Gardner at chapter 7 in this volume.

132 M603v. The *magousaeans* are said to have circulated pamphlets against Mani, thus Hom 81, 24.

133 Sims-Williams 1990: 283–287.



into Bēlapat, which angered the Magousaeans, leading them to complain to Kartīr, who contacts the appropriate figures at court. The evidence from 2 Ke suggests that Kartīr and his associates charged Mani with 'leading astray' the people; commanding them not to do the 'works of the king'; and abandoning the 'law of Zarades'.<sup>134</sup> Mani's failure to heal a member of the royal family, perhaps Bahram's wife Shapurduxt, probably worsened his position.<sup>135</sup> Even then, the king is said to have questioned the captive Mani about the location of his deceased sister, an interesting detail to which we shall return below.<sup>136</sup>

Kartīr's decision to record his vision on multiple inscriptions even after Mani's death suggests that there was still a need to assert his authority. He did so during the very period in which the *Kephalaia* were being edited by Mani's disciples, who, in the midst of persecution, emphasized their founder's own glorious ascent, despite his shameful death. The *Homilies* describe Mani's encounter with his 'form', which seems roughly equivalent to the *dāenā*.<sup>137</sup>

At the eleventh hour of the day he raised himself from the body up to the dwelling-places of his greatness in the heights. He met his form (μορφή) ... of the lights. He came forth and leapt to the heights [with (?)] the power that came after him.

A Parthian source adopts Buddhist terminology, speaking of Mani's *parinirvana*: 'And in great joy he flew together with the light gods' up the 'pillar of glory'.<sup>138</sup> Thus Mani's disciples asserted his privileged connection to heaven, despite his fallout with the Sasanian court.

Meanwhile Kartīr had secured the support of Bahram II, who promoted him to chief *mōbed*. In his inscriptions, produced some time during the latter's reign, he asserted that his royal patrons had reached paradise.<sup>139</sup> Similarly, the ambiguous title *Bōxt ruwān ī Warahrān* might imply that Kartīr has assured the king a glorious place in paradise, through the sacrifices made on his behalf.<sup>140</sup> The figural reliefs associated with the Sar-e Mašhad inscrip-

134 See Gardner, chapter 7.

135 Hom. 46, 26.

136 Hom. 49, 9–11.

137 Hom. 60, 13–17. Compare Kartīr's vision, in which his *dāenā* follows him over the Činwad bridge.

138 M5569.

139 Thus, Kartīr states that Shapur, Hormizd and Bahram 'went to the place of the gods' (Kartīr, inscription 5, 7, 9).

140 Variouslly interpreted as 'he who saved Warahrān' or 'whose soul was saved by Warahrān'.

tion seem to feature Bahram (I or II) killing a lion as he crosses the Činwad bridge, followed by Kartīr, the king’s wife, and a fourth figure who may be the crown prince.<sup>141</sup> In providing such public spectacles affirming salvation, Kartīr was probably responding to the followers of Mani, whom Bahram I was said to have questioned while in prison about the fate of his sister / wife. While his answer is fragmentary, and in this case uncertain, in other hagiographic episodes Mani reveals the post-mortem location of certain individuals.<sup>142</sup>

The Wirkak Sarcophagus, itself the product of (artistic) patronage, is further evidence for the display of a glorious afterlife by elites within the Iranian cultural sphere.<sup>143</sup> Commissioned by Wirkak, a Sogdian official from sixth-century Xi’an, China, the sarcophagus includes six panels depicting his life, with an emphasis on his privileged status, followed by an extensive scene of his ascent to paradise with his wife.<sup>144</sup> The couple is depicted in the midst of a successful crossing of the Činwad bridge, with numerous iconographic details paralleled in Mazdayasnian literature.<sup>145</sup> Several eschatological motifs may be Manichaean; and in the upper register of the sarcophagus there is a scene in which a seated, preaching figure (perhaps Mani as Buddha of light?) forbids the consumption of meat, or at least commonly hunted animals.<sup>146</sup> Thus the Wirkak sarcophagus, like the Sar-e Mašhad reliefs, demonstrates the interrelated dynamics of religious instruction, the portrayal of a successful afterlife, and elite patronage. And yet in this environment, influenced by Buddhism and far from the Sasanian court, the traditional Iranian aristocratic practice of hunting is rejected.

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Thus Skjaervø 2011, who notes ‘it is also possible, of course, that the title was (deliberately?) ambiguous and referred both to Warahrān’s function in the vision narrative and the relief and to Kartīr’s efforts on behalf of the king’.

141 On the interpretations of this scene, see e.g. Russell 1990(a): 187; Tanabe 1990 (with earlier bibliography); Grenet 2002; and Skjaervø 2011. Russell interprets this as Bahram I, Skjaervø as Bahram II. In my view, the former view is more likely: Kartīr would thus have affirmed that Bahram I’s soul is in paradise, and was hence given the title *Bōxt ruwān ī Warahrān* by Bahram II.

142 For examples see Sundermann 1986(c): 58.

143 See the extensive analysis in Grenet 2007.

144 Similar late antique Sogdian images of the deceased in paradise are found on the Yu Hong sarcophagus and the Miho couch.

145 Grenet 2007: 471–474.

146 De la Vaissière 2005.

### *Vision as Court Performance*

In this section, we move from the rivalry of Mani and Kartīr at the court of the king of kings to narratives of visionary experience before local rulers, including those in areas of Buddhist cultural influence. According to a tradition preserved by Bīrūnī, Mani took Shapur on a tour of heaven:<sup>147</sup>

... king Sābūr came to believe in him the time when he (Mani) raised him with himself to heaven and they both stood in the air between heaven and earth. He displayed marvels to him during this (feat). They say that he would ascend from among his companions to heaven, remain there a few days, and then descend to them.

The *Dēnkard* attributes a similar achievement to Zarathustra, who gains the support of King Vistasp when the latter is made to see spiritual realms through the *mang* drink.<sup>148</sup> While these sources clearly belong to the realm of hagiography, they point to the necessity of performance in demonstrating the existence of otherworldly realms at court.<sup>149</sup> We shall explore the dynamics of court visions in several miraculous accounts, elucidating them with another passage from K342 in which Mani's interlocutor asks for a 'sign', just as the apostle himself did in the CMC.

In an important fragment from a Parthian manuscript, Mihršāh, ruler of Mesene, and brother of Shapur the king, first opposes Mani, taking pride in his garden, where he is feasting at the time of their encounter:<sup>150</sup>

Then he (Mihršāh) says to the apostle: "Was there (ever) in the paradise that you praise, such a garden as this garden of mine?" Then the apostle understood this evidence of disbelief.

The prince's challenge to reproduce the wonders of his garden in paradise echoes a theme we have already encountered in Mani's interview with Bahram

147 Bīrūnī, *Āthār*, tr. Reeves 2011: 182; this passage's connection to the Turan-shah fragment is also noted in Shapira 2001: 177–178.

148 See *Dēnkard* 7, 4.83–86.

149 Antonio Panaino reaches a similar conclusion in his study of Kartīr's vision, which he proposes may have involved a ritual performance (Panaino 2011: 231). More specifically, Skjaervø has recently argued that his double and associates initiated the vision through recitation of an Avestan passage (*mahr*), just as in rituals on behalf of the deceased (Skjaervø 2013: 359–360).

150 M47, Sundermann 1981: 102–103, text 10. English translation in Asmussen 1975: 20 (adapted).

I: The pleasures enjoyed by Iranian aristocracy, including hunting, feasting and gardens, are no match for the wonders of paradise. So Mani appeals to him by means of a heavenly vision:

Then by (his) miraculous power he showed (him) the paradise of light with all the gods, divine beings and the immortal breath of life and every kind of garden and other splendid things there. Thereafter he fell to the ground unconscious for three hours, and what he saw he kept as a memory in his heart.

When Mihršāh awakens, Mani grasps his right hand, suggesting that the prince has become a catechumen.<sup>151</sup>

As a catechumen, Mihršāh might have continued to pursue his earthly delights, while supporting Mani and his elect. According to Manichaean literature, such elites would maintain their privileged status in heaven. This is clear from another hagiographic account, in which Mani and the shah of Turan, a kingdom at the eastern limits of Sasanian rule, are locked in an elaborate status negotiation combining courtly etiquette and Buddhist concepts regarding merit.<sup>152</sup> Mani has been addressed as Buddha by the Turan-shah, and himself declares that the prince will enjoy post-mortem honor:<sup>153</sup>

“May you be blessed. As you are now glorious and honored in the world among men, so you will also be glorious and honored in soul on the last day in the eyes of the gods. And you will be eternally immortal among gods and the beneficent righteous ones”.

This equation of worldly and post-mortem glory evidently reflects a more general attitude within Iranian court society, which is criticized by Syriac authors. For example, in the *Martyrdom of Pethion*, the ‘Magian high priest’ notes:<sup>154</sup>

151 K91 speaks of receiving the ‘right hand of peace’ as the beginning of the catechumenate (1 Ke 226, 8–10); K39 offers various cosmological and eschatological precedents for the ‘right hand’ and other Manichaean ritual gestures. See also Reeves 1996: 123–124 for Mandaean materials on right-hand clasps, which are also employed in visionary ascents.

152 Skjaervø 1994: 245–252.

153 M8286, see Sundermann 1981: 101, text 9. There is another English translation in Asmussen 1975: 18–19.

154 Syriac text in AMS 2, 575. Discussed in Zaehner 1955: 258–259, who finds similar ideas in *Zādspram* 32–33.

In our *Avesta* it is clearly recognized that everyone who enjoys fame and honor in this world will also be exalted, honored and sublime at the rising of the dead; and whosoever is wretched and lowly in this world will be just as wretched in the world to come.

Other Syriac martyr acts from the Sasanian empire share this rejection of worldly glory: In the *Martyrs of Mount Ber'ain* the child of a local noble has a vision of the divine throne room, after which the bishop subsequently convinces him to convert from Mazdayasnianism to Christianity. In this case, however, the support of the prince leads to his death, rather than the beginning of a patron-client relationship.<sup>155</sup> By contrast, at least some Manichaean and Mazdayasnian texts equated earthly and heavenly privilege.

In a related account, Mani appeals to a vision of otherworldly realms in order to secure the acknowledgment, and presumably patronage, of the shah of Turan. The Parthian text describes Mani's interactions with this dynastic prince:<sup>156</sup>

The apostle led the righteous one into the air, and he said: "What is higher?". The righteous one said: "My sphere". The apostle said: "And [what] is greater [than that]?". He said: "The earth that bears everything". And he said: "What is greater than these (things)?" The righteous one said: "The sky (?) ...". "What is greater?". He said: "The sun and the moon". "And what is brighter?". He said: "The wisdom of Buddha". Whereupon the Turan-shah said: "Of all these you are the greatest and the brightest; therefore in truth you are yourself Buddha".

This passage is paralleled in  $\kappa 323$ , which identifies the Turan-shah as Shapur, most likely the son of the emperor Shapur I.<sup>157</sup> Although the account is fragmentary, it also features a dialogue between Mani and a 'righteous one' as they ascend, concluded by the Turan-shah's declaration that Mani is the 'apostle of God' and 'Bouddas'.<sup>158</sup>

155 For more on this text in its Iranian context, see Brock and Dilley, forthcoming.

156 Sundermann 1981: 19–24, text 2.2. I follow the translation by BeDuhn in chapter 3, which also includes more detailed information on the manuscript.

157 2 Ke 353, 29 / G227. See the identification in BeDuhn, chapter 3, and further discussion of the passage.

158 2 Ke 354, 9–10 / G228. The unnamed 'righteous one' has been identified as a Buddhist sage by both Skjaervø 1994 and BeDuhn in chapter 3, who adduce parallels from Mahayana and Sāmmītiya Buddhist texts, respectively.

Further, in the Parthian version we find a detailed section on the nature of the wisdom that Mani imparts to the Turan-shah:<sup>159</sup>

Then the devout one (*dyn’br*) [said] to the Turan-shah: “Even so shall you do (as) ... you are”. [Whereupon the Turan-shah] said [to] the apostle: “...”. Whereupon the lord Mani taught the Turan-shah much [insight] and wisdom. And [he showed] (him) paradise and hell, the [puri]fication of the [worlds], sun [and moon, soul and] body, the apostles that had come into the lands, righteous ones and sinners, and the work of the elect and [the audi]tors. Whereupon, when the Turan[-shah and] the nobles heard this word, they became glad, accepted the faith and became well-disposed towards the apostle and the religion (*dyn*).

Thus Mani informs the prince about the basic messages of his revelation, at least regarding individual eschatology; his apostolic predecessors in their respective lands; the existence of heaven and hell; the process of purifying the light; the respective fate of the righteous and sinners; and the role of the elect and catechumens in this work. As we have seen in Part I, this list of topics reflects the key points addressed in K342, and probably also the *Šābuhragān*.

While the Turan-shah may or may not have become acquainted with Buddhism, the Manichaean hagiographic account of his conversion clearly engages with it. And in fact there is strong evidence for a courtly interest in otherworldly realms in India during the first centuries C.E. The *Letter to a Friend*, attributed to the great Mahayana scholar Nāgārjuna and addressed to the Sātavāhana king Getaka, contains basic ethical teachings, including a vivid description of punishments in hell recalling the *Mahāvastu*.<sup>160</sup> Nāgārjuna thus framed his efforts to acquire patronage with reference to his expertise in otherworldly realms.<sup>161</sup> A similar interest is attested for the Kušān empire, which had formerly included Turan. According to the Chinese translation of the *Śri-dharma-piṭaka-nidāna sūtra*, Kanishka felt remorse after killing a number of people in war. His court adviser Ma-ming (that is, Aśvagoṣa, whose account of Buddha’s ascent is described above) showed him an image of hell and advised him to repent to escape punishment there, whereupon Kanishka accepted the dharma.<sup>162</sup>

159 Translation from BeDuhn, in chapter 3.

160 Fynes 1995: 46, who regards it as ‘literary evidence for Sātavāhana religious patronage’.

161 The inscriptions of Ashoka proclaim his goal of helping his subjects to achieve good karma and successful entry into the heavenly realms. See Schmithausen 1992: 121.

162 Kumar 1973: 95.

It is clear, then, that Mani's visions faced both Iranian and Buddhist competitors, who likewise emphasized the existence of heaven and hell. There was a general consensus that otherworldly realms existed, as is clear in K342. Mani's enumeration of his predecessors' visions in this kephalaion appears to have been in conversation with an Iranian 'free-person' (ἐλεύθερος), who proclaims himself convinced that the land of light exists; but, like Mani and Kartir, he asks for a 'sign (μεῖνε)' of the land of light, which Mani agrees to give.<sup>163</sup> Mani appeals to the 'great luminary', the sun, which is revealed in the world daily; and the five gods, whom he explicitly identifies as a 'sign of the land of light'.<sup>164</sup>

These 'five gods' refer to the five sons of the First Man, namely the trapped light particles that are purified and ascend to the kingdom of light in the ongoing process of salvation. These ascending light particles are in fact visible to those who know to look. In the CMC, immediately before he asks his Twin for 'a sign', Mani requests 'that the souls of the victors may be seen, coming out from the world, by every human eye'.<sup>165</sup> This meditation on the ascent of 'victors'—including deceased electi and catechumens—is an integral part of the form of the Manichaean daily prayers, as reconstructed by Iain Gardner. He comments that it is while focusing on the sun and the moon that one sees the 'visible manifestation' of the purified 'living soul' in its ascent. Indeed, 'one sees the gods in their palaces, and one can even try to look through into the transcendent world of blazing light'.<sup>166</sup> In this way, visions of heaven were accessible to all who practiced this central ritual, as suggested explicitly in 1 Ke when it says that the 'light mind' will appear to whoever 'has open and looking eyes'.<sup>167</sup> An understanding of this ready availability surely informed how Manichaean readers interpreted the hagiographical episodes of courtly visions.

For modern scholars, such episodes frustrate the tendency to understand visionary narratives either as a textual exercise in exegesis or doctrine, or as the product of or handbook for a 'mystical experience'.<sup>168</sup> While the relatively bare descriptions of the vision itself do allude to Mani's teaching on cosmology and the soul's ascent, they also suggest that some form of visionary performance was expected in order to secure patronage. This might have taken various

163 2 Ke 424, 25–29 / G300.

164 2 Ke 425, 2–27 / G297.

165 CMC 37, 2–8.

166 Gardner 2013(b): 3.

167 1 Ke 100, 16–17.

168 For these trends in scholarship, see Townsend and Vidas 2012: 3–12.

forms: The ‘live reports’ from one or more entranced individuals, as Kartīr’s vision appears record; or the joint ascent with the Buddhist ‘righteous one’ at the court of Turan; or even an incubation practice, as suggested by the vision of Mihršāh. Whether such performances reflected actual experience is of course unanswerable, and from the standpoint of cultural history, uninteresting. We know from Kartīr’s inscriptions that the act itself, and its record as a ‘sign’, helped secure the authority of the sage.

### Conclusion

Mani applied his cultural hermeneutic to diverse traditions on heaven and hell, arguing that he represented their culmination. This is an excellent example of the kind of theorizing that represents the crystallization of the ‘religion concept’ in Sasanian Iran, a process explored by BeDuhn in the following chapter. He notes: ‘From Mani’s descriptive parsimony, we discern an outline of the basic elements of his working concept of a religion: (1) the product of revelation, (2) authorized by a founder figure, (3) organized as a community, (4) in a particular land, (5) guided by textual resources’. As BeDuhn further observes, most of these categories come from ancient ethnography. Revelation of otherworldly realms, of course, does not. This represents a second trend in the emergence of the religion concept, namely the identification, through Mani and others, of certain family resemblances among nascent ‘religions’. Adam Becker has recently suggested a list of possible features, specifically scripture, monotheism, and ‘a distinction between earth and heaven and the possibility of ascending from the former to the latter’.<sup>169</sup> Stroumsa’s study of religious change in late antiquity has also pointed to the special emphasis accorded to ‘the fate of the persona after death’.<sup>170</sup> In this chapter, I have built on these insights, both by further documenting the extent and nature of the shared discourse on otherworldly realms, and by offering a synchronic analysis of the context in which it developed.

The description of the apostles and their visionary ascents in K342 closely reflects the dynamics of religious competition within early Sasanian courts. Along with related passages in the CMC, it exhibits numerous similarities with the language of Kartīr’s inscriptions, confirming that the *mōbed*’s vision was

169 Becker 2009: 302. He further notes that Christians used ‘fear of God’, a concept which included fear of post-mortem punishment, to theorize their similarities and differences with Mazdayasnians in late antique Iran.

170 Stroumsa 2009: 8.



in competition with Mani's own revelation, probably as recorded in the *Šābuhragān*. Both enjoyed the patronage of Shapur over the course of several decades, though ultimately Kartīr orchestrated Mani's downfall under Bahram I. According to Manichaean hagiography, appeals to vision and revelation also played out in regional courts across the Sasanian empire, in areas influenced by both Iranian and Indian / Buddhist cultures. Yet the widespread understanding that heaven and hell exist, as well as the existence of common motifs, are marked by differences that are just as significant, for example regarding ethical and ritual practices. The shared discourse on otherworldly realms allows for a way in which these differences could be framed, and presented as something of consequence, not only to followers, but also potential patrons. The interest of Shapur and others in heaven and hell suggested not just concern for personal salvation, but a complex set of words and symbols through which their own power could be asserted, in heaven as on earth.

## Mani and the Crystallization of the Concept of 'Religion' in Third Century Iran

*Jason BeDuhn*

The general trend of the modern academic study of religions has been to employ the concept of 'religion' to cover a universal type of activity or set of activities, a form of which can be found in any human society and culture. This broad application of the term has its uses. Yet its etic character, imposed at times on cultures that do not themselves recognize a distinct 'religion' category, has been increasingly noted, often in connection with the idea that religion is a peculiarly modern, even modernist, idea. It is purely tautological, however, to say that the way we moderns use the term religion is a modern invention, informed by distinctive, historically conditioned shifts in discourse and social organization. That fact does not preclude the possibility of a pre-modern concept that anticipated the modern one by identifying the same socio-cultural entities we would place at the center of the modern category of religion. In what follows, I argue that Mani and his early successors in third-century Iran produced such a concept, within which they included such recognizable entities as Christianity, Mazdayasnanism, Buddhism and Jainism, as well as their own Manichaean community, in an unusually rich environment of cultural interchange and comparative awareness presaging the conditions typically associated with the modern era.

Wilfred Cantwell Smith differentiated a broad and generic modern use of the term 'religion', referring to a universal human phenomenon (for which he preferred the term 'faith'), from a narrower, historically specific use referring to discrete systems, and hence 'religions' in the plural.<sup>1</sup> There have been times and places where the latter—*religions*—did not exist; in fact, in human history they appear to have been the exception rather than the rule. 'To speak of "religions"', Robert Campney has noted, 'is to demarcate things in ways that are not inevitable or immutable but, rather, are contingent on the shape of Western history, thought, and institutions. Other cultures may, and do, lack

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1 Smith 1963.

closely equivalent demarcations'.<sup>2</sup> Nevertheless, the fact that certain historical cultures 'lacked one-for-one "versions" of the Western category "religions" does not mean that they lacked some usages that are analogous—ones that do something like the same work, ones invoked in the sorts of contexts in which "religions" would be invoked in modern Western discourses'.<sup>3</sup> The Manichaeans employed terms and expressions analogous to modern discussions of religions in that they refer to self-identifying communities that were not interchangeable or coterminous with ethnic or cultural identity, but organized around systems of discourse and practice that were 'disembedded' from a particular society and culture;<sup>4</sup> within such communities, the members could understand themselves to share a set of markers and commitments that set them apart from others of the same ethnicity, and united them despite disparate ethnic and cultural backgrounds.

With the historical appearance of such identities, we enter into an environment where a plurality of religions replaces the assumption that 'religion' is a sub-category of cultural practices wholly determined by one's ethnicity.<sup>5</sup> The distillation of some set of such practices into a transportable commodity, capable of crossing from one culture to another, occurs only under very special and rare conditions; and the ability to conceptualize and talk about such entities marks a distinct event in intellectual history. The mere geographic juxtaposition of ethnic and cultural groups with their respective traditional religious practices does not constitute the emergence of a plurality of religions, because each set of religious practices remains exclusively associated with a specific ethnic identity. Individuals could cross these ethnic boundaries and adopt the lifestyle—including the religious practices—of a people to which they had not been born. In the Hellenistic kingdoms of the eastern Mediterranean, for example, natives could adopt colonial culture, and colonials could go native. One could 'Hellenize' or 'Judaize', for instance. Moreover, the intensified mobility of representatives of different cultures meant that one could associate with members of another culture in their religious practices without moving to their native land. Religions emerged in antiquity when particular sets of religious practices no longer carried exclusive identification with such a native land, but belonged to a community that carried its own disembedded cultic identity.

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2 Campany 2003: 289.

3 Campany 2003: 290.

4 I owe this expression to Schwartz 2001: 179; see also North 1992, who differentiates 'embedded' religious practices from 'differentiated religions'.

5 See Herodotus's definition of Hellene (*Histories* 8, 144.2): Common blood, common language, common mode of worshipping the gods, common way of life; cf. Origen, *Against Celsus* 5, 25, 34.

Of course, any such demarcation of a historical change must wrestle with balancing the impression of novelty and innovation against the prior existence of many if not all of the elements taken up into the new historical entity. Traditional native societies have various exclusive clubs and associations that bear some resemblance to membership in a 'religion'. In Graeco-Roman antiquity we find cultic associations, to which belonged devotees of one deity or another, even to the exclusion of all others. We also find philosophical schools and sects that believed themselves to be in possession of unique knowledge or understanding that either decoded or challenged a particular culture's symbolic system, cultic practices, and values. As A.D. Nock suggested in his classic work *Conversion*, these ideological associations, with their doctrinal boundaries and ethos of a voluntarily dedicated life, contributed something essential to the later emergence of fully defined religions.<sup>6</sup> Such philosophical associations were, after all, *haireseis*—that is, 'choices' or voluntary identities, and as such foreshadowed an essential defining characteristic of religions as entities in their own right apart from involuntary ethno-cultural identity.

This variety of religious practice within Graeco-Roman culture received further enrichment and stimulus from contact with the practices of the culturally other.<sup>7</sup> The intensified contact between different cultures characteristic of the Hellenistic age produced in some a fascination with the exotic, and the attraction of becoming other than what one's own culture supplied for identity and meaning. Various levels of cross-cultural engagement ensued, from the largely imaginary to the full extent of 'going native' within another culture. Through this attraction to something foreign to their own received culture, 'proselytes' or 'converts' made strategic breaks with the religious culture of the society around them. The drive to disassociate a particular cultic tradition from its ethnic origins, and to 'internationalize' it, so to speak, marks a shift from the attraction of the exotic to an emphasis on heightened claims of universal efficacy. One might 'Judaize' not to become Jewish, but because Jewish *religio* was true and efficacious *religio* over against various false and non-efficacious *religiones*. The Christian movement took up such internationalization prior to Mani, but its leaders drew primarily on tropes of ethnogenesis, describing Christians as a

6 Nock 1933: 164–186.

7 Robert Campney, building on Wilfred Cantwell Smith, suggests that 'the tendency to nominalize and reify "religions" ... and to conceive of them in metaphorically specific ways are most in evidence where there is heightened awareness of religious plurality and difference—and therefore also, very often, religious rivalry and competition for resources, patronage, and prestige, with attendant attempts to classify and narrate so as to bring some conceptual and rhetorical order to the confusing field of players' (Campney 2003: 312–313).

'new race'. Mani decisively broke with ethnic categories in formulating the idea of non-ethnic communities of practice equivalent to the modern concept of religions.

### The Ethnic Embeddedness of Religion in the Hellenistic and Roman West

We possess quite a bit of data on the development of inter-cultural enrichment in the Mediterranean region in the Hellenistic period, establishing the conditions in which religious pluralism could arise. Through trade, gods were exported and imported along the same networks of exchange that other goods traveled, carried by native merchants in their travels and made known to those with whom they did business. Cultic associations organized around foreign deities formed within merchant colonies,<sup>8</sup> and attracted interest and participation from the surrounding population.<sup>9</sup> The groups of 'God-fearers' around Diaspora Jewish cultic centers (*proseuchai*) originate in this same tendency.<sup>10</sup> The formation of empires, with their circulation of armies, furthered such cultural interchange, as soldiers settled down with their native gods in new places, or adopted the gods of the region where they were posted, or returned home with the gods they adopted, often in connection with inter-ethnic marriage. 'Some Greeks became completely absorbed in native *milieux*, some natives in Greek. On both sides cult was a part of culture.'<sup>11</sup>

Deliberate government programs at times made such cultural exchange a matter of policy, either by adopting and sponsoring the gods of the conquered, as *sacra peregrina*, or imposing foreign gods upon them (in connection with state-sponsored urban development). When, through cultural contact or imperialism, foreign gods intruded into a society, the native cults could themselves come to be more self-consciously defined over against the intrusion. *Judaism*,

8 As attested, e.g. by an Athenian inscription referring to such establishments for merchants from Cyprus and Egypt for the worship of Aphrodite Ourania and Isis, respectively; Dittenberger 1960, entry 280.

9 As occurred, e.g. in the case of foreign cultic centers established on Delos: One dedicated to Hadad and Atargatis by Achaeus of Hierapolis in 128/7 B.C.E. (Ferguson 1969: 386), one to Sarapis by Egyptian colonists (Roussel 1916).

10 E.g. at Miletos (Schürer 1987, vol. 3: 167–168) and Aphrodisias (Reynolds and Tannenbaum 1987). On non-Jewish patronage of the cultic centers of both Judaeans and Samaritan merchant colonies on Delos in the Second Temple period, see White 1987.

11 Nock 1933: 34.

for instance, arose as native self-consciousness in response to the intrusion of *Hellenism*: The constituent elements were already there, pervading the religious observances of Jewish culture, but coalesced in a more sharply defined and self-consciously observed set of beliefs, practices and values in the presence of the other.<sup>12</sup> Jason of Cyrene, writing in the mid-second century B.C.E., describes heroes of Jewish resistance to and revolt against the Seleucids as loyal to *Ioudaismos*, standing against an encroaching *Hellenismos* (2 Maccabees 2:21–22, 8:1 and 14:38, vs. 4:11–13 and 11:24).<sup>13</sup>

This sort of nativist reaction to a heightened awareness of alternative cultural forms and practices has the quality of reinforcing the traditional interchangeability of religious and ethnic identity. Traditionalist Jews were resisting the attraction of socio-cultural alternatives associated with the successful hegemony of 'exotic' Hellenism. Yet, insofar as this self-consciously reified native identity may exert an attraction on a visiting merchant or soldier, it becomes a potential resource in the formation of a new kind of identity that defies ethnic boundaries. The proliferation of non-Jews drawn to Jewish religious practice predates the second diaspora connected to the Jewish revolts against Rome, and corresponds instead with the emergence of *Ioudaismos* in the second and first centuries B.C.E., buoyed by the newly independent and invigorated Judaea under the Hasmonean dynasty. Presumably, Jewish colonists across the Mediterranean gained a renewed sense of national identity, and certain features of traditional religious practice received reinforcement from contact with the Hasmonean religious reform through the *apostoloi* sent out from Jerusalem to collect the annual *didrachma* temple offering. Gentile interest in Jewish religious practices dates to this key period.<sup>14</sup>

A cultural outsider might go totally 'native' in adopting the language, dress, and manners of another culture—in short, becoming a *proselytos* and member of the *ethnos* in question. The difference between such re-identification on the one hand, and 'conversion' on the other, may not be all that clear in individual cases known to us from the historical record, inviting all sorts of anachronistic readings. How exactly should we understand the status of the Queen of Adiabene and her son Izates, who 'changed their course of life, and embraced the Jewish customs'?<sup>15</sup> Clearly, their own subjects considered

12 See Cohen 1990; Janowitz 2000.

13 See Amir 1973; Cohen 1999. For the broader phenomenon of native reaction to Hellenism, see the classic work of Eddy 1961.

14 See Josephus, *Jewish War* 2, 463; 7, 45; Seneca, *Moral Epistles* 95, 47; Horace, *Satires* 1, 9.68–72; Juvenal 14, 96–106; Persius 5, 179–184.

15 Josephus, *Antiquities of the Jews* 20, 2.1–4.3.

them to have abandoned their own ethnic identity and culture, and to have adopted 'strange and foreign' ways. Worshiping the Jewish god could not be detached in their minds from joining the Jewish ethnos as a *proselytos*. The same sort of relation to a native culture occurred among individuals attracted through contact with Indian civilization. Greek and Macedonian colonists from neighboring Bactria and travelers from further afield adopted Indian speech and dress and customs, and left inscriptions expressing their religious and cultural loyalty to Indian gods and society.

What this means is that there existed, even before the emergence of 'religions', something akin and antecedent to 'conversion' in the voluntary act of joining another ethnicity. Most commonly, this would be connected to emigration to the land of that ethnicity. But in the cosmopolitan conditions of the Hellenistic and Roman periods, different ethnicities found themselves juxtaposed in urban areas, and people could be attracted to a 'foreign' enclave right outside their front door. Associating with this expatriate colony meant necessarily adopting their religious practices. The spread of the Isis cult through such conditions is well documented.<sup>16</sup> The appearance of communities of 'God-fearers' around Jewish colonies makes sense in much the same terms. Of course there was also the possibility of what we might call 'imagined foreignness', such as appears to be the case with the Mithras movement.<sup>17</sup> In this instance, a rather typical Hellenic cultic association takes on the attractive trappings of the exotic without, it seems, any actual direct involvement by people from the land from which its practices and teachings are supposed to originate, much as in some forms of modern Masonry.

A potential proselyte attracted to a foreign culture often found it necessary to negotiate the internal diversity of that culture, and might selectively associate with a particular sub-culture or cultic identity. It was well-known among Hellenic and Iranian observers that Indian culture possessed two distinct and rival paradigms of religio-philosophical authority: The Brāhmanas and the Śramanas. These figures were understood to be the equivalent of Hellenistic philosophers, and one could form an allegiance to and association with one group or another.<sup>18</sup> In the same way that Hellenized intellectuals associated with the prominent Greek philosophical *haireseis*, filling the ranks of the Stoics, Epicureans, Platonists and Pythagoreans, those drawn to Jewish culture might

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16 See most recently the series of international conference volumes Bricault 2000; Bricault 2004; Bricault et al. 2007.

17 Burkert 1987: 2–3 and *passim*.

18 E.g. the character Demetrius of Sunium, who abandons his property to journey to India and join the Brahmanas in Lucian of Samosata, *Toxaris*, 34.

take their instruction from Sadducees, Pharisees, Essenes or Christians. Josephus describes such sectarian groups among the Jews as *haireseis*, or schools of philosophy similar in nature to the more familiar Greek schools.<sup>19</sup> It has been common to treat his characterization as a very loose analogy; but there is something distinctly anachronistic in this judgment. Josephus made use of the cultural categories available to him, and his choice was the best he could make, given the ideological basis of the divisions among these sectarian movements.

### Christianity as a Category Problem

Against this background, the formation of Christianity as a religion involved a tipping point where to be a Christian no longer meant belonging to a cultic association or ideological movement within the Jewish *ethnos* and culture. When this happened (in different places at different times in different ways), it presented the dominant Greek or Roman culture, as well as the Jewish one, with a category problem. Was this simply the cultic association of a new god, a 'superstition' insofar as it was judged unfavorably? This is how Pliny the Younger understood it in the early second century, and Celsus at the end of the same century, and this understanding shaped Roman government policy towards Christians for more than two centuries. Or was this a new philosophy, as Justin Martyr, Tatian, Sextus and other second-century Christians suggested?<sup>20</sup> Or was this, as many Christian leaders preferred to say—right up through Eusebius of Caesarea in the early fourth century—a new people (*ethnos*), a new race (*genos*)?<sup>21</sup>

In any case, Christianity could not yet be conceptualized as a new sort of thing, a 'religion', until someone came up with that new category and concept. Something was happening on the ground that was not yet reflected in the conceptual categories of the society. The category problem persisted among those who referred to Christians as a 'third race': Despite Tertullian's feigned obtuseness,<sup>22</sup> the point of this designation was to characterize Christians as a *tertium quid*, a freak of nature that was neither Jewish nor Roman because it had

19 See Josephus, *Jewish War* 2, 119–166 [2, 8.2–14]; *Antiquities of the Jews* 13, 171–173 [13, 5.9]; 18, 11–25 [18, 1.2–6].

20 See Wilken 1980; Wilken 1984. Tertullian, *To the Nations* 1, 4, compares the Christian sect to philosophical and medical ones.

21 See Buell 2005.

22 Tertullian, *To the Nations* 1, 8. On Christians as a 'third race', see Sanders 1983: 171–178.



no defining ethnic constituent.<sup>23</sup> That conceptual lag is what prevents us from simply identifying the rise of Christianity with the emergence of religions in the full sense. The Christian movement may have exposed the obsolescence of the previous equation of religious commitment and ethnicity, but it had trouble producing a new model and terminology to take the place of the previous paradigm.

The application of the category of *ethnos* to the Christian community appears consistently from 1 Peter 2:9–10 (late first century?) to the early fourth century, when the Constantinian revolution fundamentally shifted the terms of discussion. At either end of this historical period, Christian authors were intent on examining and defining the way that this new people arose out of the Jewish people. But in doing so, they only reworked familiar tropes of ethnogenesis connected to the origin stories of Greek cities, or of the Roman people, not to mention that of the Israelites.<sup>24</sup> As the recent studies of Denise Kimber Buell and Aaron P. Johnson have ably demonstrated, ethnic identity was recognized as fluid and formative in antiquity.<sup>25</sup> It was understood that new nations formed in history, and so the Christians could be conceived by others, and by themselves, as such a new nation, with its own distinctive *religio*.<sup>26</sup>

But since Christians were dispersed through the cities, intermixed with non-Christians, and without either a civic or regional homeland, they violated one of the principal defining characteristics of a nationality.<sup>27</sup> As resident aliens, they could do no better than speak of themselves as citizens of 'heaven' in place of the typical reference to one's native city or land. But the mundane reality, as everyone recognized, was that local Christian communities were constituted of proselytes from a variety of ethnic backgrounds, whose abandonment of their respective traditional identities and values could not be legitimated by reference to membership in another equally ancient and respectable nation. For this reason, the category problem persisted, and could find articulation as late as the emperor Galerius's edict of toleration of 311 C.E.:

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23 Christians had their own 'three race' typology, serving a very different end than that used against them by their critics. The apologist Aristides, for example, uses such rhetoric to designate three genera of worship: Polytheism, Jewish monotheism, and Christianity (2, 2). Cf. Clement of Alexandria, *Miscellanies* 6, 41.6.

24 See Woolf 1998.

25 Buell 2005; Johnson 2006.

26 E.g. Origen, *Against Celsus* 2, 51; Eusebius *Demonstration of the Gospel* 1, 1; 2, 3; 10, 3.

27 A category problem already articulated in the second century anonymous *Epistle to Diognetus* 5, 1–2.

... the Christians, who had left the *religio* of their fathers ... (and) for some reason had followed such a caprice and had fallen into such a folly that they would not obey the institutes of antiquity, which perchance their own ancestors had first established; but, at their own will and pleasure, they would thus make laws unto themselves which they should observe, and would collect various peoples in diverse places in congregations.

For Galerius and his predecessors, the laws the Christians made unto themselves could not properly be termed *religio* because they were neither traditional nor duly instituted. On the scale of empire, Roman authorities and intellectuals acknowledged the plurality of the systems of ritual observances that constituted *religiones*; and they could find in their historical records notices of new cultic forms being instituted by authorized civic bodies. The Christians, in their subversive counter-assemblies, illegitimately appropriated to themselves a corresponding authority without the necessary civic or national jurisdiction.

The same category-challenging defiance of ethnic norms found expression from the Christian side a century earlier from the pen of Bardaisan of Edessa. In the *Book of the Laws of Countries*, Bardaisan contrasts the code of life followed by Christians all over the world with the particular moral codes of their respective ethnicities, the details of which he draws from the familiar literary genre of anthropologies of the exotic. For Bardaisan, Christians in their voluntary ethos stand apart not from other religions, but from the traditional code and way of life—the *nomos*—of the various ethnicities.<sup>28</sup> His characterization takes its inspiration from philosophical tropes about the voluntary choice of rational living in the face of mere custom. The philosophical life separates one from the values and interests of one's compatriots. Just as identity as a Stoic supplants one's birth-identity, and makes all the peoples of the earth brothers, so does the Christian identity for Bardaisan. He belongs, therefore, to that trajectory which conceptualized Christianity as a philosophy, rather than a new *ethnos*. But by pitting the two categories against each other, he provided one of the key stages in the reconceptualization of religious identity.

Just two years after Galerius's traditional characterization of Christian deviance from culturally embedded *religio*, or even *religiones*, Constantine and Licinius acknowledged the possibility of a new disembeddedness of religious identity. In the Edict of Milan, issued in 313 C.E.:

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28 Drijvers 1965: 41–63.

... grant to the Christians, and to all, full authority to observe that *religio* which each prefer (*daremus et Christianus et omnibus liberam potestatem sequendi religionem quam quisque voluisset*) ... (and) also concede to other *religiones* (*aliis religionis*) the right of open and free practice for the sake of the peace of our times, so that each may have the free capacity to devote himself as he chooses (*ut in colendo quod quisque delegerit, habeat liberam facultatem*). This regulation is made so that we may not seem to detract from any dignity or any *religio* (*cuiquam religioni*).

The innovation enunciated here regards not the plurality of systems of observance, but the prominent emphasis on individual choice, regardless of heritage. Here at last *religio*, heretofore associated with one's distinctive nationality, had detached itself from birth and custom, and become a voluntary affiliation and association—a religion. Christianity's willful deviance from cultural tradition as a *superstitio* had been accepted as a legitimate alternative, and elevated to the class of *religio* that previously presupposed embeddedness in ethnicity.

Constantine's and Licinius's new conceptualization of voluntary religious identity appears to be without clear precedent in the Roman sphere. Attempts to connect it to the rhetoric of Christian apologetic, with its frequent discussion of varieties of non-Christian worship, run up against the problem that such Christian exercises in 'comparative religion' never manage to establish a category of equivalent comparanda. They inevitably set Christianity as *vera religio* over against the *falsae religiones* of local, ethnic origin.<sup>29</sup> Thus, developing Bardaisan's emphasis on Christianity's distinctive international quality, writers such as Lactantius placed their Christian identity in a unique category apart from very traditionally conceived cultic systems and ways of life coterminous with ethnic allegiances. Philosophical comparisons of the wisdom traditions and lifeways of different cultures likewise worked with traditional notions of fully embedded ethnic identity, from which a philosopher might extract bits of universal truth, but nothing like equivalent systems of practice to which one might adhere regardless of ethnicity. Was the Edict of Milan's conceptual revolution purely the immediate product of political expediency, then, or did its authors have the benefit of antecedent developments outside the Roman sphere, hidden from our gaze only by ingrained habits of viewing the Graeco-Roman world as an insular intellectual culture?

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29 See the excellent study of this discourse in Schott 2008, esp. 78 ff.

### Was Buddhism the First Religion?

While India could not have exercised substantial direct influence on the development of religious discourse in the Roman world, we must consider its possible role in shaping such discourse indirectly through its contact with Mesopotamia and Iran. Did the co-existence within Indian culture of the Brāhmanas and Śramanas by the time of the Hellenistic age bespeak a distinct concept of religion and a specifically 'religious' pluralism within India already at this time? Obviously, such a question deserves a full study in its own right, and I only can hope to outline some key facets of the data on which a more complete assessment might be made. At the very least, we need to guard against anachronistically treating these cultural categories as religions in the later historical sense without cautious examination of their character in the earlier period considered here. I will focus my observations on Buddhism, as having what might appear to be a good claim to emerge as a fully free-standing 'religion' prior to the third century C.E. Yet, as Wilfred Cantwell Smith remarked regarding the problem of whether or not early Buddhism was a religion: 'The modern West has proven incapable of answering this question. The early Buddhists and their neighbours, we may note, were incapable of asking it'.<sup>30</sup>

An organized body of followers of the Buddha's teachings originated within a larger Indian culture, of course, and took many centuries to cross a significant ethnic and cultural frontier. What was it, then, before it took that cross-cultural step? I have already pointed to the presence in west Asia and the Mediterranean of various voluntary cultic and philosophical associations, with a variety of relations with the larger surrounding culture. They remained, however, sub-cultures, leaning on the particulars of their native ethnicities in various ways. In light of such comparisons, the early Buddhist movement fits right into place, displaying considerable similarity to contemporaneous Hellenistic philosophical schools, albeit in the distinct environment of Indian society and the culturally-defined roles it gave to sages. The Brāhmanas and Śramanas represented alternative and rival authorities of cultural wisdom,<sup>31</sup> with the former associated with the ethnically-bound cultic system and social norms, and the latter constituted of various intellectual critiques of Brāhmanic norms and alternative metaphysical and moral systems.

Buddhism, as one of the Śramanic sects, was a teaching, not a priestcraft, with practices of self-cultivation, rather than a system of ritual worship. It

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30 Smith 1963: 56.

31 Chakravarti 1987: 35-44; Goyal 2007: 46-53.

commemorated a human founder, a historical sage—an Indian Pythagoras, if you will. It carried out competition with and polemic against rival teaching traditions, as well as a lively internal debate over correct interpretation of the founder's teachings. Its rejection of traditional religious practices under the authority of the Brāhmanas was not of the same character, but amounted to a critique of certain corpora of knowledge normative to the society, such as Vedic mythology, and of the efficacy of ritual practices such as sacrifice. Like its contemporary Hellenistic philosophical counterparts, it treated these cultural traditions as superfluous to true insight into the nature of things and ultimate happiness. The local assemblies of the Buddhist *sangha* can be compared reasonably to the *collegia* of various voluntary associations in the Roman republic and early empire, with rules of membership, periodic assembly, and recitation of foundational narratives and teachings. Buddhist institutional development, involving settlement of its practitioners in *viharas*, created a professionalization of the *bhikkhus*, in a more permanent relationship of support by lay followers, that began to directly challenge and siphon support from the Brāhmanas.<sup>32</sup> This socio-economic institutional rivalry, however, should not be read automatically as the competition of two 'religions' if its participants themselves did not, and perhaps could not, conceive of it in those terms. In short, little about Buddhism while it remained an all-Indian affair distinguished it phenomenologically from the sort of institutionalized intellectual traditions we find in the Hellenistic world, none of which characterized themselves as belonging to the same category of practice as the culture's cultic system(s)—i.e. as a 'religion'. Hellenistic observers themselves noted the distinction, regarding the Brāhmanas as priestly bearers of ancient wisdom comparable to the 'prophets' of Egypt or the magi of Iran; while considering the Śramanas, lacking the familiar trappings and responsibilities of priestcraft, as philosophers.<sup>33</sup>

This comparison in no way casts doubt on the fact that Buddhism eventually became a 'religion' in the full sense of the term, as it disembedded itself in crucial ways from its original ethnic and cultural setting, and became a separate, portable system of meaning and practice that could be transplanted to a non-Indian culture. Granted, therefore, that Buddhism at some point became a religion, the task becomes one of pinpointing when, where, and in what conditions this happened, and a Buddhist religion per se emerged. If we have difficulty distinguishing an early Buddhist from an adherent of the Stoic, Epicurean

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32 Chakravarti 1987: 55–62.

33 Karttunen 1997: 55–64.

or Cynic traditions, what changed or was added in the process of it becoming a religion? What is the distinguishing trait between a philosophical and religious movement in the ancient world? After all, both sorts of tradition were capable of being spread beyond their original culture, and becoming an identity that transcended ethnicity.

A surprising number of modern researchers, influenced by later Buddhist hagiographies of the third-century B.C.E. Mauryan king Ashoka,<sup>34</sup> perpetuate the anachronistic image of him as a convert to a Buddhist religion, and read into his inscriptions a missionary zeal on a par with Constantine and Theodosius. But the *dharma* he promoted in his edicts, and conveyed via emissaries to contemporary monarchs in Hellenistic west Asia and the Mediterranean region, consisted of a generic piety, duly translated into Greek in his inscriptions at Kandahar as *eusebeia*.<sup>35</sup> 'And what is *dhamma*? It is having few faults and many good deeds, mercy, charity, truthfulness, and purity' (2nd Pillar Edict). Romila Thapar notes as 'curious' the fact that in the edicts 'there is repeated reference to heaven (*svarga*) but no reference to Nirvāna or to transmigration'.<sup>36</sup> Ashoka considered *dharma* equivalent to 'the essence of all sects' (*sāravaddhī savvapāsamdānam*), 'for they all seek mastery of the senses and purity of mind'.<sup>37</sup> Its most idiosyncratic element—a vigorous promotion of vegetarianism—more closely reflected the Jaina sympathies of his grandfather than it did Buddhist values. Ashoka's term for 'sect', *pāsanda*, does not have a clear etymology, but was used polemically in Brāhmanical and Buddhist literature to refer to factional others, groups deviating from norms of practice or doctrine.<sup>38</sup> Ashoka's discussion of factionalism and the need to transcend it, therefore, attests an intra-cultural sectarianism comparable to that Josephus describes within Second Temple Jewish culture. Ashoka repeatedly enjoins deference and generosity toward both of the two major forms of sapiential authority in Indian society, the Brāhmanas and Śramanas.<sup>39</sup> Inscriptions commemorating his patronage demonstrate support for the Buddhist *sangha*, along with other Śramana groups, including the Ājivikas.<sup>40</sup> His

34 See Strong 1983.

35 Schlumberger et al. 1958; Benveniste 1964

36 Thapar 1994: 20. For the original Prakrit text of Ashoka's edicts, see Bloch 1950; for English translation, see Thapar 1997: 250–265.

37 Quotations are from the 12th and 7th Major Rock edict, respectively.

38 I am grateful to Dr. Timothy Lubin, of Washington and Lee University, for personal communication on this term.

39 E.g. 3rd Major Rock Edict, 4th Major Rock Edict, 13th Major Rock Edict.

40 In his dedication to them of the cave of Barābar (Thapar 1997: 260).

self-identification in one inscription as an *uposaka* (lay-supporter) of the Buddhist *sangha* establishes him as a 'Buddhist' in the same sense that Marcus Aurelius was a 'Stoic'. Ashoka simply did not live within, and did not create, the conditions in which Buddhism could be conceptualized as a 'religion'.

Those conditions still had not materialized in Hellenistic Bactria and its Kušān successor kingdom in northwest India in the last centuries B.C.E. and first centuries C.E. The presence of adherents of Buddhism in these nominally 'foreign' realms involved their incorporation of Indian ethnic and cultural territory. In neither Hellenistic Bactria or the Kušān realm can it be shown that either the rulers or general population did anything like 'convert' to Buddhism; rather, they seem to have supported Buddhist institutions and participated in veneration of the Buddha alongside of other cultic and cultural activities of Indian, Iranian, and Hellenic origin. Later Buddhist legend made the Kušān king Kanishka into a convert and patron of Buddhism in much the same way it did Ashoka. Kanishka's famous coins depicting Shakyamuni Buddha and Maitreya Buddha correspond with other evidence from 'Gandharan' art of the time, attesting the evolution of a devotional cult connected to the Buddhist movement. These two Buddhas appear alongside of dozens of deities in a numismatic program which can only be read as celebrating a rich polytheistic environment comparable to contemporary Rome, in which individual 'gods' and 'heroes' (e.g. Herakles) coexist in devotional life without anything like distinct religions dividing it.<sup>41</sup>

When Buddhism did begin to reach into non-Indian territory, it traveled into central Asia and China along the trade routes, as part of the cultural baggage of Indian merchants. As in the parallel Hellenistic case, where the merchants settled, they set up associations, and some of their activities attracted the local population. The city of Khotan, so central to the development of Buddhism outside of India, was itself an Indian colony planted strategically in partnership with a corresponding Chinese merchant colony, to facilitate trade between two major economic zones.<sup>42</sup> Its local coinage featured bilingual inscriptions in Indian Prakrit and Chinese.<sup>43</sup> In other words, it compares in every way to Greek colonies established in Bactria, where colonists retained their native language, culture, and traditional rites and objects of devotion. Buddhism, as a philosophical filiation, appears to have come to the Indian colony at Khotan a century and a half after the latter's foundation.<sup>44</sup> Indian cultural influence spread with merchants, mercenaries, and bureaucrats-for-hire all along the trade route to China

41 See Cribb 1980; Rosenfield 1967.

42 See Lamotte 1988: 281–283; Emmerick 1979: 1–3.

43 Thomas 1944.

44 Emmerick 1967: 22–23.

that ran across the southern edge of the Tarim Basin; Indian Prakrit served as the language of government and business in place of the local language of the region. It was along this route that Buddhism came to China, carried as part of the vigorous regional trade. Later, the Iranian Saka people moved into the region, coming to dominate Khotan and the western end of the trade route, while their close kin moved into western India, establishing states in Sind and Gujarat. In both the north and south, they became avid consumers of Indian culture, sponsors of cultic activities and patrons of Brāhmanas and Śramanas alike.<sup>45</sup>

Were the Indian merchants who sponsored Buddhist institutions and circulated Buddhist texts in Central Asia making available a Buddhist *religion*, to which non-Indian people *converted*? Notably, this form of transplanted Buddhism carried with it the Indian pantheon, whose deities were the subject of cultic practices and devotions, even while Buddhist teaching set limits on their efficacy. This fact is often neglected in studies of the spread of Buddhism: Namely, that Buddhism invariably traveled with native Indian gods and rituals as essential elements.<sup>46</sup> Archeological reports provide abundant evidence of the coexistence and interpenetration of 'Buddhist' and 'Hindu' material culture, although it is obscured in much of secondary scholarship by the latter's tendency to extract specifically 'Buddhist' evidence from more complex archaeological settings, and to distinguish evidence of so-called 'assimilated' Indian deities in unavoidably Buddhist contexts from evidence of the cult of Indian deities without explicit Buddhist references in the same sites. When local non-Indians began to participate in this foreign complex, they did so around an Indian core community which retained authority based on their foreign origin, as a kind of cultural colonialism, in which the teachings of the Buddhists stood in the same relation to the larger attractive Indian culture-complex as the teachings of the Stoics did to the Hellenic culture-complex, or those of the Pharisees to the Jewish culture-complex. The evidence of cultic centers in central Asia shows us that 'Buddhists' could also accommodate local pantheons, just as Stoics might participate in worship of the local gods in different regions of the Roman empire. In both cases, the ideology could coexist with traditional religious practice, indicating that it was not perceived as an alternative religious system.

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45 See Van Lohuizen-De Leeuw 1995.

46 See Gaulier et al. 1976: 31–40; Puri 1987: 129–136; Joshi 2004.



The kinds of texts associated with the early waves of Buddhism's spread across Asia likewise indicate that the tradition did not arrive as a religion. Of course, many of these texts were preserved in their original Indian dialects; one had to linguistically be or become Indian to access them. Translation into local languages was sporadic and selective, and at first may have been as much to serve the descendants of Indian colonists who had lost facility with their native language (as the Septuagint served Greek-speaking Jews in the Diaspora) as it was to make content available to 'converts' from the local population. If we take the choice of what was translated to be indicative of what held primary interest in the Buddhist tradition for those who wished to access the content of its literature, we find, for example, that the earliest translations of Buddhist texts into Chinese, those of An Shih-kao,<sup>47</sup> consist almost entirely of digests and handbooks for basic physical and metaphysical categories, ethical principles, and meditative techniques. That is, An Shih-kao was a purveyor to the Chinese literati of foreign techniques of self-cultivation—the latest fad, if you will, in intellectual consumption of the exotic. There is no evidence that the readers of An Shih-kao's texts understood themselves to be apostates from native Chinese forms of religious practice, and converts to a new 'religion'. They simply showed interest in foreign ideas brought by non-Chinese merchants or traveling sages.<sup>48</sup> Thus the earliest traces of Buddhism in China bear all the hallmarks of the attraction of the exotic that I have suggested forms an essential antecedent of the development of a sense of distinct religions and thus religious pluralism.<sup>49</sup> Over the next few centuries, it developed the trappings and self-consciousness of an alternative to native Chinese religious practices, and hence became a 'religion' proper, although it struggled throughout Chinese history to disconnect its identity from its foreign origins. The challenge it posed in its indigestible distinctness helped to prompt the development

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47 The identity and motives of this Parthian Buddhist remain buried beneath legend. But the character of the works he translated speaks for itself. He arrived in Luoyang and began introducing Buddhist texts to Chinese readers in 148 C.E.

48 Cf. Zürcher 1991 at 277: 'In spite of all the changes and adaptations which the scriptures may have undergone in the course of translation, they basically remained intrusions from another civilization, containing an enormous range of concepts, rules, literary images and religious lore which, once introduced into China, lost their original degree of cohesion and integration. Some elements in a scripture could—for a variety of reasons—"catch on" and become productive factors in Chinese Buddhism, whereas other notions figuring in the same text would remain alien and undigested'.

49 Cf. Zürcher 1991: 291.

of a Chinese terminology roughly equivalent to what we mean by 'religion' in the early medieval period.<sup>50</sup>

### Religious Pluralism in Iran

Between the Graeco-Roman Mediterranean and Indian South Asia stood Iran. There, as in Judaea, we see a nativist reaction and coalescence of religious identity against what was regarded as an intrusion of foreign or illegitimate gods or religious practices. The Mazdayasnian 'religion' emerged through a process in the third to seventh centuries C.E. out of the traditional religious practices of Iranian culture, in self-conscious response to the presence and challenge of foreign identities that included alternative religious traditions. The cultural leaders of third-century Iran found themselves caught up in the tensions that exist within multi-ethnic and multi-cultural empires such as the new Sasanian empire. Would the imperial group assert its own ethnic and cultural supremacy over conquered peoples, or would it accommodate the diversity of its political realm? Aligned with state power, the traditional priesthood could aspire to suppress alternative religious practices, and impose native Iranian ethnic religion on non-Iranians. This aspiration came with various normativizing and institutionalizing moves that more sharply defined approved practices over against deviant ones, regularizing and rationalizing something we can begin to think of as 'Mazdayasnianism'. Nevertheless, it remained rooted in the retrenchment of a single ethnicity and culture. It never went beyond its own ethnic and cultural homeland, but traveled with Iranians, and only Iranians, as they moved out into the world.

For the traditional Iranian priesthood, there should have been no such thing as 'religious pluralism', because by being born Iranian one was automatically and unavoidably within the domain of Mazda worship. To belong to the culture was to be obligated to certain religious practices. There was no such thing as other 'religions', only unbelief and religious transgression. The famous inscriptions of the priest Kartīr express these assumptions, while at the same time they reveal that something was happening on the ground to challenge them, namely, the distillation of cross-cultural religions. Before and around Kartīr, Iranian monarchs identified themselves in inscriptions and on coins as 'Mazda worshipping', and announced their sponsorship of traditional cultic activities connected to that deity. They upheld the moral code willed by Ahura Mazda,

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50 Company 2003: 299–312.

while opposing 'the lie' and suppressing the worship of *daevas*.<sup>51</sup> Kartīr, too, was 'Mazda worshipping'. Yet unlike earlier expressions of this loyalty, Kartīr's inscriptions do not identify Mazda's rivals as other gods (either lesser or false), but as other *groups*, a number of which could not be equated with ethnicities:<sup>52</sup>

And from province to province, place to place, throughout the empire the rites of Ohrmezd and the gods became more important and Mazdayasnian *dēn* and *magi* were greatly honored in the empire ... and great blows and torment befell Ahriman and the *devs*, and the teachings of Ahriman and the *devs* departed and were routed from the empire. And Jews (*yhwdy*) and Śramanas (*šmny*) and Brāhmanas (*blmny*) and Nazareans (*nčly*) and Christians (*klystyd'n*) and Baptists (*mktky*) and Manichaeans (*zndyky*) were smitten in the empire, and idols were destroyed and the abodes of the *devs* disrupted and made into thrones and seats of the gods.

Now what are these groups? Beginning with Jews, one might expect the list to proceed with other foreign ethnicities. But, rather than speaking of Indians (an established ethnic category in both Iranian and Graeco-Roman ethnography), Kartīr refers to the two parallel authorities of Indian wisdom, the Brāhmanas and Śramanas. They, along with the Jews, figured in the prior Hellenistic imaginary of exotic wisdom, which may have entered into Iranian intellectual culture through Hellenistic Mesopotamia. At this point, then, we still could consider Kartīr's inscription a polemic against foreign, non-Iranian 'wisdom'; Jewish and Indian populations had been incorporated into the Sasanian empire by conquest, and these traditions of authority had remained in place within their ethnic enclaves, as alien bodies within the new Iran. Next, however, comes a string of groups of a different kind; none of these terms have a single ethnic reference point. They represent *voluntary* associations devoted, in Kartīr's mind, to the service of devils. So what is the category to which these entities or systems of practice belong?

Kartīr refers to his own tradition as the 'Mazda-worshipping *dēn*'. The term *dēn* designated cultic and pious conduct, the set of practices which traditional Iranian society expected and imagined would form the basis of post-mortem judgment. In other words, it functioned much the same way as *religio* does in

51 See the Achaemenid era inscriptions conveniently excerpted in Boyce 1984: 104–106.

52 Translation based on MacKenzie 1989, but modified to bring out the underlying Middle Persian terminology.

Latin or *eusebeia* does in Greek. But it possesses a distinctly institutional sense in Kartīr's inscription, when he says that this *dēn* and its authority-figures (the *magi*) were 'greatly honored in the empire'. Kartīr avoids using the same term to refer to his rivals, but implicitly he treats them as evil alternatives, as kind of anti-*dēns*. They are not simply an amorphous mass of nefarious practices or the world of unbelief, but rather distinct systems and communities, in other words, rival *dēns*.

In short, Kartīr's inscriptions share with the roughly contemporary Christian discourse the categories of *vera religio* and *falsae religiones*, which in turn simply universalize traditional ethnic normative ideas about the propriety of the practices of one's native tradition, in opposition to 'foreign' practices. Christians conceived of themselves as something like a new, synthetic ethnicity, possessing their own proper god(s) and set of associated values and practices, the Christian *religio*. Kartīr belonged to a parallel process of defining a new Iranian identity in part by circumscribing the correct objects and methods of the Iranian *dēn*. The difference for Kartīr lay in the new organizational reality of a plurality of voluntary, non-ethnic identities, whereas Christian polemicists still looked out upon a mass of cultural practices of the various peoples making up the Roman world. The 'foreignness' of Kartīr's Nazareans and Christians and Baptists and Manichaeans had been distilled into a point of contrast not with Iranian ethnicity or culture as a whole, but with the specific sub-set of cultural practices designated by *dēn*. With this, a new possible category of identity emerges.

If we go back, say, two centuries, an inscription such as Kartīr's is simply inconceivable—in Iran, the Graeco-Roman world, and India. Any inscription with a similar motive would record the pious donations and dedications of the sponsor of the inscription, include suitable phrases indicating his reverence towards the gods, and how the favor of those gods may have been manifested in his life. It might also record support for particular *collegia* of either a priestly or philosophical kind. Nor would the idea that the figure has taken steps to combat evil or the impious be out of place. But there would be no way to speak of distinct religious communities, instead of the simple dichotomy of the pious and the impious. As reluctant as Kartīr obviously is, and as much as he thinks of these groups as the many heads of a single demonic 'lie', he has come to terms with new categorical divisions within his society created not by the plurality of ethnicities encompassed within Iran, but by people's choices with regard to a new kind of identity. Kartīr writes a generation before Constantine and Licinius, and proves that a concept of distinct religions had emerged in Iran earlier than it can be shown to exist in the Roman empire.

But was this reconceptualization his own insight, or was he making poor use of some one else's earlier conceptual breakthrough?

### Mani and the Crystallization of the Religion Concept

In a work addressed to the second Sasanian ruler, Shapur I, nearly half a century before Kartīr's inscription, Mani presented himself amid the same pluralistic field of *dēns* as we see in Kartīr's remarks. But Mani did more than refer to or describe this plurality; he made it the subject of a *theory*. He perceived analogies among these entities in their foundation and purpose; and in justifying his own spiritual authority, Mani placed himself in continuity with the founder figures of these religious others.<sup>53</sup>

Messengers of God have constantly brought wisdom and knowledge in successive times. In one era they were brought by the messenger Buddha to the land of India, in another by Zaradusht to Persia, and in another by Jesus to the west. Now this revelation has descended and this prophecy is promulgated during this final era by me, Mani, the messenger of the God of truth to Babylonia.

Mani's list of religious predecessors attests many of the same groups of followers referred to in Kartīr's inscription: The latter's own Mazdayasnian tradition, Buddhists, Christians, and Mani's own Manichaeans. The other groups—Jews, Brāhmanas, and Baptists, find reference in other preserved passages of Mani's writings or recorded oral teachings.<sup>54</sup> Both Mani and Kartīr, then, report a rich

53 Quoted from Mani's *Šābuhragān* by Bīrūnī, and translated after Reeves 2011: 102–103. For the corrected reading 'wisdom and knowledge' (rather than Bīrūnī's 'wisdom and deeds'), see the arguments of Tardieu 1981, and the further evidence cited in Reeves 2011: 102–103 n. 114 and Reeves 1996: 23 n. 40.

54 For passages on these groups from the *Synaxeis* Codex, see Funk 2009. In one such passage, Mani speaks of journeying to 'the countries of the land of the east, of India', in which 'I took a close look at the caste of the Brāhmanas (*Brachmanes*) ... I took a close look at their *nomos* and found that the leaders and the teachers [excelled] in prophecy and asceticism, in special skills'; and that they were 'incapable of listening to any other but their own ... *nomos*' and that they 'did not search outside of ... their *nomos*'. Nonetheless, Mani 'interpreted all the greatneses from their signs', as a result of which they told him: 'All the things that you have told us are of light' (Funk 2009: 121–122). For the 'religion of the Jews' (*yahūdān dēn*), see Sundermann 1992(a): § 94a. For the 'sect of the baptists' (ΠΛΟΥΤΑ ΝΗΒΑΠΤΙΣΤΗΣ), see I Ke 44, 25.

and vibrant—perhaps fairly unique—religious pluralism within third-century Sasanian Iran. Kartīr, for his part, was forced to acknowledge a changed condition on the ground, where religious traditions had consolidated into distinct faith communities; but they still represented to him just a many-headed form of a single demonic lie. Mani steps away from such a perspective, asserting not only their shared categorical identity but even their common derivation from a single divine truth. His desire to relate and compare himself to these others, rather than distance himself from them, produced a self-conscious attention to their parallelism of origin, structure and purpose. In other words, it fostered an analysis that distilled out of the phenomena a conceptual category to which these communities could be imagined to belong.

The 2 Ke codex now provides us with significantly greater detail on Mani's thinking on the shared traits of distinct religious communities. We find a close parallel to the *Šābuhragān* passage quoted above, outlining Mani's view of the history of religious revelation:<sup>55</sup>

I will [tell] you each one of the apostles by name, they who came and appeared in this world. Zarades was sent to Persia, to Hystaspes the king. He revealed the truly-founded law in all of Persia. Again, Bouddas the blessed, he came to the land of India and Kušān. He also revealed the truly-founded law in all of India and Kušān. And after him Aurentes came with Kebellos to the east. They also revealed the truly-founded law in the east. (N.N.) came to Parthia. He revealed the law of truth in all of Parthia. Jesus the Christ came to the west. He (revealed the law of) truth in all of the west.

Mani has taken account here of several additional founding figures, particularly from the Indian environment.<sup>56</sup> Each of them delivered a *nomos*, a set of foundational ordinances by which the community should live.<sup>57</sup> Moreover, this passage explicitly characterizes these other 'laws' as 'truly-founded (εἰς μαντῆ μινε)', in that respect equivalent to Mani's own 'law' and not relegated to an unspecified mass of *falsae religiones*.<sup>58</sup> Mani presumes that their founders all had experiences of revelation similar to his own, through which they received the same fundamental truths.<sup>59</sup>

55 2 Ke 422, 28–423, 12 / G302 + 299.

56 Gardner 2005 first demonstrated the probable Jaina identity of the figure Kebellos.

57 Paul had spoken, in a text probably known to Mani, of ὁ νόμος τοῦ Χριστοῦ (Gal. 6:2).

58 Cf. Dilley at chapter 5 in this volume.

59 2 Ke 423, 15–22 / G299. This claim to visionary confirmation of religious truth is closely

For they were seized from this place, they were [taken] up, they went, they saw, they came (back), they bore witness (that truly?) the land of light exists and that we have come from it. Also, hell (εμῆτε) exists, and we have seen the place where it is ... They made disciples of the people ... Their witness exists till now in their writings, in all these countries.

Mani's distinctive regard for the written word finds expression here, as does his sense that the records of these revelations constitute the special possession of groups of disciples following each of these visionary figures.

In other passages in 2 Ke, Mani demonstrates detailed knowledge of the 'prophetology' of the various traditions. He knows that the followers of Bouddas believe the latter to be the seventh of that title, just as Kebellos—i.e. the Kevalin Mahāvīra—is understood to be one of twenty-four such figures.<sup>60</sup> In making these observations, Mani seems to be delineating traditions constituted by a succession of leadership, along the lines of philosophical lists of *diadochoi*. He also comments on the internal organizational structure of these communities, with their various 'chiefs', 'teachers', 'elders', 'deacons' and 'disciples', whose coordination and cooperation maintain a kind of polity that defines one community (σαρχῆ) or church (εκκλησια) from another.<sup>61</sup>

From Mani's descriptive parsimony, we discern an outline of the basic elements of his working concept of a religion: (1) The product of revelation, (2) authorized by a founder figure, (3) organized as a community, (4) in a particular land, (5) guided by textual resources. Mani could have drawn most of these elements of his definition from familiar descriptive categories of ancient ethnography; the founder establishes a community in much the same way that

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paralleled in the inscriptions of Kartīr, where he recounts his own vision of heaven and hell. A very similar personal visionary journey is described in a classic Mazdayasnian text set in Sasanian times, the *Book of Ardā Wīrāz*. Cf. Dilley, ch. 8 above.

60 G139, 2; G140, 3–5 and 13–14. The exact place in the 2 Ke codex of the quire from which these references are cited, and hence its original pagination, has not yet been settled, and for that reason they are cited only by the plate numbers of the facsimile edition (Giversen 1987).

61 For the various titles of organizational roles, see G137, 12–14; G139, 6–7 and 23; G140, 6. It remains uncertain whether Mani's references to the 'towers' (πύργος) of the followers of Bouddas and Kebellos (G139, 12; G140, 5) represent allusions to their distinctive religious monuments, or constitute metaphors for the communities themselves as in 1 Ke 369, 29–370, 15, where the image of the tower for the community is taken from the Christian text *Shepherd of Hermas* (I am grateful to a personal communication from Iain Gardner for this reference). The latter work was also known to Manichaeans in central Asia (on which see Müller 1904).

the *oikistēs* and / or *nomothetēs* of a new city or colony did. Philo of Alexandria had already described the formation of the Jewish people under Moses in similar terms,<sup>62</sup> and Mani's contemporary Origen characterized Jesus as the founder of the Christian people likewise.<sup>63</sup> But Mani took the category problem posed by the Christian case and solved it with the creation of a new category by inclusion of other comparable voluntary communities—Buddhists and Jainas and Mazdayasnians—each of which might have consisted primarily of people from a single ethnicity, but nonetheless formed distinct communities within them, loyal to the authority of a founder figure who was *not* accepted as a culture hero by the surrounding general society. Mani lived within a narrow historical window within which he could accomplish this conceptual revolution, as Christ and Zarathustra soon became such general culture heroes within their respective societies.

In light of such discussions in 2 Ke, we can identify a medieval Sogdian text, 18248.I,<sup>64</sup> as a likely fragment of kephalaia literature recording Mani's oral teachings on this subject.<sup>65</sup> In this text, Mani reviews much the same collection of prior entities discussed in 2 Ke, but with an eye particularly on the history of their corruption, which in turn created the conditions in which Mani's fresh revelation and community had its purpose. He discusses the 'Brāhmanic religion' (*pr'mn'nch dynh*), the 'Magian religion' (*mwγ'nch dynh*), the 'Buddhist religion' (*pwty dynh*) and the 'Christian religion' (*trs'k'nch dynh*); with the Iranian term *dēn* used in the same way as Greek *nomos* is in the Coptic Manichaica. In contrast to Kartīr, the Manichaeans did not avoid calling other traditions *dēn*, even in the context of critiquing them; and therefore they could speak in the plural of *dēnān*: The 'previous religions' (*pēšēnagān dēnān*) in general (M5794.I v.20), or the religions (*dēnān*) that employed water baptism (M5966 r(?) .2–5), or the religions (*dēnān*) of the Roman empire (*hrōm*) whose doctrinal conflicts the first Manichaean missionaries observed (M2.I r.i.4), and against which they marshaled the wisdom of Mani (M216c + 1750 v.8–11).

All of these examples, and most of those that survive from Iranian Manichaean literature, involve at the very least the idea of Manichaean supersession of the 'previous religions', and many go so far as a polemical stance not unlike the

62 On Moses as the *nomothetēs* of the Jewish nation, see Philo, *Life of Moses*, *passim*; Goode-nough 1938.

63 Origen, *Against Celsus* 1, 45; 2, 51.

64 Published as TM 393 in Henning 1944: 137–142.

65 Mani appears to be identified as the speaker in the manner of a kephalaion at 18248.I v.20–22 (= Henning lines 46–48); but there remains some question whether this represents an isolated quotation in a later homily by another author.



Christian one against *falsae religiones*.<sup>66</sup> But in that Christian discourse before the fourth century, as well as its antecedent in Latin writers who employed the plural *religiones* to refer to the variety of cultic systems, these *religiones* remained linked to ethnic groups, as the traditional manner a particular population had of conducting themselves in relation to their gods. At most, Christian writers might distinguish ‘Gentile’ or ‘Hellene’ *religio* from Jewish and Christian forms. Mani and his followers thought in different terms, designating each *dēn* or *nomos* by a distinct, generally non-ethnic term that referred instead to a tradition of voluntary commitment to a particular cultic authority. Note that the text preserved in 18248.1 uses ‘Brāhmanic’ rather than ‘Indian’, and ‘Magian’ rather than ‘Iranian’, in cases where the presumption might have been that the cultic tradition in question more-or-less corresponded with an ethnic identity. It is not a question of the etymology or prior use of terms such as *nomos* or *dēn*; it is a matter of how Manichaean texts consistently and exclusively employ these terms to refer to entities recognizable as ‘religions’ rather than ethnic or political institutions. In this way, Mani made a decisive advance on how Bardaisan used *nomos* a generation earlier. With Mani, a ‘religion’ category has displaced ethnicity as the primary marker of identity. Manichaeans did not think of themselves as a ‘new race’, but as adherents of a new religion comparable to other disembedded systems of cultic practice that through the course of time had crossed ethnic and cultural boundaries to a greater or lesser degree.

Mani may have selected either *dēn* or *nomos*, or both, himself; since he appears to have had some knowledge of both Iranian and Greek.<sup>67</sup> Alternatively, either term already may have been borrowed as a loan word into Mani’s native Aramaic dialect. On the other hand, they may represent translations coined by his disciples for an original expression in Mani’s original Aramaic. The same may be suggested for the use of *ekklēsia*, used in a Coptic kephalaion where an equivalent Iranian version has *dēn*.<sup>68</sup> Quotations of Mani’s works by

66 The full Manichaean position is aptly summed up in *Gyān Wifrās* (Sundermann 1997(a)) § 77: ‘Every religion (is) from the command of the gods, [and] the religions have fallen from this injunction’ (*wysp dyn ’c yzd’n ndr’z [’wd] dyn’n ’c ’ym frm’n nš[t’ft(?)] ’hy[nd(?)]*).

67 Mani’s knowledge of some Greek terminology can be demonstrated from his apparent use of words such as *pragmateia*, *hylē*, *bōlos*, *archon*, *hypodektai*, etc. (see Burkitt 1921: cxxxv–cxl). These terms belong to the vocabulary of the natural sciences, politics, and perhaps philosophy, rather than from any specific sectarian milieu, and in this way suggest Mani’s exposure to Greek in common use in cosmopolitan Mesopotamia. The term *nomos* certainly would have been a familiar one in this same context.

68 1 Ke 370–375, which employs the plural ἱερωαῖτι ἱερακλῆσια in the same statement quoted from Mani in the Iranian text M5794.1, using *pēšēnagān dēnān*. See Lieu 2006. This Mani-

Syriac and Arabic writers have the best chance of preserving Mani's original wording. In one such passage, Bīrūnī quotes Mani speaking about *milal*, the plural form of *milla*, which is used in the Qur'an and subsequent Islamic literature in the sense of 'system of religious practice' or 'religious community'.<sup>69</sup> This Arabic term derives from Aramaic *melta*, and Mani himself may have employed the latter expression in his discussion of various 'religions', where his translators used *dēn* or *nomos* or *ekklēsia*.

In the new passage quoted above from 2 Ke, Mani very specifically localizes each of these prior religious traditions in a particular regional or ethnic enclave: Zarades in Persia, Bouddas in India and Kušān, Aurentes and Kebellos in 'the east' (ταννατολη), Jesus in 'the west' (πικανζωτῆ). Mani drew an explicit contrast between such regional traditions and the international scope of his religion, highlighting the very culture-crossing development that I have been treating as one of the hallmarks of the emergence of distinct religions. We have both an Iranian and a Coptic version of this pointed contrast. First the Iranian:<sup>70</sup>

The *dēn* which I have chosen is greater and better than the other *dēns* of the ancients (*abāriḡān dēn ī pēšēnagān*) in ten ways. First, the *dēns* of the previous ones (*dēn ī ahēnagān*) were in one country and one language. But my *dēn* is such that it will be manifest in every country and in every language, and will be taught in distant countries.

The Coptic offers a more elaborated (and somewhat stilted) treatment of the same comparison:<sup>71</sup>

The *ekklēsia* that I have chosen is superior in ten aspects over the first *ekklēsias* (ἡἠαρπ ἡεκκλησια). So, one: ... Some of them came in [the west (?)] only; others among them have come in [the east (?)] alone; each of them came in (and) [they chose the] *ekklēsias* that they chose

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chaean use of the term in the plural to refer to distinct religious communities, rather than local bodies of Christians, is to my knowledge unprecedented.

69 The passage is in Bīrūnī's *India* (*Kitāb fi tahqīq mā lil-Hind*), translated in Reeves 2011 at 127: '... adherents of (other) religions reproach us because we worship the sun and moon ...'. I wish to thank John Reeves for his personal communication with me about this passage. In the Qur'an, *milla* frequently appears in parallel with *dīn* (as a loan word from Iranian), e.g. Sura 4, 125; 6, 161.

70 M5794, originally published as T II D 1261 in Andreas and Henning 1933: 295–297; cf. Boyce 1975: text a.

71 1 Ke 370, 29–371, 19, translation from Gardner and Lieu 2004: 265–266, slightly modified.

in the places and the cities where they were disclosed. The one who chose his *ekklēsia* in the west, his *ekklēsia* did not reach to the east; the one who chose his *ekklēsia* in the east, his election did not come to the west. Thus, there are some of them whose name did not display in other cities. However, my hope, mine: It is provided for it to go to the west and also for it to go to the east; and in every language they hear the voice of its proclamation, and it is proclaimed in all cities. In this first matter my *ekklēsia* surpasses the first *ekklēsia*s: Because the first *ekklēsia*s were chosen according to place, according to city. My *ekklēsia*, mine: It is proclaimed for it to go out from all cities, and its good news attains every country.

Mani's program is not one of Iranianism or Babylonianism. It is not a program of cultural proselytism such as we see in Hellenism or the phenomenon of 'going native' in becoming Jewish or Indian. Rather, something is being lifted out of a particular locality, ethnicity, and culture, organized as a system and institution, and being transplanted to new ethnic and cultural locations. In noting the close ties between other traditions and specific localities, and contrasting it to his own global aspirations, Mani attests the historical development in his own time from the locally-rooted traditions of the past to the new conditions of inter-cultural proselytism, in which Christians and Buddhists, for instance, were crossing cultural frontiers every bit as much as his disciples were. Mani was able to theorize about this change of religious landscape, as part of his crystallization of the very concept 'religion'.

The role Mani and the Manichaeans seem to have played in defining the new kind of social entity we call 'religion', and coming to conceptual terms with the new historical reality of religious pluralism, therefore, did not depend on Manichaean acceptance of other traditions on equal terms with their own. In fact, Mani and the Manichaeans did not do this. They had a clear idea of supersession: Other religions represented *previous* revelations whose time had now run its course.<sup>72</sup> Statements attributed to Mani show a clear assertion of

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72 "The apostle of light, the splendrous enlightener, [Zarades] came to Persia, up to Hystaspes the king [... he chose] disciples ... [he proclaimed] his hope in Persia. But ... Zaradēs [did not] write books. Rather his [disciples who came] after him, they remembered; they wrote ... that they read today ... Again, when Buddha came ... he too proclaimed [his hope and] great wisdom. He chose his churches ... Yet there is only this: that he did [not] write his wisdom [in] books. His disciples who came after him are the ones who [remembered] somewhat the wisdom that they had heard from Buddha. They [wrote it in] scriptures. And because of this, that the fathers of righteousness did not write their wisdom in books,

the superiority of his revelation, and its place as the ultimate form of faith. While affirming the original inspiration of other religions, Mani criticized their current forms as corruptions and deviations from original truth. As the 'interpreter' (πρερμηνευτης, Hom 60, 31; 61, 16), Mani was understood to clarify and explain the figurative speech of his predecessors by his own clear and literal exposition. As Augustine of Hippo reports (*Against the Fundamental Epistle* 23; cf. *Against Faustus* 15.6):

The divine mysteries which were taught figuratively in books from ancient times were kept for Manichaeus, who was to come last, to solve and to demonstrate; and so after him no other teacher will come from God.

The prologue to the Coptic *Kephalaia* collection places the same idea in the mouth of Mani himself:<sup>73</sup>

The other dogmas and sects ... I opened the eyes of each of them [regarding its] wisdom and its scripture, that this is the truth that I have revealed ... The other messengers ... and the first fathers previously revealed it ...

Clearly, then, Mani's claim of supersession entailed a qualified acceptance of the worth of the superseded traditions:<sup>74</sup>

The writings and wisdom and the revelations and the parables and the psalms of all the first *ekklēsias* have been collected in every place. They have come down to my *ekklēsia*. They have added to the wisdom that I have revealed, the way water might add to water and become many waters. Again, this also is the way that the ancient books have added to my writings, and have become a great wisdom.

Mani's 'universalism', therefore, represents in part simply another polemical and competitive strategy different from that of Kartīr's particularism: Supersession in place of suppression, appropriation in place of rejection. But the differ-

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[you should] know that their righteousness and their church [will pass] away from the world' (1 Ke 7, 27–8, 10, tr. Gardner 1995: 13). 'After Paul the apostle, little by little, day [after] day, all mankind began to stumble. They left [righteousness] behind them, and the path which is narrow and difficult. They preferred [to] go on the road which is broad' (1 Ke 13, 26–29, tr. Gardner 1995: 19).

73 1 Ke 7, 3–7; the translation is my own.

74 1 Ke 372, 11–18; tr. Gardner and Lieu 2004: 266.

ence that universalism made in the Manichaean case relates to the Manichaean *interest* in other religions as a resource, and the project to not *merely* polemicize, but also to draw positive comparisons and parallels between other faiths and one's own. As Robert Campany notes of texts which attempted to define distinct 'paths' or 'teachings' within the pluralistic environment of medieval China (which included Manichaeans and Christians alongside of Buddhists, Taoists and Confucians), such discursive endeavors 'are always framed from the point of view of someone who, even when favoring one side over the other, writes as if it is possible to weigh both on the same scale and implies that two (or more) particular things are members of a common genus'.<sup>75</sup> In constructing a supersessionist narrative, the Manichaeans highlighted the similarities and connections between religions, and charted a paradigm for 'religion' as a category of human identity. At the same time they wished to subsume all religious pluralism within their own community they necessarily made themselves students of that pluralism, with particular attention to the commonalities that Mani insisted proved their common divine inspiration. It was this project, at one and the same time historical and theological, that was distinctively Manichaean, and uniquely instrumental in defining 'religion', by taking account of what was beginning to happen on the ground and formulating a way to think about this novel phenomenon.

Muslims, then, inherited this new conceptual framework, and even directly the terminology Manichaeans had adopted for it, and carried it forward both within their own supersessionist narrative, and as part of an intellectual project very closely approximating the modern comparative study of religion. For Muslims, religious pluralism was a given, an established understanding of one of the principal ways people defined themselves. It was so obvious and accepted by them, I think, only because of the way the Manichaeans had changed the terms of the discussion in the preceding centuries.

In light of this comparative project Mani initiated, it may be possible for us to put behind us once and for all vain efforts to define an 'essential' Manichaeism, deriving in a clean line of descent from either a 'Christian' or 'Mazdayasnian' heritage, or any other insular 'religious' tradition. Manichaeism should not be construed as belonging to or deriving from entities which did not yet exist, entities which it helped define for the first time. As Wilfred Cantwell Smith astutely observed: '... it is the outsider who names a religious system. It is the observer who conceptualizes a religion as a denotable existent'.<sup>76</sup> Manichaean identity

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75 Campany 2003: 313.

76 Smith 1963: 118.

was crafted and formulated by an active engagement with multiple antecedent traditions of practice and discourse. Mani's own position of authority was rationalized within a theory of revelation that permitted him to acknowledge previous formulations of truth while subordinating each of them to his own encompassing interpretation. The academic attempt to trace lines of relationship among sharply defined, distinct religious traditions in the ancient world has been a great anachronism, and an uncritical adoption and projection into the past of what amounts to the invention, in the first few centuries C.E., of the idea of distinct religions distinguished from their ethnic and cultural settings. The emergence of such new entities did not immediately and automatically produce a new vocabulary and new theory to account for them. That further conceptual development awaited the distinctive perspective of Mani, whose unique comparative project brought forth the first clear delineation of the religion concept.



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