Special Issue Introduction

"Formative Exchanges" in Late Antique Eurasia (1): Zoroastrianism, Manichaeism, Judaism, and Christianity

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ABSTRACT The article first presents the theoretical, historical, and methodological presuppositions that guided the organization of the first "Formative Exchanges in Late Antique Eurasia" workshop at the Käte Hamburger Kolleg (KHK), Ruhr-Universität Bochum, in 2017. In the second part, the article summarizes the papers presented at this meeting and identifies the emerging questions and results shared by the participants.

KEYWORDS formative religion, religious encounters, Zoroastrianism, Manichaeism, Christianity, Judaism, Persian Empire, Roman Empire

Introduction

The notion of "formative religion" found both its initial methodological inspiration and its [1] ulterior developments in the academic research carried out at the Käte Hamburger Kolleg (KHK), Ruhr-Universität Bochum, on religious contacts in Eurasia, between 2014 and 2019, after the guest editors of this issue, Eduard Iricinschi and Kianoosh Rezania, joined the project on "Dynamics in the History of Religions between Asia and Europe," directed by Volkhard Krech (2008–2018), and by Alexandra Cuffel and Kianoosh Rezania (2018–2020).[1]

The KHK methodology of identifying religious contacts and analyzing the conditions un- [2] der which these occurred and left meaningful changes in their wake enabled the editors and their guests to explore the notion of "formative religion" at multiple levels. First, investigating the formative stages of any given religion emancipates scholars from engaging the issue of religious origins, always an enterprise fraught with theological baggage by virtue of

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1 For more details on the theoretical background of the research carried out at the Käte Hamburger Kolleg, RUB, see Krech (2012a, 2012b).

its own definition. Second, by enlarging the scope of the analysis beyond singular religious formation—also a matter of theological mythmaking—to the matter of encounters between various religious formations, the historians of religion engaged in this KHK enterprise turned their attention to the notion of "formative exchanges."

The above double methodological assumption opens the way to envisage "religions" in an unremitting fluctuation and exchange with their neighbors' rituals and narratives. Just as no man stays "an island" for too long, the decade-long explorations in religious contacts, carried out at the Käte Hamburger Kolleg in Bochum, showed that no "religion" remained "pure," that is, uncontaminated, unrelated to others, or unexposed to cultural influences coming from what it considers to be, normatively, outside geographical, political, and ideological realms. Third, and finally, if one considers "formative religion" to be taken both as a considerable step away from the enchantment with religious origins and as a measure of variable hybridity, one could also understand the establishment of an organized religion as a processual development unraveled through dialogue, mimesis, resistance, and rejection. [3]

The KHK analytical concepts of "typology," "purity," "media," "gender," "dynamics and stability," "transcendence and immanence," "secrecy," and "tradition," elaborated and tested throughout the years of research, provide scholars with the necessary critical tools to evaluate the ways in which "formative religions" developed as the outcome of interactions between various religious formations, either of the same orientation, also labelled as "intra-religious boundaries," or with different aspects, identified at the Käte Hamburger Kolleg as "inter-religious dynamics."[2] The most appropriate way to identify religious alterations which took place following social and literary interactions would be to identify the resulting "formative exchanges" and document them in their processual development. This also means that one needs to track changes recorded on both camps of religious encounters in an ongoing process of reciprocal information exchange between the sides in contact. [4]

At the pragmatic level, between 2017 and 2019, Iricinschi and Rezania envisaged the exploration of this ever-changing landscape of mutual influences at work in religious encounters in three stages. In 2017, they organized a workshop on "Formative Religious Exchanges between the Sasanian Empire and Late Antique Rome" dedicated to the exploration of issues of religious interactions between Zoroastrians, Manichaeans, and Christians in both the Persian Empire and in the Eastern Mediterranean. The initial working hypothesis suggested that formative dynamics of contacts, interactions, and exchanges took place between Zoroastrianism, Manichaeism, and Christianity at multiple levels: religious, ritual, material, and experiential. As a result, Iricinschi and Rezania suggested exploring the rhetoric, ritual, and material scope of religions represented as "minorities" within larger ethnic and ideological landscapes, such as Christians and Manichaeans in the Sasanian Empire, or Manichaeans and Jews in the Roman Empire. At the same time, they sought to investigate how the subsequent reactions from the political, ethnic, and religious "majority" of the Persian and Roman Empires led not only to various manners of accommodation or rejection of religious minorities by the religious establishment, but also to the transformation of the above-said majorities because of religious contacts. To discuss these formative interactions, they invited scholars to investigate late antique primary sources in Middle Persian, Parthian, Syriac, Armenian, Georgian, Coptic, Greek, and Latin, which describe religious contacts in the late antique Sasanian and Roman Empires. [5]

Encouraged by the success of the 2017 workshop, whose measure is hopefully reflected in [6]

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2   For details, see the *KHK Working Paper Series* available online: https://er.ceres.rub.de/index.php/ER/concepts (accessed December 4, 2020).

the papers included in this Special Issue of *Entangled Religions*, the two scholars associated with this project attempted to replicate it a year later. In 2018, they shifted their geographical focus eastwards and focused on the eastern Iranian plateau, the Indian subcontinent, and Central Asia. The temporal interval of the investigation, however, remained unchanged, namely, the first millennium CE. The organizers preserved the binomial conjunctures between Zoroastrianism and Manichaeism but chose to explore its relevance against the Central Asian background shaped by religious interactions between Zoroastrianism, Manichaeism, and Buddhism. As a result, they investigated formative dynamics of contacts, interactions, and exchanges that took place between these religions at the same multiple levels: knowledge, ritual, material, and experiential. While they still considered the literary and social negotiations Manichaeism and, to a limited degree, Christianity conducted with Zoroastrianism, as an imperially-mandated religion, in the Sasanian Empire between the third and the seventh centuries, the second-year workshop added the perspective of religious interactions across Central Asia and into China to the end of the first millennium CE as the new inquiry focus.

This approach opened the avenue of surveying the meetings between Western Asian religions (Zoroastrianism and Manichaeism) with East Asian religions (Buddhism and Jainism) by identifying some of the major building blocks of religious encounters. An open list of these common platforms of religious interactions includes the following: geography and landscape as key features in shaping religious encounters; negotiating expressions of materiality in religious settings; shared associations between mythological vocabularies and social or ritual practices across various religions; shared ritual skills and ritual specialists; religious expressions of survival and accommodation techniques, such as commercial exchanges, medical care, and ritual meals; cosmologies as texts informing ethics, rituals, and politics; and sites of literary interactions, interpretive strategies, and narrative exchanges. In analyzing the ways in which religions were imported, adopted, and transformed in Western and Central Asia, the 2018 workshop regarded transformation, hybridization, and adaptation as various outcomes of religious encounters. To discuss these formative interactions of religions on the move, the organizers invited scholars to investigate primary sources in Middle Persian, Parthian, Greek, Latin, Coptic, Syriac, Sogdian, Uighur, and Chinese, which describe religious contacts across Western and Central Asia until the end of the first millennium CE. [7]

Most recently, in 2019, the research team preserved the binomial formative encounter between Zoroastrianism and Manichaeism of the first two workshops as well as its development across the above-presented "platforms of religious interaction," the geographical focus of the second workshop, but shifted the period focus to the first centuries of the Islamic period. As a result, in 2019, the team investigated the relevance of the religious interactions in the Islamicate world, on the Iranian plateau, the Indian subcontinent, and Western and Central Asia in the first seven centuries of the Islamic period. The 2019 "Formative Exchanges" workshop surveyed aspects of the interaction between the three religions of Zoroastrianism, Manichaeism, and Islam, and at the same time analyzed religious discourses and practices shared by Zoroastrianism and Manichaeism in the Islamicate world several centuries after Mani's own lifetime. For the sake of precision, the organizers of the workshop followed John C. Reeves's use of Marshall G.S. Hodgson's definition of "Islamicate" as designating matters which refer "not directly to the religion, Islam, itself, but to the social and cultural complex historically associated with Islam and the Muslims, both among Muslims themselves and even when found among non-Muslims" (Reeves 2011, 7; Hodgson 1974, 1:59). The 2019 "Formative Exchanges" meeting also explored the ways in which Islamicate literacy provided the [8]

means of adapting, translating, and adopting Zoroastrian and Manichaean texts. At the same time, the organizers extended their investigation to the literary contexts in which these texts were produced (the literature of religious disputations) and to their *Sitz im Leben* (polemical encounters). In analyzing the ways in which religious identities were shaped by the above description of series of literary codifications and re-descriptions, the scholars invited to the workshop treated transformation, hybridization, adaptation, reformation, and reorganization as various outcomes of religious encounters.

During the three years of investigating historical and geographical variations of the concept of "formative religion," Iricinschi and Rezania adopted the following working definition of it. As a preliminary exercise in defining fuzzy conceptual units, they regarded "formative religion" as the sum of social, political, religious, and literate processes through which the members of a given religious community—once they found themselves in a situation of possible religious interaction—adopt, borrow, copy, denigrate, and even integrate what they perceive to be the practices and tenets of other vicinal religious formations. As a result, their own religious practices and narratives will possibly be altered and, as an indirect effect, carry the potential to transform the very practices and ideologies they appropriated in the initial mimetic approach. [9]

For this process of the crystallization of the concept of "formative religion" to take place, one needs to identify, also with a provisory title, few required conditions. The constellation of religious exchange leading to co-formative exchanges occurs a) in a situation of "religious contact"; b) in a social, economic, and political context in which various religious formations inherited and further experimented with forms of negotiating coexistence (such as the Sasanian Empire and the Roman Empire in late Antiquity, in the case of this special issue of *Entangled Religions*), and, finally, c) a collection of shared practices, vocabularies, objects, and ideas. Following the theoretical work of Ann Taves (2009, 161–68), one could regard these shared platforms as building blocks of religious encounters. As mentioned above, these common platforms of religious interactions could include: highlighting geography and landscape as key features in shaping religious encounters; negotiating expressions of materiality in religious settings; underlying shared associations between mythological vocabularies and social or ritual practices across various religions; shared ritual skills and ritual specialists; religious expressions of survival and accommodation techniques, such as commercial exchanges, medical care, and ritual meals; and cosmologies as texts informing ethics, rituals, and politics. [10]

To take just one example, from Manichaeism, a shared platform could include practices of hybridization, carried in Manichaeism on multiple levels, such as social, religious, ontological. Situations of religious contact presuppose encoding and decoding hybridity, expressed through new, unusual divinities, or through exchanges at the level of materiality, art, and literacy. Mani dedicated most of his cosmological narrative and almost his entire mythological lore to depicting a religious ontology of the mixed elements between darkness and light, angels and demons, vices, lust, and abstinence. His description of the realm of Darkness and of its archons or demons promotes an ontology of mixing to describe the world of Darkness and its inhabitants. This points us to the performative dimensions of religion, which aim at consolidating the established social formations through performative associations of remembering persecution, at placing it within an emotional landscape, and at reenacting it in a ritual context with theatrical dimensions, in emotionally enhanced displayed performance. Theatricality in religious ritual and its association with increased levels of emotions represents a [11]

constant feature across ancient and late antique religions throughout the Persian world and the Greco-Roman cultures.

The Contributions of Formative Exchanges I

In his keynote paper, "Mazdeans and Christians Facing the End of the World: Circulations and Exchanges of Concepts," Antonio Panaino (2020) offers an evaluation of the parallel developments and mutual exchanges between Mazdeans and early Christians: while the latter's millennialism shows Iranian influences, the Zoroastrian doctrine of universal mercy displays parallels with the Origenian notion of *apokatastasis*. Panaino sets the stage for the evaluation of a late antique cultural continuum across languages, in which the conceptions of "time," "salvation," and "evil" received ontological substance and mythological expressions, only to travel between cultural urban centers and seats of power between Western Asia and the eastern Mediterranean. He evaluates the theological and logical consequences of the "divine prerogatives of time," understood on the Iranian highlands as a meditation between the infinite qualities of time and its worldly instantiations, in the formation of "planetary millenarianism with its pattern of the seven millennia" (2–3). Panaino also establishes the deep ties of an "expansion and dilation of time" with the Young Avesta and finds a most telling illustration of it in the Mazdean liturgical overlapping performance of a "concatenation of rituals (…) from one priestly college to another, and in an uninterrupted sequence to cover (and protect) the whole time of the world" (4).

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Much to historians' delight and Christian theologians' fright, a dual conception of time, articulated by a mitigated dualistic mythological landscape, lends temporary ontological substance to evil, and consequently, it inevitably leads to what Panaino calls "a kind of *apokatastasis*," namely, "the total elimination of hell and of the complete remission of sins to all persons previously condemned to the harshest punishment" (5). To demonstrate the revolutionary political and religious principle of "divine mercy for the whole of humanity with the total elimination of hell," Panaino investigates the available specks of evidence and assembles a dossier of primary sources (*Škand Gumānīg Wizār* IV, 100–101; *Anthologies* by Zādspram XXXV, 47; *Dādestān ī Dēnīg*, [Book of the] Religious Judgements XXXVI, 106; *Bundahišn* III, 26–27). The author illuminates the theme of the workshop impressively by connecting this to the Origenian doctrine of complete restoration of all beings after the final judgment (*apokatastasis*), whose echoes he detects not only in Syria (the School of Nisibis and Stephen bar Sudaili, supposed to the author of the *Book of Hierotheos on the Hidden Mysteries of the House of God),* but also in the affairs of Justinian politics as they were reflected by the sentences against Origen in 543/44 and 554 (the second Origenist controversy).

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In her contribution "Teaching with Images among the Jews and Manichaeans of Late Antique Mesopotamia. A Comparison of Doctrinal Content, Didactic Function, and Oral Context," Zsuzsanna Gulácsi (2020) compares and connects the didactic functions of two pictorial forms of late antique religious art: that displayed in the Dura-Europos synagogue and that, to the east, of Manichaean expression. By doing this, she places the Dura synagogue and its Jewish practices within the Mesopotamian context, and she argues that Manichaean religious art enhances our understanding of the Dura-Europos Jewish synagogue. She uncovers parallels developments between the religious and artistical development of the two communities. Gulácsi argues that, beginning with the second half of the third century CE, both the Jews and the Manichaeans of Mesopotamia spread and augmented their religious messages using

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pictorial devices. She ranges side by side Mani's religious activity and promotion of his message after 240 CE through visual representation in a pictorial scroll and the renovation of the Dura synagogue in 244/245 CE, expressed through the didactic paintings on its four walls, "encircling the community in three dense registers of figural art" (5). This leads her to uncover three layers of functional similarities between late antique Jewish and Manichaean forms of religious art, expressed in parallel "regional development of techniques of religious instruction": they both represent relevant episodes expressed in their respective religious literature; their images were used as teaching tools, and helped with the oral education of the community (7). Gulácsi's insight follows her previous important work, *Mani's Pictures* (Brill, 2015), and brings her methodology into new territories, in that it matches the "textual references written between the mid-third and late fifth centuries in primary Manichaean and secondary polemical accounts" to the paintings in the Dura synagogue.

The two sets of data Gulácsi sets side by side, extracted from written Manichaean sources and painted Jewish representations, do not align perfectly. "Beside a prayer (on three fragments of a parchment scroll) and the various inscriptions (on the ceiling tiles and murals of the synagogue), the Duran Jews and their visitors did not leave behind textual records," she writes (8). Yet it is precisely this informational incongruence that gives rises to a rich hermeneutic interplay of sharing religious practices of proselytism and education in late ancient Mesopotamia in Gulácsi's article. "Without arguing for direct influence between the two communities, I view their use of pictorial art as part of a shared phenomenon of techniques of religious instruction" (9). Sharing occurred at some time between 240 and 256, she argues, as Manichaean missionaries from the East were bound to enter Dura on their westward way. Moreover, Gulácsi points to Ctesiphon as the common source of artistic craft behind both religious cultures: "Model-books from the nearest metropolis, Ctesiphon, would explain the systematic use of Iranian visual language (garments, throne, investiture, and triumph motifs) throughout the panels of the synagogue" (footnote 7). And the Manichaean books were intimately associated with Mani's book of paintings, *The Book of Pictures*, in the process of proselytism and education. Mani, Gulácsi writes, "established the systematic exposition of his complex doctrine in a set of images stored in a book format" (17). Gulácsi treats the two different media of writing and painting in Manichaeism and Judaism in Mesopotamia as two "houses" for topics related to "prophetology, eschatology, and polemics" situated in an educational continuum of religious practices (22). In doing this, she underlines the practices of Manichaean religious literacy in their dual aspect, written and depicted, illustrating it with primary sources about early Manichaean proselytism. Furthermore, Gulácsi identifies a similar "duality of doctrinal communication" in the painted walls of the Dura synagogue. The topography and locus of this duality changes: if the Manichaean missionaries traveled across lands with Mani's written books and his *Book of Paintings*, the Jewish devotees had access, in the meeting hall of Dura synagogue, both to the Torah, "placed in the dedicated space of its aedicula," and to "*painted/visual* collection of the biblical narratives displayed panel by panel on all four walls in three registers" (31).

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Both the Jewish murals and Mani's *Book of Pictures* dealt with, according to Gulácsi, three common themes, reflecting three main areas of communication: prophetology, eschatology, and polemics (against idol worship). Moreover, both the Manichaeans and the Jews of Mesopotamia adopted pictorial means for education. Using images to teach, worship, and proselytize, Gulácsi argues, increases the likelihood that the religious message travels fast across cultures and linguistic barriers: "Conveying doctrine by pictorial means is especially

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handy in multi-lingual missionary contexts possibly associated not only with the Manichaeans, but also with Jewish diaspora communities that increased converts to Judaism at this time" (42).

Gulácsi adds the didactic dimension to the two meant to describe the functions of the Dura   [17]
synagogue, namely liturgical and artistic. To be more precise, "the narrative pictorial program of its meeting hall fulfilled a didactic function in a special sermon, separate from liturgy" (53). Gulácsi uses the pictorial details of the Dura synagogue as historical proof for religious didactic practices: "At Dura, the act of reading from a scroll is documented by being depicted" (54). This takes her reasoning one step further: "art could have played a leading rather than a subordinate role in a sermon" (59). Thus, according to this bold hypothesis, the close similarities between textual descriptions of the uses of Mani's *Book of Paintings* and the arrangement of the pictures in the Dura synagogue allows her to unseat textual preeminence in late antique Jewish educational practices and place "teaching with images" as a fundamental educational method, in which, Gulácsi argues that "art could have played a leading rather than a subordinate role in a sermon" (59). Mani's *Book of Paintings* and equally the paintings on the walls of the Dura synagogue commanded a different somatic relation to the communication of the religious message, and this entailed both a different expository order and a different educational scenario, one in which the speaker explains and unfolds an elaborated image to their audience. Says Gulácsi: "The narrative panels of the Dura synagogue played the leading role in planning and staging an image-based sermon by serving as the starting point of instruction" (59).

Jason D. BeDuhn's article provides a new viewpoint of the notion of "formative religion."   [18]
In "The Co-formation of the Manichaean and Zoroastrian Religions in Third-Century Iran" (2020), BeDuhn proposes the thesis of a simultaneous development of Zoroastrianism and Manichaeism in the third century CE. Following the seminal works of Prods Oktor Skjærvø, BeDuhn locates the traces of this parallel process "against the background of older Iranian religious cultural traditions" (see the paper's abstract) and in divergent "systems of interpretation and application." Paying attention to a reconstructed late antique religious landscape, BeDuhn adds more newly edited primary texts to this point the view which grants Manichaeism originality in the composition of its mythology and Zoroastrianism a more reactive role. Quietly radical, BeDuhn's article proposes the replacement of the notion of "religion" for ancient Zoroastrianism and of the "official doctrine" of Zoroastrianism "at a time when nowhere else on earth was there such a thing as a 'religion' […] at a time when priestly institutions authorized myths, ritual scripts, purity codes, and other elements of regional religious culture, held together at most by a loosely-defined theory of efficacy in relation to divine beings" (2). He criticizes the narrative, promoted by modern religious studies scholars, of Zoroastrianism and Manichaeism as religions that were "founded, lost, and reconstructed" (2). BeDuhn revisits the theme of his important 2015 article, to which Rezania's contribution relates, to associate the occurrence of religious pluralism in Western Asia with the rise of non-nativism forms of worshiping gods, or, to use BeDuhn's own definition of religion, "organized systems of beliefs and practice disembedded from particular societies and cultures" (4). Two religious formations competed to appropriate and re-shape the inherited Iranian variety of "cultural traditions," according to BeDuhn: Mani and Kerdīr, in competition and reciprocal emulation, contributed to the formation of Manichaeism and that which crystallized as Zoroastrianism. "Mani crafts a working definition of religion as the product of revelation, authorized by a founding authority, organized as a community, guided by textual resources" (9).

Engaged in horizontal cultural exchange, borrowing, and permutations, Mani and Kerdīr, or later, "Manichaeism" and "Zoroastrianism," competed to appropriate the following characteristics of Iranian culture: 1) a "dualistic universe"; 2) "the myth of primordial combat," that is, the use of the preexisting Iranian pantheon and its adaptation to hierarchical theologies; 3) "veneration and ritual support of natural elements" (identification with natural elements and granting them redeeming roles); 4) the "use and interpretation of Iranian religious literature" such as "Gāthās, Yašts, and other Avestan literature"; 5) the adoption of Zarathustra as a "ritual hero of Iranian culture," leading to the construction of a "full-bodied prophet" in Mani after the model of the gospels; 6) the adoption of Iranian heroic legends; 7) the divergent creation of an ethos specific to Manichaeism and, respectively, Zoroastrianism; and finally, 8) the use of eschatology as a platform of circulating end of the world notion between Judeo-Christian traditions and Zoroastrianism/Manichaeism. The contribution this article makes to scholarship resides in a radical rethinking of the formation of Zoroastrianism, as a reaction to cultural developments in Manichaeism. BeDuhn states clearly that Zoroastrianism "came into existence as a nativist and traditionalist reaction to conditions of religious options and innovations that existed in the third century. Like Judaism developing against the challenge of Christianity, or Hinduism developing against the challenge of Buddhism, such a nativist and traditionalist reaction has the quality of reinforcing the traditional interchangeability of religious and ethnic identity" (49).

In " 'Religion' in Late Antique Zoroastrianism and Manichaeism: Developing a Term in Counterpoint," Kianoosh Rezania (2020) engages with Jason BeDuhn's earlier major text on the formation of "religion" as a "disembedded system of cultic practices" suitable for dissemination across various cultures and languages (BeDuhn 2015, 270). Rezania's examination of the occurrences of the "Middle Persian lexeme *dēn/δēn* in Manichaean and Zoroastrian corpora" (6) yields a rich semantic palette of these terms. His analysis points to the meaning of *daēnā-* as "vision" in Old Avestan texts and indicates that its connection, as "vision-soul," to the mytheme of the "moment of consultation (*həm.paršti;-Y.33.6*) with Ahura Mazdā" intersected with the later designations of the lexeme *daēnā-* in Young Avestan texts, as ritual guide, to establish "semantical relationships" between the "psychopomp" functions of *daēnā-* and "religion." Rezania's metaphorical mapping superimposes the concatenation of "vision," "soul," and "assistance along the way," together with eschatological evaluations developed in the Young Avestan texts, and ritual and eschatological aspects of concerns with the postmortem fate of the soul. "The semantic field of *daēnā-* intersects with the following fields: ritual, guiding in ritual and postmortem life (psychopomp), ritual or traditional text, tradition, law, conduct of life, as well as community" (22) Rezania contends, and uncovers the quiescent ground for a full development of the term "religion" in the third century CE, because of exchanges between Mani's organization and Kerdīr's version of Zoroastrianism. The novelty of Rezania's contribution resides in the investigation of the occurrences of *dēn* in Manichaean texts written in Middle Persian, Parthian, and Sogdian, in the plural and singular, at the syntactic level, and then in the extension of this exploration to its semantic and pragmatic aspects, opening the door for the evaluation of similarity in the study of religious contacts. Says Rezania: "When we encounter a Manichaean comparison between 'religions,' we can assume that the Manichaeans used a generic concept of RELIGION" (63). With this approach, Rezania's linguistic assessment supports and confirms BeDuhn's 2015 hypothesis, and it establishes fertile grounds for further research in that it determines that both Mani and Kerdīr, the Zoroastrian state priest and his contemporary, wrestled with and promoted

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divergent hierarchical formulations of the binomial correlation between "one's own religion" and "other people's religions." As a result, Rezania notices, Mani set in place a hierarchy of religions open to religious plurality, which might have resulted in, or even be the result of, ulterior Manichaean multilingualism, while Kerdīr's vision of Zoroaster, as reflected in his inscription, depicts Zoroastrianism as shaping religious plurality according to a conservative dualist outlook. "Manichaeism accepted the presence of other entities in the religious field as 'religions,' thus acknowledging the plurality of religions in third-century Iran. Third-century Zoroastrianism discredited other entities and presented itself alone as religion, a position that could be accounted for, to some degree, up to the end of the first millennium C.E." (88).

Götz König implements a similar vision of cultural allotment between later antique Zoroastrianism and Manichaeism. In "From Manichaeism to Zoroastrianism. On the History of the Teaching of the 'Two Principles'" (2020), König places Manichaean dualism between earlier formulations of it in the Younger Avesta and later reactions to it by Zoroastrian theologians. König establishes three principles that guide his analysis of the formation of the Iranian religions: "1) religious competition and demarcation; 2) theoretical considerations within one religion; 3) the adoption of philosophical models" (4). In his distilled assessment of the ways Zoroastrian theologians associated "evil" to "finitude" and had both articulated by the ontological weight of "principle," König summons the early Greek philosophical discussion of the "principle" following Anaximander and establishes its connection to the Iranian cosmological model. Iranian cultures already possessed a term "principle" and the concept "of [the teaching of] the two principles" after 500 BCE. Given that Mani's central teaching was the one about the two principles, and that he "had access to the (still unwritten?) Avesta probably in its Pahlavi translation(s)" (12), König suggests regarding it as "the fulfilment of metaphorical-conceptual tendencies that can be found only in the Avesta" (14). Mani reworked, König shows, two major positions in the Younger Avesta, namely that light combines with the good and the lack of light, hence darkness, becomes evil, especially in its material aspects. Zoroastrian responses worked to undo the Manichaean position and to find "ways *not* to radically separate light from matter" (19). Its representatives distanced themselves from the rejection of matter to avoid economic issues and, against Manichaeism, "to formulate a dualism in which light, darkness, and matter could be set as an alternative and convincing constellation" (20). If Materia cannot be identified with darkness and evil because this would grant it an "indefinite" character, König infers from Ādurbād's argument in Dk 3.199.7, against Mani's teaching in *Dk* 3.200, then this leads to the exclusion of matter from the discussion of the eternal two principles. It also causes the scholar to question the relation between the two and to further inspect it: should light be considered as a physical phenomenon or as a metaphysical concept (26)? The development of the notion of divinity in *Bundahišn* presents structural similarities with Aristotelian philosophy, König argues. Moreover, the dual understanding of light as metaphysical notion and as charged with material features might have been influenced by the "adoption" of Aristotelian and Neoplatonic conceptions of finitude, infinite, and the matter: "Neoplatonism was attractive to the Zoroastrian authors because it offered a solution for the conflicts between a) philosophy and theology, and b) god and the world, both of which became prominent in late Antiquity. The emanation model enabled the construction of a coherent world. 'Light' is seen as a metaphor of this coherence, but also as a kind of 'connector of the transcendent/infinite with the immanent/finite'" (35). If Mani and his followers drew on Young Avesta to establish the distinction between Evil/Matter and Good/Light, König argues that Zoroastrian religious writers countered it by adopting various models from late antique

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philosophy of Greek expression to relate matter to the two principles "through light which itself exists as fire and endless lights, as material and immaterial light" (41).

As a preliminary conclusion, one notices that a common thread emerges from the above re- [21] viewed contributions to indicate that all contributors concentrated on the cultural, linguistic, philosophical, social, and political interstices of "formative religions." Both BeDuhn and König uncover the epistemological motivations for the shapes the exchanges between Manichaeism and Zoroastrianism took in late antique Iran. BeDuhn recognizes "permutations" with which Mani, Kerdīr, and their respective followers operated in their adoptions of Iranian cultural traditions. For BeDuhn, Mani establishes the major religious figures as precursors who shared wisdom, or "permutation of the same truth" (2020, 7). If traditions become movable parts in processes of cultural adoption, then to the variety of religious practices and beliefs BeDuhn oppose "religious pluralism" that is the awareness and practice of religious competition. The contribution his article makes to scholarship lies in a radical rethinking of the formation of Zoroastrianism, and less of Manichaeism.

Similarly, in exploring the philosophical relevance of "time" in Zoroastrianism and its [22] connections to Aristotelian and Platonical schools, König identifies and traces "fulfilment of metaphorical-conceptual tendencies" in the theological and philosophical systems shared between Manichaeism and Zoroastrianism, with the adoption of Hellenized forms of classification and thought. Likewise, Rezania's contribution highlights the transitory aspects of the formative religious processes when it uncovers a moment of supposed linguistic errancy in Mani's speech in M 5794, in which "a plural adjective qualifies a singular noun": "Mani's difficulty to formulate the word dēn in the plural in third-century Iran more than its plural use in one case. Nevertheless, the passage lets us conclude that, in his theory of religion, Mani acknowledged not only religious plurality but also a hierarchy of religions."

It is precisely the same sort of closed reading of paintings, texts, and contexts that leads [23] Gulàcsi to promote a healthy destabilization off the logocentric tendencies of scholarship on education in late antique Judaism and Manichaeism by isolating four main types of characteristics of the shared visual and religious cultures between the Manichaeans and the Jews of Mesopotamia: "(1) the defining importance of an oral religious culture surrounding them, (2) evidence about live discussions of religious teaching preserved in them, (3) the need for a skilled teacher to sermonize with them, and that (4) they most likely played a leading role in image-based sermons" (Gulácsi 2020). Finally, having explored the theological, social, and political consequences of the correlation between structured millenarian "time" and evil in Zoroastrianism and early Christianity, Panaino includes an anthropological coda and draws the chart of a Mazdean cosmology galvanized by Ahreman's "mentally suffering drive": Evil is not only a matter of deprivation but, for Panaino's reconstruction of Zoroastrian eschatology, a matter of mental suffering, whose very own impermanence opens the gates to personal restoration: "The Zoroastrian final optimistic solution of the definitive mercy of God toward everybody, a solution that also includes the sinners of hell, implicitly assumes that the damned are not completely responsible for their faults" (Panaino 2020, 26–27).

We have mentioned above the theoretical underpinnings of two more conferences on the [24] topic of "formative encounters," which took place at Ruhr-Universität Bochum in 2018 and 2019 and were organized by Eduard Iricinschi and Kianoosh Rezania. The articles we gathered in this first issue of *Entangled Religions,* dedicated to formative religious exchanges in late Antiquity, were developed in dialogical engagement, reflecting the academic and oral environment in which they were initially presented. This collection represents the first step in

an academic enterprise which will continue in 2021 with the publication of two more *Entangled Religions* special issues, dedicated to the exploration of formative cultural and religious entwinements between Zoroastrianism, Manichaeism, and Buddhism, following the presentations of the 2018 KHK workshop, and respectively, Zoroastrianism, Manichaeism, and Islam, reflecting the work of the 2019 KHK meeting.

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Mazdeans and Christians Facing the End of the World

Circulations and Exchanges of Concepts

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ABSTRACT   This contribution offers a conspectus of the parallel treatment of some eschatological subjects in the comparative framework of Mazdean and Christian sources. Although some impact of the Judeo-Christian tradition on Iranian apocalypticism has been fittingly detected in previous studies, the author insists on evidence showing a sort of circular exchange between Christians and Mazdeans, where, for instance, chiliasm presents some Iranian (and not only Babylonian) resonances, while the well-known Zoroastrian doctrine of universal mercy and of the *apokatastasis* shows impressive correspondences with the Origenian doctrines. What distinguishes the Iranian framework is the fact that millenarianism, apocalypse and *apokatastasis* did not directly contrast, as it happened in the Christian milieu. These Christian doctrines played a certain influence in Sasanian Iran, although their diffusion and acceptance was probably slow and progressive, and became dominant among Zoroastrians only after the fall of the Sasanian period, when the Mazdean Church was no longer the pillar of the state and the social and legal order. The diffusion of the doctrine of universal mercy was a later acquisition, as shown from the evidence that earlier Mazdean doctrines did not assume a complete salvation for the wicked but prescribed a harsh and eternal punishment for them. Furthermore, the author focuses on his own research on these subjects and summarises some results concerning a new and original presentation of the Mazdean concept of evil as a manifestation of suffering, comparable to a state of mental 'sickness.'

KEYWORDS   eschatology, millenarianism, Mazdeism, origenism, *apokatastasis*, evil, psychology

Introduction

In the present contribution I would like to develop some considerations which began in the last years about the complexity of the relations between Mazdeans and Christians in late Antiquity.[1] I would also like to insist on the importance of this subject because it gives us the

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1   In this study I have taken the opportunity to resume some of my previous research, which I have developed with a large and detailed bibliography in other publications, and to anticipate forthcoming results. The

opportunity to focus on the multicultural dimension of the pre-Islamic Iranian world and its richness beyond the traditional borders of Christian and Medieval Studies, which sometimes forget the relevant role played by the *Ērānšahr* on the neighbouring countries; furthermore, it is important that a community of scholars as ours might share its views about these problems, avoiding the risks of a certain isolation that could confine our research interests to a sort of esoteric limbo. And this is particularly important now, when many young scholars have offered deep and seminal studies on such an intercultural subject.[2] Furthermore, I will try to focus on the fact that the Iranian area has played a remarkable role in the transmission, ramification and evolution of some fundamental theological ideas which became current in late Antiquity and the early Middle Ages, and will argue that this ambiance strongly influenced an intellectual debate that was much more universal and cross-cultural than is generally presumed.

The Millenaristic Problem

I recently had the chance to observe (Panaino 2016)[3] that in the *Wizīdagīhā ī Zādspram* (The [2] Selections of *Zādspram*), chapter XXVIII, 2, the symbolic number attributed to Ahreman's invasion of the *gētīg* world directly evokes that of the Beast in John's *Gospel*, chapter XIII, 17–18. The figure prevailing in the Christian framework, as is well known, was 666, while the Mazdean one is 6666. The relations and the connections between these two numbers are evident not only because of their patent similarity, but also considering the millenarian arguments adopted by Irenaeus of Lyon in order to explain the cosmic meaning of 666, which, *mutatis mutandis*, result in basically the same endorsed by Zādspram some centuries later.[4] Actually, both theologians considered the number six as the basic figure indicating the complete number of millennia covering the history of the world and its decimal multiple, 60 or 600, as respectively referring to a series of centuries (60 x 100 = 6000) or of decades (600 x 10 = 6000). In any case, both authors were consciously operating in the patent framework of a chiliastic speculation, emphasizing the full completion of a round cycle of six thousand years in which the fight against evil should take place. This common emphasis on six millennia is relevant *per se* because it shows how Judeo-Christian chiliasm crossed the border and, in turn, was influenced by Iranian millenarianism.[5] It is true that the Zoroastrian cycle in its complete duration was of 12,000 years (or of 9,000 + 3,000), divided in two distinct sub-periods of 6,000 each, one *mēnōg,* the latter *gētīg,*[6] while Judeo-Christian chiliasm insisted on the role of an additional millennium, the seventh, to be attached after the first six millennia in order

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reader will forgive these self-quotations, but I desired to avoid any heavy repetition of a full apparatus of sources and notes which have already been offered elsewhere. Some of these previous works were written in Italian, and it is possible that they have escaped and will escape the attention of some scholars. Thus, I believe that a new up-to-date version of their contents could be of a certain utility. I take also the opportunity to thank Dr. Samra Azarnouche (EPHE, Paris) for her kindness in sharing some opinions about the problems I have discussed in the present work, and to Prof. Dr. Kianoosh Rezania (Ruhr-Universität Bochum) for his invitation to take part in a seminal conference dedicated to the intercultural problems I have tried to analyse in this study.

2   See most recently Panaino (2004b); Walker (2006); Minov (2013); Payne (2015).

3   On the *Wizīdagīhā ī Zādspram,* ch. XXVIII, 2, see Gignoux and Tafazzoli (1993, 92–93, 255–56, Pahlavi text).

4   All the details are collected in my study quoted above; see also Panaino (2017g).

5   On this subject, see Panaino (2017g).

6   An analytic description of the facts is given in Panaino (2017g). Sometimes only 9,000 years are mentioned because the first period before the meeting and the pact between Ohrmazd and Ahreman is not considered.

to represent a paradisiacal phase accessible only to a limited group of 'elects' before the final judgment. But the period of the battle, the fight against evil in the world, in both cases remains inscribed into a frame of 6,000 years, and this similarity probably did not escape ancient observers. We must also recall that the Judeo-Christian background of chiliasm has traditionally been connected (following a thesis suggested by Cumont 1931; see also Panaino 2017g) with the Babylonian astral tradition, in particular with the importance attributed in Mesopotamia to the power of the planets (including, of course, the two luminaries, i.e. the sun and the moon). But the interest for the representation of a millenarian period working as a Great Cosmic Year, whose borders represent two extreme sides, the beginning and the end of the earthly creation and, with it, of the human struggle, remains strongly rooted in the Iranian tradition. We must insist, following Sasha Stern (2007, 103–23 and in particular 118n95–96),[7] on the evidence that the Iranian world, and not the Mesopotamian or the Greek one, was the first to elaborate a deep speculation about the concept—or, better, category—of 'time' according to a sort of pre-philosophical determination. Thus, this happened in spite of the fact that the Babylonian culture was able to elaborate complex mathematical parameters for the periodical numeration of the diurnal motion of the visible astral bodies and improved intercalary systems for a more precise synchronism with seasonal phenomena. In other words, the interest for the divine prerogatives of time in its para-philosophical relation with the limited, historical dimension, and contrariwise the dialectics between eternity and temporal limits, were an Iranian intellectual challenge. The origins of these speculations can be identified in the Avestan corpus (Yt. 13, 53–58; see Kellens 2000, 2009), where we find scattered but coherent and precise references to the existence of millenarian periods, framed in the dimension of limited time, where the astral bodies started to move after a period of immobility (Panaino 2017g). The latter point shows that the idea of a direct cosmological distinction between a phase of immobility and another one of motion, connected with the *mēnōg* and *gētīg* ontological articulations of reality, was also already fixed in its main lines in the Achaemenid period.

The relation between eternal, unlimited or borderless time and its subordinate dimension, having borders, also involves the quality of divine actions, starting with the theological qualification of the supreme divinity. Ohrmazd, in fact, not only has the power to entrap Ahreman in a limited space-time dimension, fighting against him in a position of absolute superiority.[8] Actually, the supreme god also disposes of the power to remain in an eternal state, outside of mixed creation, entering into it only when strictly necessary, as just at the end of the cosmic battle for the celebration of the sacrifice of the world's renovation. Some Young Avestan passages in the *Mihr* (stanza 55) and *Tištar Yašt*s (stanza 11) clearly state that the *yazatas*, or at least some of them (like Miθra and Tištrya), can enter and exit limited time, and that they have the privilege to enter and exit the two different qualitative temporal dimensions while all the negative forces are blocked inside creation and its space-time limits.[9] This 'qualitative' difference—and I insist on the term *qualitative*—has a certain number of theological and

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7   Von Orelli (1871, 109–10) anticipated some ideas later developed by Stern.

8   Ohrmazd is equipped with forces possessing a double nature, one *mēnōg*, the latter *gētīg*, while Ahreman has at his disposal only *mēnōg* creatures, because he was in a state of complete stupefaction (*stardīh*) during the second cycle of 3,000 years of the *mēnōg* period. This double articulation of the world, which practically corresponds to a double level of creation, can be compared with some ideas later developed by the Jewish Platonist Philo of Alexandria, as well as by Origen and Gregory of Nyssa, as rightly remarked by Ramelli (Ramelli 2017, 383–84).

9   For a detailed textual analysis of these sources and their interpretation, see Kellens (2000), Kellens (2009), Panaino (2017g). Kellens' philological revision of the text and his emendations are indispensable in order to properly understand the real meaning of these passages.

para-philosophical implications, because it shows that the basic pillars of later Mazdean cosmology were fixed in the period of composition of Young Avestan sources (Panaino 2017g), and that the influence of these general categories on close cultural traditions can be easily supposed, and in some cases reasonably admitted. Thus, while we have no reason to dismiss the traditional assumption that it was the Mesopotamian world that exported planetary millenarianism with its pattern of the seven millennia, this doctrine was not isolated, and its diffusion was not in contrast to the observation that the seven planetary bodies all move along a path of twelve zodiacal signs, and that in a millenarian speculation the relation between seven, nine or twelve millennia represent only different, but not antagonist, schemes based on the same idea that a limited time, measurable using the motion of certain astral cycles, determines the duration of the world and that of the fight between good and evil forces.

Although I do not want to insist here on the problems connected with the interrelation of [4] millenarianism in the Judeo-Christian and Mazdean worlds, I must emphasize that at least some Zoroastrian theologians were particularly worried about the problem of the stability of limited time. If the arms of the macrocosmic clock, the visible cosmos, mark the progress of the millennia and announce the coming of the last moment, a strong interest of Ahreman's would be blocking and delaying its regular course, so that the expected end, the final fight, with the inevitable destruction of evil and even of hell, would be untimely delayed. This problem has been discussed only superficially in scholarly literature, although we find in the *Dēnkard* some peculiar passages in which the Druj expressly tries to block the motion of the sun in coincidence with the visible manifestations of the three Sōšāns.[10] This complex doctrine, the astronomical background of which cannot be investigated here, demonstrates that the regular course of the sun, and of limited time, must be protected against the actions of demoniac forces, which try to postpone or even to delay the end of limited time, also on the heavenly level. The expansion and dilatation of time is actually a daēvic event, which prolongs the presence of evil in creation, and it is for this reason that the regular course of time must be shielded in its sequence till its total completion. In my opinion, this need was well focused on already in Avestan times, because it is in the Mazdean liturgies that we find a recurrent concern for the worship offered to the different portions of time: days, parts of the days, months, different phases of the month and of its lunations, the thirty single days, the seasons and seasonal festivals, individual years and, implicitly, the sequences of years (Panaino 2017b). This insistence, quasi obsessive, shows that the cosmic order, starting with regular time sequences, must be supported and protected, and that the ritual performances contribute to its stability against any evil attempt of temporal disarticulation. The Mazdean liturgical calendar and its performative celebration through the five daily ritual sessions, or *gāh*[11], was *per se* a strong weapon against the disruptive force of Ahreman, and it probably influenced other cultural traditions, such as the Islamic one, which in any case adopted a similar ritual sequence of daily prayers.[12] Furthermore, we must observe that the Mazdean liturgy, with its process of the installation of the incoming ritual college, to which the duty of performing the new ceremony must be transferred, implies a concatenation of rituals (Panaino 2017d) from one priestly college to another, as in an uninterrupted sequence to cover (and

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10   The most pertinent texts are attested in *Dēnkard* III, 160 and 407; they are edited, translated and discussed in Panaino (2018) with a large bibliography on the subject.

11   These are: *Hāwan* (morning), *Rapihwin* (afternoon), *Uzērin* (evening), *Ēbsrūsrim* (sunset to midnight) and *Ušahin* (midnight to dawn). See MacKenzie (1971, 143). For the liturgical implication of these five ceremonies, see Panaino (Forthcoming).

12   On this sensible matter Shaked (2002) very sharply wrote: "The imposition of five daily prayers in Islam has been shown by Goldziher (1900, 132–33) to be a development due to Zoroastrian influence."

protect) the whole time of the world. This was probably the deepest concept underpinning the ideology of the liturgy, to be considered as a unique continuous celebration, through which the pillars of the world were maintained and protected against the disruptive action of Ahreman and his army.

Time and Salvation: Eternal or Limited Hell?

Thus, the end of time represents a conceptual subject because it opens the way to a *transumanatio* and *transfiguratio* of humanity,[13] creating a new state of transcendental life in which the dualism represented by the antagonistic presence of evil will be completely eradicated. But this final status implies consequences that we can find with sufficient clarity in later Pahlavi sources. In particular, I am interested in the subject of the total elimination of hell and of the complete remission of sins to all persons previously condemned to the harshest punishment: we can label this process as a kind of *apokatastasis*, because with its clear idea of a complete and definitive restoration of the cosmic and divine order, as was the case before the irruption of evil, this doctrine involves a series of *comparanda* that can be directly observed, *mutatis mutandis*, in the Christian world, particularly in the theology of Clemens of Alexandria and, most significantly, of Origen (Panaino 2017c).[14] The first of these Christian theologians started to suggest, although in a prudent way, that it would be possible to imagine universal salvation for all intelligent creatures (*Stromata* [i.e. "Miscellanies"] VII, 2.12.2–3.13.1).[15] In this way, all punishments in the afterlife would correspond to a compulsory purification of the soul more than to simple retribution. It is in this framework that the 'restoration' assumes its full relevance, and that the future doctrine of Christian purgatory finds its starting point. The following Christian formulation of the *apokatastasis*, as developed by Origen, is *per se* a problem not only because it was condemned by Justinian as heretical, but also because it represents a tantalizing subject in modern theology, where it has been reformulated with many prudent nuances and some *caveats*; for instance, Hans Urs von Balthasar's *Kleiner Diskurs über die Hölle* (A Little Discourse about the Hell; Balthasar 1987) was followed (within the same booklet in the edition of 1999; Balthasar 1999) by another pamphlet of the same author programmatically entitled *Apokatastasis*. This study was the fruit of a conference delivered in 1988 in Trier and published in the same year (Balthasar 1988).

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Prudently, we must remark that it is not very simple to distinguish what was stated by Origen himself and what has been attributed to him by his supporters or even by his enemies, so that sometimes doctrines that can be seen as 'extreme' belong to a long tradition of struggles and polemics. Looking at these problems from the perspective of the Iranian late Antique reception, this cautious distinction, although important, is less significant because even the

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13   On the concept of transfiguration in Pahlavi sources, see Shaked (1970).

14   Only during the final revision of this article did I have access to the article of Ramelli (2017), who on parallel lines investigates some aspect of the Iranian doctrine of the *Frašgird*, the final renovation, in connection with the Christian *apokatastasis*.

15   See, in particular, Clemens, *Stromata* VII, 2.12.2–3: πρὸς γὰρ τὴν τοῦ ὅλου σωτηρίαν τῷ τῶν ὅλων κυρίῳ πάντα ἐστὶ διατεταγμένα καὶ καθόλου καὶ ἐπὶ μέρους. ἔργον οὖν τῆς δικαιοσύνης τῆς σωτηρίου ἐπὶ τὸ ἄμεινον αἰεὶ κατὰ τὸ ἐνδεχόμενον ἕκαστον προάγειν. πρὸς γὰρ τὴν σωτηρίαν τοῦ κρείττονος καὶ διαμονὴν ἀναλόγως τοῖς ἑαυτῶν ἤθεσι διοικεῖται καὶ τὰ μικρότερα […]. "For all things are arranged with a view to the salvation of the cosmos by the Lord of the universe, both generally and particularly. It is then the function of the righteousness of salvation to improve everything as far as practicable. For even minor matters are arranged with a view to the salvation of that which is better, and for an abode suitable for people's character […]." For the Greek text see Früchtel, Stählin, and Treu (1979), translation according to Wilson (Clemens, n.d., 526).

distortions had their weight in the Eastern areas and played their most seminal role. In any case, we will try to reflect on the impact of the tradition(s) attributed to Origen and whether they were true or (partially) false—although in some cases this influence produced very significant developments, as in the theory, attributed to Origen, of the final conversion of the Devil. I want to underline the intrinsic difficulty of this matter because the subject is not neutral, and it involves a lot of unresolved confessional and theological polemics which, of course, do not concern my approach but must be considered in the general context. In addition, it is interesting that the Iranian side of the doctrine of the *apokatastasis,* in its relation to the Christian Origenian tradition, presents us with a number of thrilling items. These 'Oriental reflexes' have generally been superseded in the scholarly framework, while contrariwise they confirm the importance of the Iranian world with regard to the eschatological debate of late Antiquity, a subject that—, with few exceptions[16]—, escapes the conspectus of the specialists of ancient theology and philosophy. We must also remark that in Zoroastrian Iran, the doctrine of the *apokatastasis* did not interfere with the earlier millenarian perspective, so that chiliasm and *apokatastasis* were not opposed at all[17]—in contrast to the Christian framework.[18]

But let us begin by following the historical sequence of events and related ideas. I [7] have already noted that the very optimistic doctrine concerning the complete liberation of humanity and its admission to the beatification in the paradise of Ohrmazd does not represent the earliest Zoroastrian position, but that this was the result of a long internal debate that developed within the Mazdean community along the course of its history. Originally, as stated in *Y.* 46, 11, hell (*drūjō dəmānē*) was "forever" (*yauuōi vīspāi;* see Kellens and Pirart 1988, 1:161).[19] If the Avestan sources do not show any particularly generous solution, we can doubt

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16 The history of the discussion concerning the relations between Zoroastrianism and Christianity is a sensitive matter. It was part of the legacy left by the *Religionsgeschichtliche Schule,* whose Pro-Iranian excesses have been strongly criticized. Although some problems did in fact exist, we must remark that the debate was not only limited to the scholarly frame. On the contrary, it was strongly 'poisoned' by some anti-Semitic attempts to show the non-Jewish origin of Christ and Christianity (see in particular the materials collected by Heschel 2008, 26–66). On the other hand, the possibility that a certain exchange between Judaism, Christianity and Zoroastrianism could have taken place, for instance in the case of the idea of time, was considered by Sasse (1933, 197–98, 207) and developed by Cullman (e.g., 1962, 56, 61; but see also Barr 1962; see also Schaeder 1930). Recently, the relevance of the Jewish and Christian impact on Zoroastrian Iran has been shown by scholars like Gignoux (1988, 1968, 1990, 1999) and Cereti (1995b, 11–27, 1995c, 1995a, 1996), who counter the thesis that Zoroastrian eschatology presents only the developments of a substantial early Iranian background. For a model suggesting the circulation of ideas and influences instead of unilateral influence in one way or the other, see Panaino (2016), Panaino (2017c), Panaino (2017g). A very recent study on the subject is offered by Hintze (2019). For revision of the problem of the apocalyptic in the Parthian framework, see Frenschkowsi (2004). For a certain Iranian influence on other religious traditions, see also Hultgård (2000), Kuehn (2014). On some related subjects concerning the afterlife, see also Tardieu (1985), and Panaino (2008).

17 For instance, according to chapter LIV, 6 of the *Ardā Wīrāz Nāmag* (Gignoux 1988, 100–101, 191), it is clear that the souls of the wicked are waiting for the end of the cosmic year in order to be released, although they suffer the spiritual quality of the punishment (Gignoux 1968, 239–41). In fact, for the sinner who is left alone in the darkness, every day is like the whole cosmic period of 9,000 years attributed to the fight between Ohrmazd and Ahreman. See again Ramelli (2017, 371).

18 On this aspect see Ramelli (2017), who started to investigate the possibility of this comparison.

19 Ramelli (2017, 366) does not recognize this fact, and in her article assumes that the earlier Avestan Mazdean doctrine was quite unclear on this subject. The same scholar (2017, 369) quotes the fact that in the *Haδōxt Nask* II, 33, the punishment of the wicked, who are thrown into the Endless Darkness, could be interpreted, following an explanation suggested by Shaki (1986), as eternal, although the critical treatment of this source is very superficial. On this aspect, and in particular on the Avestan expression *anaγra-təmah-* (Pahl. *asar tārīgīh,* unlimited darkness), see Piras (2000, 67, 72, 120–21), with a wide conspectus of Indo-Iranian parallels. N.B. Avestan *anaγra-* literally means *an-aγra-,* i.e., "without beginning," *aγra-* meaning as a neuter substantive "beginning, top," as adjective "first, foremost" (Bartholomae 1904, 49, 114–15), exactly like Vedic *ágra-,* n., "beginning" and "foremost, anterior, first." For this reason, it may

that, even in the early Sasanian period, a priest such as Kirdīr would have supported this kind of tolerant perspective for sinners in the afterlife. I strongly doubt that a society such as the Sasanian one, at least in its first centuries, would have favoured such a 'liberal' doctrine concerning the future life, in particular when the same Mazdean priests were strongly in charge of secular and legal activities as judges, with the specific duty of prosecuting private and public crimes, religious infractions and heretical positions. In general, theology and political power can be dreadful sisters, and they usually impose narrow paths; I do not think that the working hypothesis that a church in charge of the law and in a frame of quasi-absolute authority was not in the favourable position to elaborate a very optimistic perspective regarding the *post mortem* is prejudiced. Tolerance was possible, but normally as the result of complex political negotiations, as was the case with the progressive respect attributed to some religious minorities in Iran.[20] The theological idea that the final defeat of Ahreman will imply divine mercy for the whole of humanity with the total elimination of hell was very revolutionary and not established in a single night of particular generosity. Another external source demonstrating the Old Iranian background of the Mazdean belief in *eternal* punishment against people who denied the existence of the kingdom of light comes from the recently published Manichaean *Kephalaion* 341 of the Chester Beatty Library,[21] which attributes to Zoroaster this severe doctrine in a framework clearly referring to other Mazdean traditions. Although this is a Manichaean source, it does not contain any a priori criticism against Zoroastrianism but describes the idea of eternal punishment as current in the Mazdean framework of late Antiquity.[22] Thus, there are good reasons to presume that it reflected a current Zoroastrian opinion and not a distortion.

From a historical and political point of view, the radical assumption of final divine mercy   [8]
represented a decision definitively established in a period of distress and defeat, probably officially canonized only after the Islamic conquest. In that phase, many Zoroastrians actually abandoned their ancestral religion, so that the Mazdean Church felt it necessary to enforce

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also be translated as "infinite," but its basic semantic value does not involve strictly temporal implications; it refers to a spatial dimension, and in fact its adjectival use concerns light or darkness, or again the lights of the heaven. Furthermore, on p. 378 of her study, Ramelli refers again to the existence of Ahreman before the beginning of the fight as the primordial being who was within "Eternal Darkness," but actually the Bad Spirit was in "unlimited Darkness" (*Bundahišn* I, 4; see Pākzād and Markaz-i Dā'irat al-Ma'ārif-i Buzurg-i Islāmī (Iran) 2005, 5). Contrariwise, for Ohrmazd it would have been impossible to attract his demonic enemy into creation and the limited time. Pahl. *asar* (lit. without head), like Av. *an-aγra-*, were used with spatial value, while it is Av. *akarana-* and Pahl. *akanārag* which were used with temporal force, for instance in the explicit designation of Zurwān as "eternal." On the contrary, Ramelli's (2017, 378–80) reference to the passage of Moses bar Kepha (813 ca.–903), in which it is stated that the two principles "crashed into one another/assaulted one another. And *darkness had the impetus to ascend*, in order to mix with those and among those […]," is very pertinent for a direct comparison. Furthermore, Bar Kepha knows the Iranian doctrine of the historical 'mixture' (although in another form), i.e. of the period of battle between good and evil forces in the world, a very important doctrine in the Zoroastrian tradition (see again Ramelli 2009, 378–90).

20   See, for instance, the *Addendum* on the Religious Minorities to the Peace Treaty signed at the end of the Lazika War; see Panaino (2010) and Panaino (2014) with additional bibliography.

21   Dilley in Gardner, DeBuhn and Dilley (2018, 101); see also the new edition of this text in Gardner, DeBuhn and Dilley (2018, 150–61). See Panaino (2017f).

22   Ramelli is probably right (2017, 356–57, 371, 377–81) when she remarks that Bardaiṣan of Edessa, who also supported an earlier version of the doctrine of universal restoration, was certainly acquainted with Iranian ideas, although this does not show that this special interpretation was due to Mazdean influence. It is probable the opposite, that Bardaiṣan was one of the channels through which *apokatastasis* became progressively known in Iran. The notion in Bardaisan (via Ephrem) that the Cross of Jesus Christ was the crossing bridge toward the salvation lost and precluded by Adam is very interesting, as remarked by Ramelli (Ramelli 2017, 371). Although it is not explicitly documented, it is possible that the idea of a crossing point was connected with an Iranian idea; see Tardieu (1985).

its appeal.[23] Furthermore, we must observe that the Mobedān were no longer responsible for secular law and for the control of social order, so that problems connected with political governance were now transferred to the shoulders of the Muslim authorities. In this completely changed framework,[24] the optimistic perspective of complete mercy for everybody, even for criminals, was a helpful tool for a decaying religion compelled to maintain a certain degree of attraction, at least in the eschatological perspective.[25] But, as I noted before, this answer was not found in one shot, and in my opinion its determination had a long and intricate background.

We must consider that the theological solution which we can find in late Pahlavi sources, [9] such as the *Škand Gumānīg Wizār* (Doubt-dispelling exposition), insists on a number of ideas that must be ascribed, at least in part, to the influence of the Aristotelian doctrine of the so-called 'golden mean' (in Pahlavi *paymān*), which was strongly argued in the *Nicomachean Ethics* (2,6, 1106b–1107a). The *Škand Gumānīg Wizār* IV, 100–101, declares (Menasce 1945, 58):

> […] and at the end, the highest Creator, who donates mercy (*abōxšāyīdār*) to [10]
> creatures, does not let any of the good creatures into the hands of the enemy; He
> saves the sinners together with the right ones, separating them from the sin thanks
> to the hands of the purifiers and brings them to the eternal path of beatification.

> […] *ud abdom xwābar dādār ī dām abōxšāyīdār ēč dām ī wēh andar dast grawīh ī* [11]
> *dušmen nē hilēd ud ān-iz ī wināhgār gumē ān ī ahlawān pad wizārdārīh ī wināh az*
> *yōĵdāhrgarān dast bōzēd ō nēk rawišnīh ī ĵāwēdānag zāmēnēd.*

This doctrine is not isolated; we can, in fact, mention the most important statement [12] formulated in the *Anthologies* by Zādspram XXXV, 47 (Gignoux and Tafazzoli 1993, 136–37), who attributed the definitive act of mercy to the "Spirit of the Earth" (*mēnōg ī zamīg*): He "will forgive" (*abaxšāyēd*) all creatures, both the "right ones" (*ahlawān*) and the "sinners" (*druwandān*), in the name of Ohrmazd. It is pertinent to note that the verb adopted in order to refer to the deliberate act of "having mercy" or of "being compassionate" was *abaxšāy-*, *abaxšayīdan* (or *abaxšīdan*; MacKenzie (1971), p. 2), the basic meaning of which was "to give the (proportional or expected) part."[26] Zādspram emphasized the fact that divine mercy would

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23   The demographic collapse of the Zoroastrian community became progressively dramatic, and despite strong resistance in certain districts, the number of Zoroastrians who converted to Islam increased not only because of persecutions or discriminations but also for economic reasons, particularly concerning the taxation system (see Choksy 1987, 1997; Kestenberg Amighi 1990; Stickel 2007; Daniel 1993; see also Bulliet 1979, 16–32). Kavvadas (2016, 1–2) remarks that the apocalypse of John Hazzaya shows a first-hand experience of the ongoing Islamization.

24   Although I insist on the circulation of ideas between East and West, the treatment of a subject so sensitive as that of the destiny of the soul cannot be separated from a re-consideration of its social impact in a precise historical framework. A similar consideration is present in the first steps of Ramelli (2017, 351–54), which follows some (in my opinion too) general reflections offered by Bruce Lincoln (1985, 2007b, 2007a) and van den Heever (1993, 2005a, 2005b) and Simmons (2015), although the historical background and relevant impact of the phenomena under discussion does not seem very consistent.

25   Another line of investigation concerns not only the plausible impact of Christian *apokatastasis* on some theological trends attested in classical Islam that directly concern the annihilation of hell, whose relevance was recently studied by Demichelis (2018), but also on the later Zoroastrian vision of the final renovation (see Ramelli 2017, 399). We must also remark that the standard Islamic doctrine assumes that hell is eternal; see El-Saleh (1986, 47–50).

26   See *baxtan, baxš-* (to distribute), *baxt* (part, sort, destiny). On this subject, see Panaino (2013b, 137–45). A similar terminology occurs in Manichaean sources; see Durkin-Meisterernst (2004, 3:15): Parthian *abaxšāh-* (to have mercy), Parthian *abaxšāhišn* (mercy, pity), Middle-Persian *abaxšāy-* (to have mercy), Middle-

be given by the divinity of Earth in her maternal quality. Zādspram's brother, Manuščihr, who was most conservative in religious matters, shared the same optimistic theological vision. Actually, in the *Dādestān ī Dēnīg* ([Book of the] Religious judgements) XXXVI, 106, it was he himself who equally stated: "all mortals, without distinction (lit. *kadām-ǧān-iz* 'everybody'), will be without envy towards the goodness of all the creatures and will benefit of the same peace" (Jaafari-Dehaghi 1998, 150–51). This agreement between the two brothers seems to imply that the theory of universal mercy was not a radical innovation during their time but that it was fixed before, although it assumed a mature formulation only in the theological treaties of the ninth century CE. In support of this solution I must quote another piece of evidence, the importance of which was recently suggested to me by Samra Azarnouche.[27] With regard to the above-quoted passage of *Yasna* 46, 11, the Pahlavi scribe felt it necessary to comment on the Avestan expression *yauuōi vīspāi*,[28] fittingly translated *hamē tā ō wisp* "forever" (Malandra and Ichaporia 2013, 72, 142, 196), the explanatory gloss *tā ō tan ī pasēn* "till the (occurrence of the) final body (*tan ī pasēn*)" (Dhabhar 1949, 203; Malandra and Ichaporia 2013, 72). This solution logically implies[29] that at the time of the reaction of the Pahlavi commentary to the *Gāθās*, which arguably falls into the Sasanian period, at least some priests had assumed a temporal limit for infernal punishment and made it clear in the commentary.[30]

The consideration that no historical sin should be punished with eternal damnation was [13] adopted as a strong argument supporting the representation of the infinite love of Ohrmazd, and, in contrast with the spirit of revenge apparently attributed to the highest divinity in other religious traditions, in particular against Islam. Concerning this preoccupation, we must recall that a well-known New Persian Mazdean text, the *ʿOlamā-ye Eslām* (The Doctors of Islam) (Olhausen and Mohl 1829, 7; Vullers 1831, 61; Blochet 1898; Unvala 1922, 2:8; Dhabhar 1932, 455),[31] insists on the presence of one of the Amahraspandān, Ardwahišt, in hell. There, he expressly ensures that the devils do not punish sinners beyond the limits established for their own crimes. This idea is not a late development but can already be found in the *Bundahišn* (Primordial Creation), ch. XXVI, 35 (Pākzād and Markaz-i Dāʾirat al-Maʿārif-i Buzurg-i Islāmī (Iran) 2005, 299).[32] This point of view, strongly related to the concept of proportionality between sin and punishment, is not unrelated to Mazdean speculations about the idea of time and, in particular, about the dialectics between infinite and limited time. In fact, the most important objection against the permanence of hell concerns the complete end of limited time and the total renovation of Earth. If hell endures after the fall of Ahreman and the triumph of God, we must postulate that in a remote part of the universe, an antagonist dimension should continue to exist in time and space in spite of the final defeat of evil. But this solution would imply a bold theological contradiction. Correctly, the late formulation of Mazdean theology

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Persian *abaxšāyišn* (mercy), Parthian *abaxšāyišngar* (pitiful, merciful); New Persian *baxšīdan, baxšūdan* (forgive, give mercy); see also Reck (2004, 95, 182).

27   Email dated May 10, 2018.

28   See Kellens and Pirart (1990, 2:26, 293 about the free dative of time).

29   The theoretical possibility that a Pahlavi gloss might have been added later cannot be excluded *a priori*, but seems to be less probable.

30   To the dossier of sources concerning the refusal of eternal punishment I must also add another passage from the third book of the *Dēnkard* (ch. 107; see Menasce 1973, 79–80); see also the doctrine formulated in the same book in chapter 272, which is discussed in the following pages.

31   This passage has been discussed recently in Panaino (2017c, 38).

32   I must thank Samra Azarnouche for calling my attention on this fitting passage. See also Bartholomae (1904, 1265n1).

considers such a perspective as completely impossible.[33] The victory of God must be complete, it argues, and in fact a river of molten metal will radically consume all of hell. Ahreman, according to a deep speculation of probably Aristotelian origin (see already Zaehner 1956, 83–84, 143–44; Panaino 2005), will not be properly destroyed, because, being a primordial substance, he cannot actually be reduced to nil; the argument goes that Ahreman will be reduced to a condition of *in-potentia*, from which the Prince of Darkness will no longer be able to resurge and re-act (Panaino 2005). In this respect, late Zoroastrian theology brings some ideas, probably already present in the philosophical debates of earlier periods and presumably already current in Sasanian times, to its most coherent and radical intellectual limits. The myth of free choice transferred to and assumed by the primordial *Frawahrān* before their earthly incarnation (*Bundahišn* III, 26–27),[34] for instance, insists on the existence of a sort of gentlemen's agreement between humanity (before incarnation) and God. There is a sort of impending 'alliance' with a clear promise (and an implicit contract) between the two parts. Practically, it presupposes that the mind of human beings can easily be seduced and that these poor persons will probably sin, but this premise also assumes that it is thanks to their role in history and their direct contribution to the development of humanity that the enemy will be defeated. Thus, it also involves the promise that all of humanity, in spite of its sins and mistakes, will be forgiven after some inevitable punishments and granted access to paradise. In other words, it seems that in the Zoroastrian system, the possibility of sin was considered not only as a probable but as a quasi-inevitable occurrence. In this respect, it was the primordial decision taken by the *Frawahrān* to live in the *gētīg* as an act of salvation, *in se et per se*. The coherent elaboration developed in the *Bundahišn* and in other Pahlavi sources, although under the influence of the contemporary philosophical debate that took place in ninth-century Baghdād, it surely began earlier.[35] For instance, in the *Dēnkard* III, 251 (Menasce 1945, 258–59), it is clearly stated that without the *gētīg* there is no access to the Wahišt, 'paradise'; and the Mazdean writer insists on the fact that the doctors of other religions who despise the *gētīg* also despise the Wahišt because they assume that most human beings will be *druwand* and thus go to hell forever. But if this were to pass as they suppose, it would mean that even God's actions are negative. This speculation is very deep because it connects the indispensable experience of the life in the *gētīg* as a sort of passage which God has imagined in order to purify the world itself and, with it, also his weak individual human creatures.

This doctrine probably has a distant precedent in the refusal performed by Yima in accepting the Daēnā offered by Ahura Mazdā, according to a very difficult myth preserved in the second chapter of the *Widēwdād*. As I have explained in other works (Panaino 2013a, 2015b), this behaviour was erroneously interpreted as a pagan refusal of 'Zoroastrian theology' (= *daēnā-*), not as that of the immediate meeting with Yima's own spiritual double in feminine form (equally named *daēnā-*). In fact, in the second case, the union with the Daēnā, i.e. Yima's

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33 Dr. Marco Demichelis (Universidad de Navarra) kindly informed me that Ibn Taymiyya (1263–1328) developed a similar idea in the framework of Islamic speculations on the annihilation of hell.

34 The numeration of the chapters adopted here follows the numeration proposed by Pakzad (2005, 52–53); see Anklesaria (1956, 44–45). See Zaehner (1955, 324, 336), and the discussion in Ramelli (2017, 384).

35 I must remark that Ramelli (2017, 381–90), following some remarks of M. Boyce (1975, 8:242–44), who fittingly observed the presence of different variants in the description of the final times in the *Bundahišn*, concludes too simply that this Pahlavi book was not clear on the final destiny of the souls of the sinners. In my opinion, despite some repetitions and inconsistencies, such as the imposition of a second judgment to the wicked ones, the *Bundahišn* does not contain any statement concerning the total annihilation of the sinners. On the contrary, the river of molten metals works as a purifying collective ordeal that grants them all access to paradise. Other, later Pahlavi sources confirm this conclusion, and there is no need to make more complex what is clear (see Gignoux 1968, 241–42).

spiritual feminine twin, would have been a tremendous prize. Thus, the miscomprehension of the initiatory dynamics of a primordial myth in which Yima was expected to refuse the Daēnā in order to meet with her only later, after the full accomplishment of his duty, was mistakenly considered as a sin by later Zoroastrian interpreters, and by modern scholars as well. But this version is unable to explain why Ahura Mazdā, the supreme Zoroastrian God, did not severely punish Yima. Why would Ahura Mazdā have transferred to him the supreme power to multiply Earth and create the *Vara*, a decision that looks like an act of recognition and not like a punishment for a 'pagan' primitive man who had rejected God's true religion?[36] More probably, Yima answered exactly as God expected of him, i.e. with a (temporary) refusal of the Daēnā, to be interpreted in this framework as the expected twin (and spiritual double) of Yima, and not as the theological corpus or the incarnation of the 'religion.' This kind of intellectual abstraction corresponds to a very improbable association when we try to project it to the context of an archaic myth, but is the fruit of a later misinterpretation of the initiatory dimension of this passage. Thus, we may presume that Yima, refusing in that moment the Daēnā (taken as his female double), was in reality accepting the role of civilising hero of humanity, and for this reason he was given the privilege to multiply the dimension of Earth and to protect humanity. With his refusal of an immediate beatification (= the union with his most beautiful feminine double), he accepted his duty for the sake of humanity and of Ahura Mazdā's project against the demons.

Coming back to our main subject, we must underline that a theological discussion concerning the need of a reasonable proportion between sin and punishment was held in the frame of an epistolographic exchange between two monophysites of Syria in the sixth century CE. We know that Jacob of Sarug (or Mar Yaʿqûb), in fact, wrote a letter about the final judgment (with reference to Matthew 25) and, in particular, about the eternal punishments occurring in hell to Stephen Bar Sudaili, a monk. In his previous letter, the young monk had wondered about the legitimacy of divine justice according to which a human sin, committed in the course of *limited time*, could find *eternal punishment* in hell. In this case, as underlined by Guillaumont (1979),[37] who commented on this passage, Jacques gives an answer based on an *argumentum per absurdum*, declaring (*ibidem*): [15]

> for if it be not just that He (i.e. God) should cast into everlasting fire him who has [16]
> sinned during a short time, as is written; then also it is not just that He should
> cause him who has been righteous during a short time to inherit the everlasting
> kingdom. And if it seems to thee that the sinner should be judged according to
> the number of years during which he has sinned, it would then follow that the
> righteous should enjoy happiness also according to the number of years during
> which he practised righteousness. So that he who sinned during ten years would
> remain in the fire for only ten, and he who practised righteousness for ten years
> would also remain in the kingdom for only ten years and would then leave it.

Then, Jacob concludes: "The sinner who does not repent, if he had lived forever, would [17] have sinned forever, and according to the inclination of his mind to continue in sin, he justly falls into everlasting hell."

In other words, the explanation, which, of course, implicitly tries to counter the Origenian [18]

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36   See, for more detailed arguments, Panaino (2013a, 91–131, 2015b).
37   The same letter was already published by Frothingham (1886, 10–26, in particular 18–21).

doctrine of the *apokatastasis* and of the universal liberation of sinners from hell, insists on the fact that God punishes the intention of the sinners.

In the economy of our discourse, it is important to recall that East Syriac ideas on *apokatastasis* could give additional weight to the present arguments.[38] Although it may seem peculiar, we must emphasize the fact that even the rector of the Theological School of Nisibis (Widengren 1984, 18–19),[39] Ḥenānā, who was elected in the year 572, had a positive attitude toward Origen and Origenism, and certainly played a very significant role in Sasanian Iran. But his case is not unique: Joseph Hazzaya (or Yūsuf Ḥazzāyā) (Scher 1909, 1910; Beulay 1974; Kavvadas 2013, 2015),[40] an eighth-century author of Zoroastrian background (born around 710–13), who was forcedly converted to Islam and then became Christian, apparently argued for a complete end of infernal punishment.[41] The previously mentioned Christian monk, Stephen bar Sudaili, probably identical to the author of the controversial *Book of Hierotheos on the Hidden Mysteries of the House of God,*[42] equally argued for *apokatastasis,*[43] showing seminal reflections of a number of contacts between Syria (Edessa) and Palestine,[44] which developed Origenian trends along the direction given by Evagrius. (Guillaumont 1958, 1962; Reinink 1999b)

These and other sources patently show that the debate about the final destiny of sinners and the reflexes of the Origenian doctrine concerning absolute divine mercy that will liberate them all after the final judgment was at least known in Syria and Eastern Christianity.[45] Thus, we can assume as certain the presence of such a theological and legal amphiboly with logical terms that would perfectly fit even into the Mazdean theology of a few centuries later. The rationale to be attributed to an intrinsic proportional rate between fault and punishment was not an abstract thought but part of the theological-philosophical agenda of late Antiquity among the Christian communities of the East. The presence of similar assumptions in later Zoroastrianism compels us to evaluate the weight and the extension of this intellectual exchange. We know that in the Zoroastrian framework, Aristotelism[46] and the doctrine of the

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38   I must thank again an anonymous reviewer for his or her pertinent and supportive suggestions.

39   See also Reinink (1999a, 182–87). About Ḥenānā and the School of Nisibis, see Vööbus (1965). See also Molenberg (2017, 152–55).

40   Kavvadas (2016) has edited the Syriac book *On Providence*, which confirms the Origenist doctrine of the *apokatastasis* in Hazzaya. Kavvadas (2016, 14–15) well describes the origins of Hazzaya, remarking the fact that he was the son of a Mazdean priest of Nemrud, seized by Arab soldiers. The personal experience of Hazzaya must be considered in the framework of a special social background, in which the doctrine of universal salvation represented a strong answer to widespread distress and sufferance. If this was a sentiment current among Christians, we can doubt that the Zoroastrians were more optimist.

41   See the most recent edition of the treatise *On Providence* by Joseph Hazzaya, edited and translated by Kavvadas (2016). In his arguments, Hazzaya followed some aspects of the doctrines developed by Theodore of Mopsuestia, also shown by Kavvadas (2016, 9–12). Joseph Hazzaya was considered heretical by Timoteus (see Berti (2009)).

42   See the edition by Marsh (1927); see also the earlier work by Frothingham (1886). On this text, see Ramelli (2013b, 772–73). Prof. Emiliano Bronislaw Fiori (University of Venice, Ca' Foscari) informs me that he is working on an Italian commented translation of the *Book of the Hierotheos.*

43   See Marsh (1927) and Frothingham (1886, 51–55, 63–66, 73). Bundy (1986) has identified the presence of Manichaean motives in this source, following some remarks already advanced by Guillaumont (1962).

44   I must thank my colleague Prof. Lorenzo Perrone (University of Salento) for his precious comments and advice.

45   In particular, it was Marsh (1927) who followed the impact of these doctrines in authors like Theodosius and Bar Hebraeus (see also Pinggéra 2002); the reappraisal of Origenism in the ninth and twelfth centuries has been the subject of a careful investigation by Reinink (1999b, 2010). Chialà (2002, 2014) has studied the subject of the *apokatastasis* in the framework of the Persian Church with particular attention to Isaac of Niniveh (see also Brock 1995). I must thank Prof. E. B. Fiori for his kind advice on this particular problem.

46   On the knowledge and diffusion of Aristotelian doctrines in Iran, see already Casartelli (1884, 1889); Zaehner (1955); Bailey (1971); Shaki (1999).

good medium had a certain influence, so that these speculations may reflect a common sensibility. This evidence emphasizes some peculiar *comparanda* which we can find in the Mazdean apocalyptical events, such as the river of molten metal, which all the dead will enter and which will purify all sinners for three days and nights. Despite the fact that in Iran, it is not 'fire' that purifies sinners, as in the river of fire[47] described by Origen[48] (e.g., in the *Homilia in Lucam* 24),[49] the two traditions are strongly resonant, if not properly similar. The problem again rotates around the idea of divine goodness and its limited or unlimited mercy, and about the role of hell. The Zoroastrian solution, in its final version, underlines the incompatibility of the last victory of Ohrmazd and of the final dissolution of the limited space-temporal dimension with the co-existence of another, limited, separated (mini)-universe into which sinners and demons would be thrown forever. Its endurance would be, as noted before, a *contradictio in adjecto*, practically as a defeat or an objective limitation for Ohrmazd's universal power. Hell, in fact, will stand as a limit against his unlimited kingdom of light.[50] The Iranian *apokatastasis* corresponds to a regeneration of the world in which even divine creation gains perfection. In fact, from the primordial phase, before the determination of limited time, Ohrmazd and Ahreman had to coexist in the universe; now, after the period of mixture, the *gumēzišn*, Ahreman will

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47   The antecedents of this image can be seen in the *Apocalypse of Peter* (Bremmer 2009, who thinks that it derives from Plato's *Phaedo* 114a), but also in the second book of the *Sibylline Oracles*, 190ff., where we find the ποταμός τε μέγας πυρὸς (Geffcken 1902, 8:37–41); see van den Heever (1993, 112), who tries to derive some Christian ideas from earlier Zoroastrianism. Unfortunately, the image of a cosmic burning is not at all Zoroastrian, but is attested in Manichaean sources. About the *Apocalypse of Peter* and the river of fire, see Ramelli (Ramelli 2017, 386). Very important is the study by Himmelfarb (1983, 110–14).

48   See Edsman (1940, 1949); Guillaumont (1946); Anrich (1902); Müller (1958); Cornélis (1959); Ramelli (2009, 2013b, 98, 122, 273, 561, 2013a); Lettieri (2011, 284–86, 2017a).

49   Migne (1862, 1864–5): *Sic stabit in igneo flumine Dominus Jesus iuxta flammeam romphaeam, ut quaecumque post exitum vitae eius, qui ad paradisum transire desiderat, et purgatione indiget, hoc eum amne baptizet et ad cupita trasmittat: cum vero, qui non habet signum priorum baptismatum, lavacro igneo non baptizet, Oportet enim prius aliquem baptizari aqua et spiritu, ut cum ad igneum fluvium venerit, ostendat se at aquae et spirtus lavacra servassae, et tunc mereatur etiam ignis accipere baptismum in Christo Jesu: cui est gloria et imperium in saecula saeculorum. Amen*. "In the same way, the Lord Jesus Christ will stand in the river of fire near the 'flaming sword'. If anyone desires to pass over the paradise after departing this life, and needs cleansing, (Christ) will baptize him in this river and will send him across to the place he longs for. But whoever does not have the sign of earlier baptisms, him Christ will not baptize in the fiery bath. For it is fitting that one should be baptized first in 'water and the Spirit.' Then, when he comes to the fiery river, he can show that he preserved the bathing in water and the Spirit. Then he will deserve to receive in addition the baptism in Christ Jesus, to whom is glory and power for ages and ages. Amen." For the translation I have followed Lienhardt (1996, 103–4). See also Frayer-Griggs (2016, 5–6, 13, 73–75, 142).

50   Ramelli (2017, 370, 391) in her evaluation of the Pahlavi sources, states that chapter XL, 31 of the *Dādestān ī Mēnōg ī xrad* XXX, 31 (or Judgments of the Spirit of Wisdom) confirms the earlier Avestan doctrine of the eternal punishment of sinners. However, the text is more ambiguous, and the old interpretation of the passage given by West (1885, 3:81n4) already takes into consideration some well-argued alternatives. The passage (so translated by West "And the bridge and destruction and punishment of the wicked in hell are for ever and everlasting") actually reads as follows: *puhl ud drōš ud pādifrāh ī druwandān pad dušox tā hamē ud hamē-rawišnīh* […] (the bridge and the punishment and the retribution of the wicked ones are in the hell for-ever-and-ever): This statement can be taken as a witness of eternal punishment, but also, as West suggested, to the entire time of the fight between Ohrmazd and Ahreman, which will last until the resurrection. In the preceding paragraph, *tā hamē ud hamē-rawišnīh* (for-ever-and-ever) is clearly used for an (apparently) eternal paradisiacal state, so that, in the second case, it should refer to the eternity of the punishment, but again, West claims that this conclusion is in contradiction with the rest of the Pahlavi statements concerning the destiny of all souls. In my opinion, the text offers a symmetric presentation of the afterlife, so that the two states are presented in their dimension with respect to the present time, which is not that of the final renovation. When the wicked are judged and purified in the river of molten metal, their punishment would be meaningless if it did not contain an additional emphasis on their previous impiety, but not as a future eternal perspective. With the destruction of hell, their place will finally be with the others, as that of Ahreman, who, having been reduced to pieces, will continue to exist not as a kind of a dark infernal active demon but as a mass of blended atoms, no longer in any condition to produce damage.

be defeated and scattered into pieces while his antagonist creation should be destroyed and the universe finally purified from its contamination. Human beings, thanks to the experience of life in the *gētīg* and after a period in the temporal afterlife in paradise, in purgatory or in a temporary hell, will have access (through the resurrection and the purification in the river of molten metal) to a new dimension of transfiguration, a subject to which Shaked (1970) attracted scholarly attention some years ago and which corresponds to a new ontological state of human beings in which they assume a semi-divine condition.[51] The postulate of the *tan ī pasēn,* or *corpus resurrectionis,* appears fundamental in the economy of this reflection because this 'future body' is not just the old one reconstructed but corresponds to a sublime transfiguration of its earlier condition. In this respect, I would like to again call attention to speculation independently developed by Origen (*Principia* II, 10.2): with reference to Paul, *Cor.* XV, 35–50, he states that the body, which will resurrect, will be a "spiritual" one, starkly different in its transcendental *habitus* from its present status (Fernández 2017). The difficulty of imagining a resurrected body, perfect, eternal, finds common inspiration in the idea that it cannot be just as it was before, an idea that, for instance, was not at all unknown among early Christian writers, who simply stated that God in his absolute power can do anything (as Celsus, for instance, assumed). I must again call the reader's attention to the fact that in the third book of the *Dēnkard* (ch. 272), Ohrmazd will raise the soul from hell, washing and dressing it with a new substance before admitting it to eternal immortality (*ǰāwēdān anōšag*) and full happiness (*purr-urwāhm*; Menasce 1973, 273). The similarity of these images, and the Mazdean emphasis on the *tan ī pasēn* (the future body), certainly deserve further comparative investigations.[52]

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51   We must recall that in the later Mazdean tradition, the individual souls (more precisely the *Frawahrān*) are expressly asked by Ohrmazd (*Bundahišn* III, 27; Pākzād and Markaz-i Dāʾirat al-Maʿārif-i Buzurg-i Islāmī (Iran) 2005, 53) to accept the incarnation (Zaehner 1955, 324, 336); this choice necessarily compels them to suffer in real life, and inevitably introduces the risks of demonic seduction. But the promise is God's final mercy. In this respect, human beings share the same idea of the *Deus patiens*, because the main historical sufferance is attributed to them. For the Gnostic and Origenian aspects of the idea of the *Deus patiens*, see Lettieri (1996, 2005, 186–89).

52   I must thank one of the anonymous reviewers of this article when he remarked that some pertinent differences should also be emphasized. For instance, the radical *apokatastatic* doctrine in Christianity implies the salvation of the Devil and demons (Lettieri 2017b, also with reference to Eriugena), as in the anathemas against Origen (and a return to an undifferentiated Monad, e.g. in the *Book of Hierotheos*). About this source, see below in the text. On the contrary, although Ahreman is not properly destroyed, he is rendered unable to act again, but certainly not redeemed (see Ramelli 2017, 374–76). In other words, the Prince of Darkness cannot actually be destroyed in a physical or material sense, but he can be put in a state of total impotence and fragmentation. On the other hand, we must remark that Ahreman invoked Ohrmazd's help when the demon Āz was ready to eat and kill him at the end of the fight with the divine forces. In that case, Ohrmazd saved him but could not let him go free, and thus paralyzed his being. Furthermore, the Origenist Christian doctrine of *apokatastasis* implies that evil is not a subsistent essence *per se*, therefore it cannot last forever; on the contrary, Ahreman is a primordial principle. I have dealt with the ontology of Ahreman in another article (Panaino 2005), and I must remark that the Mazdean theology in this case follows some Aristotelian patterns, which attributed to Ahreman the dignity of a primordial substance. In this regard, I wish to emphasize that it is not my intention to demonstrate that the two religious trends were similar, but only that they shared some important points, and that these correspondences require a discussion. In addition, although the controversy against Origen presents some obscure points, the theory that the accusations against him did not really represent his original doctrines but only those of his followers, or again that they consist of distortions or exaggeration of his thought, is far-fetched and sometimes based on confessional arguments, as those suggested by Crousel (1985) and few of his followers. In this perspective, Evagrius (Guillaumont 1958, 1962; Chialà 2002, 101–9), who was severely condemned, as was Gregorius of Nissa, another faithful disciple of Origen, followed his master (Hombergen 2001). I must thank Prof. Gaetano Lettieri for his remarks on this particular problem. Again with respect to the end of evil, we must observe that the Manichaean solution, in turn, involved a complete damnation of evil, but according to a completely different theology, which did not reflect the Zoroastrian

Circulation of Ideas and Multilateral Exchanges

The observation of these striking similarities invites us to reflect on the ways of transmission and communication in a rough scheme based on the pattern of direct and unilateral influence.[53] The Sasano-Byzantine border was a territory of ancient civilizations where extraordinary cultures had continuously contributed to the progress of the material and immaterial cultural development of humanity. Jewish-Christian chiliasm remains inexplicable without the influence of the Irano-Mesopotamian tradition, but new developments that these millenarian doctrines assumed in the Christian framework inspired new reflections in the Eastern world, and their resonance was also visible in Iran. The insistence of some scholars that Iranian eschatology is strongly indebted to the Judeo-Christian world, as assumed by Ph. Gignoux and C. G. Cereti, is correct, and my contribution probably enforces this interpretation, but with the prudent consideration that other ideas, coming from the East at earlier points in time, entered and deeply inspired the Judeo-Christian world. This must be considered in light of the fact that the Judeo-Christian οἰκουμένη was not beyond the Iranian border but was part of its political space, and that continuous interrelations were possible among these religious communities. One of the main risks we must face concerns the fragmentation of a cultural mosaic, which sometimes is seen as made just of single pieces, but without the perspective of a more general and integrated view. A confessional trend which underlines the distinctive character of each religion frequently discharges the compelling evidence of objective intercultural phenomena which disentangle our ordered vision of the postulated difference. For instance, I am wondering whether the sentences against Origen in 543/44 and 553 were just an inner Byzantine problem, faced and resolved by Justinian, or if there were other reasons for them as well and, eventually, external implications and reflections. Although one might observe[54] that this kind of Origenism seems mostly a Palestinian phenomenon,[55] reasonably

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doctrinal vision, although some points appear to be similar. In this regard, the idea of the *bolos,* in which all sinners and demons will be thrown, is extraneous to the Zoroastrian point of view and seems to belong to a more properly Gnostic perspective. In the framework of the Zoroastrian speculation, it is clear that no eternal Hell is possible because its existence and permanence would imply the presence of a limit in the universe. In any case, its endurance, although as a place of diminution and punishment, represents a space in which Ahreman will reign and in which Ohrmazd will be extraneous, while divine victory must be universal in time and space.

53 Although I cannot enter into all the problems discussed in other works, there is no reason to search for an overwhelming Iranian influence on the Christian doctrine of universal salvation, which, in fact, was not attested in ancient Iranian sources. See also the discussion in Ramelli (2017, 361–62). The famous passage by Plutarch, *De Iside et Osiride* 46–47, based on a fragment by Theopompus (IV. century BC) on Mazdeism, simply states that Ahreman will be annihilated at the end of the fight with Ohrmazd but does not develop other eschatological concepts *in extenso*. In any case, in it there is nothing that could be referred to as supportive of the *apokatastasis,* but also of a cyclical idea of time periods, which is completely extraneous to all attested Mazdean doctrines, despite what Ramelli (2017, 374) remarked. It is true that the text states that Ohrmazd's soul will sleep for a certain time, but there is no reference to a resurrection of Ahreman and to a new fight.

54 Again, I thank one of the anonymous reviewers for his or her comments.

55 But this phenomenon was very significant; for instance, among the most enthusiastic Origenists of Palestine, we find Domitianus and Theodorus Askida, who were so able to secure the support of the court that they were elected bishops in Ancyra and in Caesarea of Cappadocia. The Palestinian turbulence was so heavy that Justinian decided to force the rebels back to order with his Caesaropapist politics and to persecute the extreme Pagan allegorical images usually adopted within the Origenist milieu. Although 'provincial', these phenomena had their own external spillovers. I must thank Prof. Gaetano Lettieri (University of Rome, "La Sapienza") for his advice on this aspect of the controversy.

confined to a handful of monasteries[56] and influential individuals,[57] so that the degree of impact this anathematization would have had outside Palestine and the capital is questionable,[58] such a conclusion is debatable if we consider that two different Imperial sanctions against it were deliberated. Justinian himself promoted them, and on the second occasion, the final deliberation was confirmed by an Ecumenical Council. Regarding the 'Palestinian' dimension, this area was certainly influential and, despite its provincial frame, developed a good net of connections. Furthermore, my attention strictly concerns the spirit of this action in the framework of Justinian politics.[59] Was an eschatological representation of divine tolerance, in itself so deeply (though not exclusively) connected with the Origenian doctrine of the *apokatastasis*, also considered a political danger, in particular within the balance of the social equilibrium?[60]

In these years, Mazdak,[61] a Zoroastrian priest, full of egalitarian and semi-socialist political and religious ideas, started a radical process of social reforms which had a significant impact on Sasanian society and even on its kingship. The echo of its radical actions was enormous and reached the West. We do not know if the Mazdakite progression in Iran and its reflection in Byzantium involved similar eschatological perspectives, but when one considers that with the potential collapse of private property and legitimate succession, the movement of Mazdak opened new expectations, we can reasonably presume that some radical hopes

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56 The monasteries have played an important role as cultural agencies in the preservation and dissemination of the Christian tradition, so that what happened there was not at all isolated or remote. Very interesting in this context is the volume collected by Fr. Jullien (2011) dedicated to Oriental Monasticism, which strictly deals with the function of these Christian institutions.

57 As, on the contrary, one of the anonymous reviewers to this article remarks. On the other hand, Kallistos Ware (Ware 2005, 198–205, *passim*) presents the scenario in a much more complex way; the circulation of the Origenist ideas is highly interesting.

58 We should not forget that Guillaumont (1962) has shown that, despite its damnation, Origenism did not disappear but, on the contrary, gained some supporters in the Eastern Syriac Church. In the same study, Guillaumont was able to show that in the year 553, the doctrines of Evagrius were the object of the main accusations. The echo of the events happening in the Eastern Roman capital had immediate reflections in Sasanian Iran and in the Eastern Syriac area, because Constantinople was not only a place in which the official Sasanian ambassador had his residence and status but also a city in which Persian spies were active.

59 As is also visible in the context of the international treaty regarding the Lazika Pace, Justinian maintained a very high level of attention to Iranian affairs, and it is clear that the position of Christianity there was significant for him (Panaino 2009b, 2010, 2014, 2015a). See e.g. Guillaumont (1969) and also Frendo (1997).

60 Although I cannot find any direct relation with the Mazdakite movement, it is interesting to note that one year before the second anathematization of Origen, a tremendous revolt (usually referred to as 'Nika') took place in Byzantium, which produced dramatic events. The presence of Manichaean elements in the "Green Faction" of Byzantium shows the complexity of some religious and political phenomena, in particular if we consider that the Manichaean element had its main social basis in the merchants' ambiance; but more interesting is the suggestion made by Jarry (1960, 366–68, 1968; and later emphasized by Carile 1994, 50) regarding the Western resonances and adaptations of Manichaean and Mazdakite doctrines. In particular, Jarry underlined the importance of a suggestion given to Justinian by the Byzantine noble Erythrius, whose wife was credited to be Manichaean (according to Malalas 1831, 423) and who was Praefectus Pretorii under Zeno (see Müller 1851, Quartum:116). This nobleman (see Martindale 1980, 2:402), in fact, would have proposed the adoption of the Mazdakite doctrine in order to conquest the whole of Asia (Carile 1994, 50). Furthermore, Jarry insists on the connections between the Byzantine revolt of the year 552 and Manichaean and Mazdakite ideas. Recently, Ramelli (2017, 253–54), too, tried to frame the apocalyptical Iranian doctrines in a sort of political dimension, but her approach does not take into consideration the Iranian dialectics between nationalism and universalism, which were well studied by Gnoli (1984). Certainly, we must recognize that the earlier Iranian vision of world history did not emphasize a universalistic perspective, and that this soteriological aspiration was endorsed by the Manichaean trend (as remarked by Simmons 2015, 190), but that in the direct confrontation against the Eastern Roman Empire, the role of the king assumed a cosmocratic meaning, and that the Iranian political project of expansion had cosmic pretensions.

61 About Mazdak and the Mazdakite movement, see Christensen (1925); Klíma (1957, 1977); Shaki (1978); Sundermann (1977); Yarshater (1983); Crone (1991, 1994, 2012).

also involved eschatological expectations. For this reason, it is worth considering as a working hypothesis that this political phase might have favoured the diffusion of the idea that even hell would be destroyed. Paradise for everybody would be another sort of 'spiritual communism,' based on the idea that divine insight is full of mercy and generosity. We know that Origen was not appreciated among Dyophysites, but intellectual alliances were possible despite general divergences. Origenism and similar optimistic ideas might have found a path of diffusion in different ways, even via Monophysites, and the common intellectual interest in Aristotelian as well as Neo-Platonic backgrounds created a sort or 'no man's land' where numerous exchanges were possible. For instance, if we consider how it was possible that some court astronomers/astrologers in Sasanian Iran were Christian, we are compelled to observe that, despite a general refusal of astrological divination, many Christians endured practicing a moderate form of astrology, in which the principle of astral pre-determination on free choice was strongly limited (Panaino 2017a). In this respect, the role played by the Magi at Bethlehem represented a double-faced instrument of propaganda. It actually showed that an Iranian traditional practice had inspired some wise men to find the true Saviour, frequently identified as one of the three expected posthumous sons of Zoroaster, but also legitimated a sort of pious practice which could not simply be demonized. But the problem is much more intricate, because astrology was strictly linked with power and its symbolism. In fact, in Iran as in Byzantium, both monarchies used to play with the image of the royal *kosmokrátor,* placed at the centre of a cosmic hall, where all the stars and the luminaries rotate around the *persona sacra* of the king as a living Sun. This game was performed on both sides (Panaino 2004a), which imitated each other in many ways, and no religion dared to contrast this esoteric trend in an open way. The Byzantine emperor put himself among the twelve apostles, just like Jesus in a process of 'Cristomimesis,' while the King of Kings appeared to the Byzantine conquerors of Ganzaca as a divinity enthroned in heaven, with angels bringing him sceptres and encircled by the luminaries and the stars. An impressive machine, like a sort of clock, moved around the throne. These and other descriptions of the celestial dimension of the universal king have been reported by Theophanes (ninth century CE) through Georgios Cedrenos (I, 721, 18; eleventh/twelfth century CE; see Panaino 2004a, 564–72), or by the Patriarch Nikephoros (XII, 43–47; eighth to ninth century CE) (see Nicephorus 1990, 56, 57 and @LOrange_Studies_1953, p. 20), but the power of this ideological symbolism was already evident in a short note by the glossographer Hesychius (fifth century CE), *sub voce* οὐρανοὺς, when he stated: Πέρσαι δὲ τὰς βασιλείους σκηνὰς καὶ αὐλάς, ὧν τὰ καλύματα κυλωτερῆ, οὐρανοὺς (ἐκάλουν) "The Persians (call) 'heavens' the royal palaces and the saloons whose coverage had been made 'round'" (L'Orange 1953, 22).

Furthermore, I would like to call the reader's attention on the fact that the few references [23] in Christian literature of the Church of the East which attest to the presence of Christian astrologers, members of the religious hierarchy, at the Sasanian court, in particular in the *Chronicle of Seert,* find a distant confirmation in the similar tradition explicitly documented by Chinese sources of the Tang period, in which the arrival of Christian astronomers/astrologers in very high positions in the Central Bureau of Astronomy is emphasized without any possibility of doubt. The most important astrologer, Li Su, was certainly a Christian and a very good specialist in these esoteric disciplines coming from the West, i.e. from the Iranian world, presumably from Persia or Sogdiana.[62]

The significance of this evidence must be emphasized; in fact, the role not only of astrol- [24]

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62   See the studies on this astrologer by Mak (2016) with further bibliography. See also Panaino (2017a).

ogy, but of a kind of astrology developed in the Persian framework gives us a measure of the cultural legacy that emerged in Sasanian Iran and the richness of its ramifications and irradiation. For instance, it is probable that the astrological doctrines contained in the Middle Persian re-elaboration of the *Carmen Astrologicum* by Dorotheus of Sidon[63] (first century CE) were transferred to China by Christian astrologers who actually became competitors of Buddhist scholars in this field. This exceeds all standard expectation, although, for an open-minded historian, reality is much more intriguing than fiction. Previously, we have mentioned the presence of Christian forms of adaptation of astrology, but the subject is more complex because it must be connected, at a higher intellectual level, with the philosophical debate concerning the eternity of the world and in particular of the heavens, and, more pertinently, with the the the possibility of the spiritual animation of the astral bodies. This debate was very relevant in Byzantium and among Christians, in the East and West, so that it impacted Monophysites and Dyophysites. Joel Th. Walker (2006, 190–97; see Panaino 2017a) has also found pertinent resonances of these discussions in the framework of the interrogatory of the Sasanian General Mar Qardagh, held during the process concluded with his martyrdom. The philosophical literature of late Antiquity demonstrates that a deep discussion concerning these subjects was known even in Western Iran before the Arab invasion, and that it would be historically reductive to limit the importance of these philosophical controversies only to the ninth century CE. If Theodor of Mopsuestia (fourth to fifth century CE) and Cosmas Indiclopleustes (early sixth century CE) strongly maintained the earlier Aristotelian representation of the heavens and of the astral bodies, assuming that they were given a soul, and stated that angels directed the motion of the sun, the moon and the stars, we can equally trace the violent reaction of a Christian scholar like John Philoponus (sixth century CE), who progressively rejected the idea of the eternity of the heavens and the hypothesis that all astral beings were animated and directed by angelic powers.[64] It would be interesting to imagine the position of Mazdean scholars, who probably maintained a generic Aristotelian point of view but stated that both the stars and the luminaries were divine beings under the power of Ohrmazd, while the planets, which were demons, although animated, would be destroyed by God at the end of limited time. In this way, the Mazdean wise men adopted only a partially Aristotelian position, without subscribing to the assumption that this world is eternal in its present status; they presumably stated that it would be radically changed with the dissolution of the limited space/time dimension created by Ohrmazd in order to entrap Ahreman, and that a new world was to be be expected. In this respect, the theological matter was likely intellectually intriguing because we can postulate that various kinds of philosophic (dis)entanglements and (counter)-alliances were possible. In this framework, the intolerance of Justinian policy in philosophical matters and the expulsion of the Greek philosophers from the Academy of Athens in 529 produced an additional earthquake, because despite the *a priori* hostile description of the events given by Agathias (sixth century CE), we can assume that a reasonable interest toward the Iranian world was present in the western scholarly ambiance of that time, and that at least Xusraw I was sufficiently interested in the ideas of these expelled philosophers to host them and eventually to offer them protection on their homeward journey, as we know from ancient sources. *Nolens volens*, these societies were in close contact, in particular at their highest intellectual levels, so that it is difficult to work out whether they were 'closed boxes' without continuous

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63   On this fundamental manual of astrology, see Pingree (1989, 229); for the edition of the original Greek text, see again Pingree (1976).

64   Panaino (2017a) discusses the main terms of this debate and offers a pertinent and extensive bibliography.

relations. The difference of language was a limited problem, not only because the Syrians and the Armenians played a continuous game of intermediation but also because the political situation necessitated observing the enemy. Collaboration was also required on some occasions, as in the case of the redaction of the treaty signed by the delegations of Xusraw I and Justinian at the Lazika Peace (532 AD). The terms of this treaty were fixed with a bilingual (Greek and Persian; Panaino 2017e) official document, in 11 points, plus a long *addendum* on religious minorities. Menander the Guardsman (mid-sixth century CE) preserved a synthesis of the original text, but the (Middle) Persian version is probably referred to by Ṭabarī with an interestingly (if not opposing, then surely differently) oriented representation of the facts. This difference clearly shows that these treaties were made public in the two countries in a way which highlighted only the advantageous results, while the necessary concessions offered to the other part were not made public explicitly (Panaino 2009b, 2014). Furthermore, the complexity of the matter and the way in which the bilingual text in Greek and Middle Persian was redacted demonstrates that the level of cooperation was very high (as it is visible in the calendar adopted for the synchronism of the annexed agreements, which followed the "Egyptian style" in order to avoid any preference and any mistake; Panaino 2010), and that the Romans probably had to write the Pahlavi version, while the Persian delegation produced the Greek text (Panaino 2017e). In any case, both sides apparently invoked a God who seems to be the same for both; a very remarkable fact (Panaino 2015a).

My focus on these apparently secondary details seeks to emphasize the multicultural dimension of the theological and philosophical speculations that concurred with the continuous elaboration of Mazdean eschatological doctrines. If I can dedicate the final part of my contribution to some conclusive remarks, I would like to synthetize some aspects of the Iranian process of theological formation, insisting on the fact that, after an original phase of formation and of inevitable dialogue with the surrounding Mesopotamian world, a long period of intercultural exchange with the Greek and Judeo-Christian civilizations transformed the Iranian intellectual world, although this phase was followed by a further re-adaptation of some doctrines that definitively took place in the Islamic period. At that time, again, some protagonists of the debate were still the same: Greek philosophy in Christian, Jewish and Islamic declinations, but the political and military defeat of the Sasanian Empire *paradoxically* gave more freedom to the inner theological elaboration of the Zoroastrians, no more limited by any *raison d'état*. The Iranian contribution to the development of human intellectual history maintained its originality because, despite the importance of Aristotelian thought and, to certain extent, also of Neo-Platonic doctrines, late Antique Iran preserved and transformed some fundamental categories originally developed in its secular tradition. This was the case with the distinction between eternal and limited time, between *mēnōg* and *gētīg*, with the particular emphasis on the fact that evil forces were mainly mental (*mēnōg*). In this way, the Iranian intellectual world continued to offer *de facto* one of the most significant innovations with respect to the representation of the relations between mind and body, in which the body assumed an autonomous and very positive function.

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The Zoroastrian Idea of Evil as a Mental Dimension

Another point which must be underlined concerns, in my opinion, the importance of what I would like to call an anachronism of Zoroastrian 'psychology,' which stems from a series of ontological premises. The 'principle' and the 'prince' of evil, which practically coincide,

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are intrinsically a manifestation of something comparable to a mental disease. The first sinner, Ahreman, substantially embodies a mentally suffering drive (*mainiiu-*) present in the cosmos; his contra-creation, realized against Ohrmazd's luminous world, is the result of an act of self-sodomy, an action which symbolically shows that Ahreman is incapable of loving anybody other than himself (Panaino 2009a, 2009c), and that he is dowered with a strong sexual drive but that this drive cannot be seminal.[65] The creatures who follow him start to behave, like the first two twins born by Gayōmart, as psychiatric criminals, killing and eating their own first couple of children, a kind of behaviour well known in the manuals of criminal psychiatry. Thus, Zoroastrianism had the extraordinary originality to imagine evil as a manifestation of mental suffering, describing its presence in creation as a mental seduction disturbing and destroying the regular course of life. At this point another interpretative key can be considered when we try to evaluate the Mazdean tolerance in the afterlife and the myth of the *Frawahrān*'s incarnation. The sin is not only a matter of free choice, a problem about which Iranologists have started a long and intricate critical and controversial debate, but a fruit of mental weakness and of inner imbalance.

In other words, the Zoroastrian final optimistic solution of the definitive mercy of God toward everybody, a solution that also includes the sinners of hell, implicitly assumes that the damned are not completely responsible for their faults. Their responsibility is limited, and consequently it is only for this limited part that they must pay for the sins in a temporary hell, which substantially corresponds to a harder purgatory. Here, I see the final effects of some theological presuppositions already visible in the idea that without the *gētīg,* humans do not have the merits to obtain a 'future body'. This body of transfiguration has been practically sainted thanks to the living experience, which works as a sort of self-sacrifice. The decision of the ancestral *Frawahrān* to descend into the living world results now in an act of auto-salvation; in fact, it opened the path to the final resurrection and paradise to the whole of humanity. A human existence, only *mēnōg,* will be imperfect, and not suitable to real incremental progress in the ontological dimension. From this point of view, the resurrection of the dead is the seal of their definitive transfiguration. No being can be resurrected in order to go to hell again. It is a pity that we do not possess minutes of theological debates occurring in late Antiquity and the early Middle Ages, apart from some scattered references in polemical documents, such as the *Škand Gumānīg Wizār,* but I am sure that the subject was dramatically deep, and that it probably knew not only external controversies but also many internal, tantalizing discussions. What we know is that at certain point, in a particular political condition, the doctrine of the *apokatastasis* was officially accepted also in the Zoroastrian world, in a very optimistic and—we could say—'liberal' version, not as a privilege for a restricted number of elects, but as the gift to be expected by all human beings. This solution was not isolated, but its Origenian *comparanda* was less fortunate, remaining in the limbo of Christian heresies while its modern revivals have opened a number of accusations and controversies, inevitably due to the eschatological importance of this solution.[66]

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65   I must emphasize the importance of these aspects, which are foundational in the Zoroastrian representation of the world and in the theological explanation of its meaning, despite the fact that they typically have been ignored. An example of the strong embarrassment subjects such as these are met with is the myth of Ahreman's act of self-sodomy, which has never been the object of a serious investigation until recent years. This silence is very peculiar if we consider that this myth concerns the origin of the antagonist creation of Ahreman, and inevitably involves a number of symbolic meanings. I cannot repeat here the material collected on these subjects (see Panaino 2009a, 2009c).

66   See, for instance, the critical discussion in Ambaum (1991).

Conclusions

The subject is certainly intriguing and I am not strictly looking for direct influences;[67] my focus in this investigation remains on the complexity of intercultural dialogue, which was evidently significant and inspired many related or strikingly resonant solutions.[68] Just as another provocation, I must remind readers that already in Bardaiṣan we find a sort of anticipation of the *apokatastasis* in his doctrine, stating that our world is a mixture of the four elements plus darkness,[69] but that this condition will be extinguished and a new mixture, although without darkness, will emerge (Ramelli_Bardaisan_2009; Ramelli 2013a). When we consider that apparently even Bardaiṣan was operating within the theological premises of an ideal temporal framework of 6,000 years (Panaino 2017g), arranged according to an even number of planetary conjunctions, we could suspect that a cross-cultural echo coming from Iran could be possible, and we come back again to a never-ending circle.

[28]

What seems to me certain is that in this complicated mosaic of traditions, Zoroastrian theology had its own dignity and complexity, and that without its study a great chapter of the intellectual circulation of eschatological ideas would simply be ignored. This omission would not only narrow the border of the ancient,[70] but also decrease the richness of spiritual hope and imagination.

[29]

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67   In any case, it is useful to insist on the role of Aprahat (born around 270 CE in Persia), who was perhaps a Zoroastrian before his conversion to Christianity. He probably knew not only Zoroastrian doctrines, but also Bardaisan's work, as Ramelli (Ramelli 2017, 393–96) fittingly argues.

68   From a methodological point of view, we must consider the strong disproportion between Mazdean and Christian original sources. In fact, considering that we can easily find sources, in a mass of hundreds of ancient Christian books, that clearly share a favour for the *apokatastasis*, the Zoroastrian Pahlavi texts cannot be considered as absolutely compact in their theological orientation. Thus, when we find one document that does not completely agree with the others, we cannot automatically infer that its orientations represents the whole Zoroastrianism of its age.

69   For a recent discussion of the Iranian elements in Bardaiṣan, see Ramelli (Ramelli 2017, 377–96).

70   Useful remarks on the cultural and inter-religious framework are suggested in the volumes edited by Kofsky and Ruzer (2016) and by Herman (2014), both with a pertinent general bibliography; see also Ramelli (2017) in her conclusions. Very important is the huge collection of papers dedicated to the cultural interaction between Mazdeans and Christians in Sasanian Iran by Gignoux (2014).

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The Co-formation of the Manichaean and Zoroastrian Religions in Third-Century Iran

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ABSTRACT   The assumption that an already established Zoroastrian religion served as the source for terms, concepts, and themes which Mani and Manichaeans appropriated and altered is due for reassessment. Building on the work of P. O. Skjaervø, this study argues that (1) Zoroastrianism and Manichaeism arose together, side by side, in the third century (2) against the background of older Iranian religious cultural traditions, (3) each fitting those antecedent cultural artifacts into different systems of interpretation and application.

KEYWORDS   Zoroastrianism, Manichaeism, Avesta, pantheon, ritual, legend, ethos, eschatology

Introduction

A little over twenty years ago, Prods Oktor Skjærvø published a set of four articles in which he surveyed the "Iranian Elements in Manicheism" as well as the possible impact Mani and Manichaeism may have had on institutional Zoroastrianism in the early Sasanid period (Skjærvø 1995a, 1995b, 1996, 1997). In these articles, Skjærvø performed the service of pushing the study of Iranian religion out of a comfort zone that viewed Manichaeism as dependent on an already well-established "Zoroastrianism." In the latter view, an organized and orthodox Zoroastrianism served as a source for terms, concepts, and themes that Mani and Manichaeans appropriated and altered to fit into Manichaean "syncretism" (see e.g. Scott 1989). In contrast, Skjærvø envisions the origin of Manichaeism occurring at a "time when the Mazdayasnian religion was being redefined and consolidated" (Skjærvø 1995a, 267). Confronting the late date of nearly all primary sources on this religion, he cautions that there is "no reason a priori to think […] that all of the cosmology of the Pahlavi books was part of the official doctrine in the third century or, indeed, that they contain everything that belonged to the official third-century doctrine" (Skjærvø 1995a, 268), and recognizes that "it is quite possible that elements of the Manichaean myth permanently entered the Zoroastrian myth at this time" (1995a, 267). While not completely unprecedented, Skjærvø's recognition of

[1]

the possibility of an exchange of ideas in both directions between these two communities (1995a, 281), in a period that was formative for both, marks a major advance away from an understanding of Manichaean origins that consists simply of normative heresiological tropes put in the fancy dress of modern academics. The present contribution is intended to build on Skjærvø's observations in light of new sources, but especially within a fresh conception of the religious landscape of the era, by which the sources that Skjærvø himself marshaled take on a different significance.

The traditional, medieval Zoroastrian account of the community's history, as read through modern (nineteenth- to twentieth-century) Religious Studies discourse, continues to have a powerful hold over how historical materials are interpreted. Hence, scholars across the field, including Skjærvø, continue to speak in terms of a Zoroastrian "religion" in the centuries BCE, at a time when nowhere else on earth was there such a thing as a "religion"; and continue to speak in terms of "doctrine," even "official doctrine," at a time when priestly institutions authorized myths, ritual scripts, purity codes, and other elements of regional religious culture, held together at most by a loosely-defined theory of efficacy in relation to divine beings. The traditional Zoroastrian narrative of a religion founded, lost, and reconstructed (in the Sasanid period) only to be shattered again, and again reconstructed (in the medieval period), is deeply enmeshed in anachronism, compounded by modern scholars of religion anxious to find parallels to other, later religions. Indeed, the Manichaean narrative of religions founded, lost, and reconstructed is much the same, and told in no more fanciful detail—and yet most scholars would regard it as a tendentious, ideological construct, while according the Zoroastrian narrative it has at least a basis in history, however embellished by legendary elements. Yet, when set within the larger context of historical developments, the evidence suggests that Zoroastrianism was in its formative (not reformative) period at the same time as Manichaeism was; that both religions emerged only in the third century against the background of Iranian religious cultural traditions; that both religions laid claim to those older traditions, and appropriated them selectively, tendentiously, within the bounds of their distinct hermeneutics; that this process of cultural interpretation and consolidation in third-century Iran resulted in precisely the emergence of "religions" as distinct institutional entities for the first time in this part of the world; but that both religions wanted to read their present into the past, and set about constructing a narrative of an earlier time much like theirs, of an earlier founding of Zarathustra's "religion."

[2]

The Religious Landscape of Late Antiquity

Recent discussions in the field of Religious Studies have made us more aware of the anachronism involved when we speak of communities in the ancient world as "religions" (e.g., Nongbri 2013; Barton and Boyarin 2016). We should not impose this category on cultures that had no such concept. As much as we may be accustomed to speaking of "Zoroastrianism" as something dating back to the Achaemenid period, this needs to be carefully qualified. It has been commonplace to speak even of an ancient "Zoroastrian Church," implying an institutional organization with an orthodox "dogma" or "official/standard doctrine" (e.g., Skjærvø 1995a, 269). This is surely wrong for the dawn of the Sasanid period and the centuries preceding it. The elements we see in Achaemenid remains that we might identify as "Zoroastrian" are cultural artifacts later taken up into the emerging Zoroastrian religion as it took shape in the Sasanid period. Avestan literature itself is taken up into later Zoroastrian usage in much the

[3]

same way that the legal codes and temple psalms of the kingdom of Judah, for example, were taken up and employed in later Judaism and Christianity.

"Religions" are entities that incorporate and repurpose older cultural material in a new, more systematic setting, and it is historically inaccurate to take the previous existence of that cultural material as an indication of the presence of the religion that will later make use of it. While obviously its later use suggests some continuity of ideas and themes, we must pay close attention to the great discontinuities and reinterpretations that are often involved in religious re-use of older cultural material. The emergence of something we can fairly call "religions" occured in West Asia only two millennia ago, for very specific historical reasons. The category "religion" emerges only when it has to, when it is summoned forth by conditions on the ground that no longer abide by previous assumptions. Those previous assumptions are that every ethnic group has its culturally distinctive ways of relating to the forces that govern the universe, the gods; and that one is born into this identity and dies in this identity, and one cannot opt out of these traditional ways without literally leaving home and going to some foreign land and marrying into a different ethnic group and acculturating to its ways. The category "religion," then, only emerges where there are options, alternative ways within a single ethnicity or state for relating to the gods. To be more precise, it is not simply a matter of variety, since variety of belief and practice is found everywhere and always. Rather, the key development is what might be called religious pluralism, where distinct and mutually exclusive identities exist that are not interchangeable or coterminous with ethnic identity. Native religious practices, deeply embedded within particular socio-cultural identities, began at particular points of history, under specific conditions, to be distilled into or displaced by *religions*: organized systems of belief and practice disembedded from particular societies and cultures. It is only when such organized communities began to exist or to be thought of as distinct entities, side-by-side and in competition with each other, that we can speak of religions in the proper sense for the first time (BeDuhn 2015b). [4]

As far as evidence suggests, this awareness of religious pluralism (which no doubt had been noted informally in the cities and marketplaces of Iran for some time) had its first formal statement in the words of Mani addressed in the mid-third century to Shapur I in the *Šābuhragān*: [5]

> Wisdom and knowledge have been brought repeatedly by the messengers of God in one period after another. Thus they appeared at one time through the messenger called Buddha in the land of India, and in another through Zaradusht in the land of Persia, and in another through Jesus in the land of the West. Then in the present time there came this revelation […] through me, Mani, the messenger of the God of truth in the land of Babylonia. (Bīrūnī, *Āthār ul-bāqiya*, ed. Sachau, 207.14-18; cf. Reeves 2011, 102–3 and n114-115) [6]

Notice the transitional nature of this declaration. In some ways, Mani is still working with the old assumptions: each land has its own distinctive tradition, its own cultural hero who brought the wisdom of knowing one's place in the universe and how to relate to its governing forces. Mani even identifies himself here with a particular region: Babylonia, as if he were the prophet to the Babylonians—much as Muhammad would at first declare himself to be the latter-day prophet to the Arabs. But both Mani and Muhammad developed in their thinking, and came to see their missions more universally. Mani makes that first step here by conceptualizing each of these historical figures as offering a permutation of the same truth, rendered into distinct [7]

systems of expression and practice. This pluralism on the ground in Mani's world offered food for thought, on the basis of which Mani comes to think of these traditions as something like what we refer to when we speak of "religions." Mani was able to imagine his own permutation of the truth behind these traditions as a world religion, one that will transcend geographic, linguistic, and ethnic boundaries (Lieu 2006). He was able to take that step because he had conceptualized "religion" as something disembedded from those other identities.

This incremental advance in the conceptualization of religion can be seen in passages from the Chester Beatty Kephalaia: [8]

> Behold, I will [tell] you about each one of the apostles by name, they who came   [9]
> (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 Kushan. He also revealed the truly-founded law in
> all of India and Kushan. After him again, Aurentes came with Kebellos to the east.
> They also revealed the truly-founded law in the east. Elchasai (?) came to Parthia.
> He revealed the law of truth in all of Parthia. Jesus the Christ came to the west.
> He (also?) revealed the truth in all of the west. […] For they were seized from
> this place; they were taken up; they went, they saw, they came (back), they bore
> witness; they have told [that the] land of light exists and that we have come from
> it. Also, hell exists, and we have seen the place where it is […]. Their testimony
> exists till now in their writings. […] 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 exists. Again, I have [seen] hell with my eyes, the way that it exists. I have
> received […] from God. I came; I have revealed this place (i.e. the land of light) in
> this world; I preached the word of God. (2Ke 422.28 – 424.12; Gardner, BeDuhn,
> and Dilley 2018, 164–69)

In another extended passage (not yet published), Mani surveys these other traditions, enumerating key parallel aspects of their formation and institutionalization. Mani crafts a working definition of religion as the product of revelation,[1] authorized by a founding authority, organized as a community, guided by textual resources (BeDuhn 2015b).   [10]

Towards the end of the third century, another Iranian religious leader, Kerdīr, shows that he has recognized the same pluralistic conditions as Mani, and he addresses them accordingly.   [11]

> And from province to province, place to place, throughout the empire the rites   [12]
> of Ohrmezd and the gods became more important and the Mazdayasnian religion
> (*dyn*) and *magians* were greatly honoured in the empire and great satisfaction be-
> fell the gods and water and fire and beneficent creatures, and great blows and
> torment befell while Ahreman and the demons and the heresy (*qyš*) of Ahreman
> and the demons departed and was routed from the empire. And Jews (*yhwdy*)
> and Buddhists (*šmny*) and Hindus (*blmny*) and Nazarenes (*n'čl'y*) and Christians
> (*klystyd'n*) and Baptists (*mktky*) and Manichaeans (*zndyky*) were smitten in the em-
> pire, and idols were destroyed and the abodes of the demons disrupted and made
> into thrones and seats of the gods. (Translation from MacKenzie 1989, 58)[2]

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1   This claim to a visionary confirmation of religious truth is closely paralleled in the inscriptions of Kerdīr, where he recounts his own vision of heaven and hell; see Skjærvø (1983). A very similar personal visionary journey is described in a classic Zoroastrian text set in Sasanid times, the *Arda Viraf Namag*, and both of these relate to even older regional tropes, as attested in, e.g., Plato's *Myth of Er and the Books of Enoch*.

2   I have added to the translation some of the original Middle Persian terms in parentheses.

Many of the same groups are referred to in Mani's and Kerdīr's declarations: Kerdīr's Mazda-   [13]
worshiping *dēn* as Mani's followers of Zoroaster, Kerdīr's Šamans as Mani's followers of Bud-
dha, Kerdīr's Nazareans and Christians as Mani's followers of Jesus, and Kerdīr's Zandiqs
as Mani's own Manichaeans. The other groups Kerdīr mentions—Jews, Brahmans, and the
enigmatic Maktaks—overlap with groups that Mani speaks of elsewhere.[3] Moreover, Kerdīr's
references to both personal revelation and textual sources of his tradition echoes factors Mani
considered essential components of a "religion." Indeed, Kerdīr's primary authorizing narra-
tive involves a visionary journey very similar to the one claimed by Mani. Skjærvø and others
have suggested Kerdīr was consciously responding to, and competing with, Mani in his in-
scriptions (see Skjærvø 1997; Russell 1990).

Both Mani and Kerdīr, then, report a rich and vibrant religious pluralism within third-   [14]
century Sasanid Iran. Kerdīr, for his part, was forced to acknowledge a changed condition
where religious traditions had begun to consolidate as at least in part distinct from ethnic
identity. Yet he also holds a rather transitional view, in that he still sees only one tradition as
natural and right for the Iranian people; the alternatives represent to him just a many-headed
form of a single demonic lie, as they already did for Xerxes. Kerdīr echoes much of the latter's
phrasing about the *daivas* or temples where they are served in a land that should belong only
to the supreme god. But Kerdīr now sees these opponents of truth manifested in autonomous,
named religious traditions and communities. Mani had recognized the same solidification of
religious identities, but by emphasizing their parallelism of structure and purpose, succeeded
in achieving a more abstract concept of "religion," even if his own was still "better." In any
case, it is clear that Kerdīr represents a response to the catalyst of this religious pluralism, in
which a distinct Zoroastrian religion is gaining self-consciousness out of prior Iranian religious
discourse and practice.

Competing Religious Appropriation of Iranian Cultural Traditions

The conceptual and historical framework established above sets the stage for a reconsideration   [15]
of the origins of religions in Late Antiquity, some of which we have been in the habit of
thinking about as much older. In this light, Zoroastrianism and Manichaeism, among other
religions, can be understood to have arisen together, side by side, in the third century. Both of
these religions drew upon earlier Iranian traditions and materials, but they each fitted those
antecedent artifacts into different systems of interpretation and application. That specific
process of cultural appropriation and repurposing by these two emerging religions requires
closer scrutiny.

Within the broader understanding of how "religions" first emerge into conceptualization   [16]
in the third century, we must move away from treating Manichaeism as a heresy that breaks
with an existing religion, or even as a religion that is unusually syncretistic compared to oth-
ers, one that, so to speak, has disassembled an existing Zoroastrianism and scavenged it for
parts. Rather, Manichaeism comes into existence on a field of traditional Iranian discourses
and practices that can be arranged and assembled in any number of ways to make a religious
system; there is no necessary arrangement or normative template in place that Manichaeans
must defy to make something different. Nor should the Zoroastrian use of those materials be
taken as their normative or default meaning and purpose, one that existed prior to Mani's cre-
ative misprision of them. Instead, Manichaeans and their Zoroastrian peers were undertaking

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3   For passages regarding such other groups from Mani's *Gospel,* see Funk (2009, 115–27).

the same work of systemizing at the same time, working with the same raw materials, and creating from them alternate religious systems for the first time.

In what follows, therefore, sets of such raw materials will be briefly examined for their antecedent character as part of Iranian culture and for their respective redeployment in the two new and competing religions in third-century Iran.

[17]

Dualistic Universe

The overall dualistic worldview of Iranian religion is well attested in the centuries before Mani and Kerdīr, and is a dominant characteristic of the two interpretations of Iranian religion they represent. Even though Manichaean mythology retains traces of non-dualistic Jewish and Mesopotamian sources, these are overwritten in every case by a dualistic structure. Those who wish to argue that Manichaeism is essentially Judeo-Christian with only a veneer of Iranian elements cannot overcome this contrary fact. Likewise, even though Zoroastrian mythology retains traces of polytheistic complexity, this has been subordinated to a dualistic supremacy that had already asserted itself well before Sasanid times. Among contemporaneous sources for this are Diogenes Laertius, Proöm. 6.8 and Plutarch, de Iside 47 (König 2020). Yet, there is evidence for forms of Iranian religion that at least qualify and subordinate this dualism to a higher order: eternal time personified as Zurwān and as parent of both Ohrmazd and Ahriman (Rezania 2010; Zaehner 1971).[4] While probably not an organized alternative "orthodoxy," these non-dualist traditions were part of the larger Iranian religious culture that were explicitly rejected by both Zoroastrian and Manichaean authorities, who agreed in polemicizing against them (Skjærvø 1995a, 271–72).[5]

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Myth of Primordial Combat

The dualistic view of the universe shared by the Zoroastrian-Manichaean wing of Iranian religious culture includes close parallels between the two religions' myths of primordial combat between the forces of good and evil. Evil is in both cases the aggressor against a perfect world, and must be repelled, resulting in a "mixture" of both good and evil in our current world that needs to be distinguished and sorted out. This mixture permeates nature itself, and is not just a human moral feature. As Skjærvø points out, allusions to this myth are few and far between in Avestan materials; he cites *Videvdad* 22.1-2 as "the only Avestan reference to the myth" of Angra Mainyu catching sight of Ahura Mazda's realm and craving to possess it, which finds its full expression only in medieval Pahlavi texts such as *Bundahišn* 1.7, but is found in its essentials in third-century Manichaean sources (Skjærvø 1996, 604 and n26). Skjærvø notes additionally a reference to primordial combat in *Yašt* 13.76-78 where, "when the Evil Spirit passed through (into) the domain of good Order, Vohu Manah and the fire came down between. Those two overcame his aggressions" (Skjærvø 1996, IV:604–605). Similarly, in the Manichaean myth, the king of darkness faces off with the divine Primal Man and his five elements, of which he fashions fire into a weapon (2Ps 10.10-10; 1Ke 126.31-127.11, 129.6-12). The two myths differ, however, in the immediate outcome of this combat, with the forces of good victorious in the Zoroastrian version but (temporarily) defeated in the Manichaean

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4   The passage Zaehner provides from *Mēnōk i Xrat* (text Z 8, 367-368) provides perhaps the clearest and most succinct representation of this theological tendency, with a transcendent Zurvan overseeing and mediating the time-bound dualist conflict of Ohrmazd and Ahriman.

5   Cf. Zaehner's texts (1971) F3(a), 429-431, from the *Dēnkard*, and F3(b), 431-432, and F7(b), 439, from Manichaean texts.

one. Consequently, the Manichaean version of the myth jumps directly to the disintegration of a primordial animate being that provides the building blocks of the natural world: Primal Man himself. The Zoroastrian version of the myth has an interlude following the primordial combat, which resumes when Angra Mainyu recovers his aggression and attacks Gayomard, the disintegration of whose body produces the raw materials for the first humans and much else in the world (*Bundahišn* 14.1-6). A close reading of Avestan sources raises the possibility that the earlier form of the myth had a single assault of Angra Mainyu on the world created by Ahura Mazda. The fully developed Zoroastrian myth of Pahlavi literature has grafted in an earlier assault on the divine world, prior to the creation of this world, perhaps by appropriating elements of Manichaean myth.

Of course, many cultures of West Asia had a myth of primordial combat, whether set in   [20] a monotheistic, polytheistic, or dualistic conception of cosmic powers. Many specific details of the Manichaean myth show continuity with Mesopotamian myths, and others with Jewish para-biblical narratives, such as the Enoch corpus (which itself has points of continuity with Mesopotamian myths; see Reeves 1992, 1993). Ancient Iranian myths belonged to this larger West Asian mythological culture, with many common themes traceable from the Mediterranean to India. Avestan materials contain allusions to all sorts of mythic narratives, including, as one might expect, a number with themes of divine combat and conflict. It would be wildly anachronistic to imagine that they all fit seamlessly into a single standard, "official" mythology of the time. It has long been recognized in Zoroastrian Studies that this material represents traces of a rich and diverse polytheistic mythology that is not always identical to what came to be Zoroastrian "orthodoxy," and much of which shares mythic plots and themes with neighboring cultures.

Zoroastrians in the Sasanid period codified this antiquated, mostly hymnic material, includ-   [21] ing many mythic allusions that were no longer fully understood by the living tradition. By selecting portions of this cultural heritage to emphasize, elaborate, and read in light of their Late Antique "orthodoxy," they superimposed an "official" mythology upon it, just as the Manichaeans did. By the time this occurred, neither community was in a position to sort out an "original" Iranian myth from elements adopted from neighboring cultures; they worked with a mythological heritage that had a long history of cultural exchanges already, and made it into "Zoroastrian" or "Manichaean" myths. Mani and the Manichaeans actively sought connections with the myths of other cultures; the Zoroastrians might be credited with being more culturally purist, except for the testimony of the *Dēnkard*, which suggests to the contrary that, in the early Sasanid period, a similar multicultural appropriation was at work.[6] They were evidently less successful than the Manichaeans in crafting a monolithic official mythology, as indicated by the inconsistencies and disarray in medieval Zoroastrian sources. Perhaps it is anachronistic to assume they even tried to with any persistence; they may have been traditionalists in the sense of being more concerned with conformity of practice than doctrine. Much depends on the use to which the full Avesta as described in the *Dēnkard* was put, since what was carefully preserved through the traumas of the Islamic conquest represented only the core ritual *nasks* (individual books of the hypothetical complete Avesta discussed in later sources).

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6   On Shapur's collection of Avestan material, see Shaki (1981).

Pantheon

There has been a considerable amount of attention in previous studies to the Manichaean [22]
use of the Iranian pantheon and to the independent witness these sources may provide to a
"popular" pantheon outside of Zoroastrian control.[7] Both Manichaeism and Zoroastrianism
superimposed a hierarchy of divine order on an underlying Iranian polytheism. Here is not
the place to belabor the relative uselessness of "monotheism" as a term that captures how
anyone in the ancient world understood the universe to be governed. Most religious cultures
of Late Antique West Asia held the idea of a divine sovereign overseeing the work of many
divine subordinates, whether those were termed "gods" or "angels" or something else. Zoroas-
trianism and Manichaeism were not different in this regard. Both made selective use of an
older Iranian pantheon as suited their respective theologies, adjusting the definitions and
roles of specific deities within a coordinated divine order. That older pantheon is attested in
inscriptions and art from the Achaemenid, Seleucid, and Parthian periods, on Kushan coins
and inscriptions, and in evidence from the first century BCE for deities associated with the
months and days of the "Zoroastrian" calendar.[8]

The most significant difference between Zoroastrian and Manichaean interpretations of the [23]
Iranian pantheon is the latter's identification of Ohrmazd not as the supreme deity, but as the
agent of the divine that enters into dualistic combat with evil. A higher god stands behind
Ohrmazd, which in some contexts is identified by the name Zurwān (or its equivalent, e.g.,
Sogdian Azrua). This dyad of the father Zurwān and the son Ohrmazd is found already in
Mani's *Šābuhragān*.[9] The discovery of the Turfan texts containing this theology fed a hypoth-
esis about the existence of "Zurvanism" in Sasanid-era Zoroastrianism, supported by a small
number of other testimonies. There are a number of anomalies in Zoroastrian texts that might
reflect a background in older Iranian religion for Mani's theology.[10] But Skjærvø is correct to
point out that, in any case, other than using the name "Zurwān," Manichaeism has very little
to do with theology reconstructed for any supposed "Zurvanism" (Skjærvø 1995a, 269–72).

The proposition that "Zurvanism" represented a significant form of Iranian religion in late [24]
Antiquity was bolstered by the discovery of the same theological hierarchy in Sogdian transla-
tions of Buddhist texts, in which Azrua (= Zurwān) and Ohrmazd correspond with Brahma and
Indra, respectively, in the original Sanskrit source texts. This evidence has been interpreted
to mean that Sogdiana belonged to that non-dualist sphere of Iranian religious culture from
which "Zurvanite" traditions emanate (e.g., Zaehner 1971, 22). On the other hand, given the
late date of Sogdian Buddhist texts relative to the early and lasting presence of Manichaeism
among Sogdian populations, it could be that Buddhists relied on the Manichaean pantheon
in rendering their Indian gods into something familiar to Sogdians. It is important to note
that most Sogdian Buddhist texts appear to have been translated outside of Sogdiana, from
Chinese versions in the Tang period, rather than in Sogdiana directly from Indian originals
(Dresden 1983, 1221–4). It is not a matter, then, of an ancient Sogdian pantheon featuring

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7   Still the most important of these studies, due to its systematic analysis, is Sundermann (1979a).
8   On the latter, see Panaino (1990). While clearly reflecting a "Zoroastrian" hierarchy, and thus a theological
        distillation pre-dating Mani, the adaptation of the pantheon to the number of months and days imposed
        an arbitrary character on the selection; it includes a number of deities who have relatively minor places in
        Zoroastrianism, while omitting a dozen significant figures of Zoroastrian theology, as well as deities (e.g.,
        Anahita) highly prominent in the period.
9   MacKenzie (1979, 506, line 76), but the context is very damaged. In the cosmogonic section, "Ruler of
        Heaven" (whyštw šhry'r) is used instead (Hutter 1992).
10   Note, e.g., that Ohrmazd creates himself as the seventh *Amahraspandān*, suggestive of a duplication to
        replace another deity in an older form of the narrative (*Bundahišn* 1.53).

Zurwān and Ohrmazd with a recognized correlation in the Indian pantheon to Brahma and Indra from centuries of cultural contact. Rather, it appears to have been a situation where Buddhist missionaries, translating from Chinese Buddhist texts, sought appropriate identifications for the Indian gods in the contemporary medieval religious culture of the Sogdians—and that culture had a significant Manichaean component. If this is the case, then a major pillar of the "Zurvanism" hypothesis must be set aside; and it may have been due to Manichaeans that a Zurwān-Ohrmazd divine dyad was available to translators of Buddhist texts. Other Iranian religious leaders set about reducing Zurwān traditions to abstractions that would not threaten their primary dualism, with only traces of more personified versions of the entity preserved largely in polemics.

A wide array of other Iranian deities were incorporated into Iranian Manichaeism at one [25] stage or another. There is every reason to believe that Manichaeans were adopting these divine figures from broader Iranian regional pantheons, and not directly from the place they later would hold in a more systematized Zoroastrianism.[11] There remains a need to examine closely the different underlying pantheons reflected in the different roles assigned to Iranian gods in Middle Persian versus Parthian versus Sogdian Manichaean texts. Mani's own Middle Persian composition, the *Šābuhragān*, provides not only the earliest record of the Iranian identifications of the Manichaean pantheon, but even the founder's own understanding of how the deities he recognized related to the gods worshipped by the Iranians. These gods of the *Šābuhragān* include Zurwān (for the supreme god Father of Greatness), Ohrmizd (for the Primal Man), the Amahraspandān (for the five divine elements), including Frawahr for one of those elements, Mihr (i.e. Mithra, for the demiurge Living Spirit),[12] Nerisah (i.e. Nēryōsang, for the Third Messenger),[13] Gēhmurd (i.e. Gayōmard, for Adam), Murdyānag (i.e. Mašyānag, for Eve), and Ahrimēn (for the King of Darkness).

Other Iranian deities found in Manichaean texts include Ardawahišt (for one of the divine [26] elements in Sogdian texts), Wēšparkar[14] (for the Living Spirit in Sogdian texts), Wahrām (for the divine warrior Adamas in Sogdian texts), Spendārmad (for the ruler of the foundations of the earth, the King of Glory, in Sogdian texts), Srōš (for the Column of Glory in Middle Persian and Sogdian texts), Sadwēs (for the Maiden of Light in Parthian texts), and Wahman (for the Light Nous in Middle Persian and Sogdian texts). From its relative absence from this second list, it becomes clear that Parthian Manichaean literature displays an intriguing independence; for the most part, it only carries over the identifications made by Mani in the *Šābuhragān* (Zurwān, Ohrmized, Frawahr, Nerisaf, Mihr, Gēhmurd, and Ahrimēn), and does not expand upon them by drawing in more Iranian gods the way Middle Persian and Sogdian Manichaean literature does. Parthian Manichaeans preferred to use descriptor titles for the gods, often direct translations of Mani's Syriac titles, rather than names drawn from the Iranian pantheon. We

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11   The evidence of the Kushan pantheon is crucial here, with Rosenfield (1967, 82) arguing that their identification as "Zoroastrian deities" is misleading and should be discarded. Rather, they represent a broader Iranian religious culture. Kanishka I's coinage, offering by far the largest catalog, includes Miiro (Mihr, as sun god), Mao (Mah), Oado (Vāta), Athsho (Atash), Nana, Oesho (Vāyu), Ardoxsho, Ashaeixsho, Lrooaspo, Manaobago, Oanindo, Oaxsho, Oshragno, Pharro, Rishto, Shaoreoro, Iamsho, and on a single surviving example, Mozdooano [Mazda Vano, "Mazda the Triumphant," see Tanabe (1995), p. 206]. See Carter (2006).

12   Mithra does not have a demiurgical role in Avestan materials, but Porphyry, de antro nymph. 6, reports such a role for him, and Hellenistic-Roman Mithras imagery suggests mythic traditions of such a demiurgical character rather close to Living Spirit material in Manichaean myths.

13   By which choice Mani appears to show familiarity with traditions of the desirable beauty of this Iranian messenger god and his association with reproductive drives and substances. See *Bundahišn* 35.59-60; 14.5.

14   Humbach (1975) argues for the derivation of this prominent Sogdian deity from Avestan *Vaiiuš uparō.kairiiō*, a form of the god Vayu ("Vayu who acts in the heights").

cannot say whether this tells us something significant about pre-Manichaean Parthian religious culture or reflects a peculiar preference of the leadership of the Manichaean mission to Parthia (initially, Mani's disciple Ammo). Parthian Manichaean literature also diverges from its Middle Persian cousin in one key character of the Iranian pantheon, even defying Mani's own identification of Mithra with the demiurgical Living Spirit, and instead recognizing in Mithra the sun god Third Messenger. This divergence has been plausibly connected to cultural differences between Parthians and Persians on the role ascribed to Mithra (Boyce 1962).[15]

The theory that all these Iranian deities in Manichaean texts amount to mere window-dressing and missionary cultural accommodation fails to take into account Mani's own declarations about his relationship to prior religious traditions. In crediting "Zarades" with establishing the "truly-founded law" in Persia, the same law "truly-founded" by other messengers of God, including himself, Mani credits the Iranian pantheon with revealing at least in part the administrators of the universe. He assumes that some distortions and misunderstandings of their identities and roles have arisen in the process of transmission over time; but his own identifications and clarifications address and resolve that problem. As Mary Boyce explains,   [27]

> Mani, believing as he did that the prophets who were his forerunners had taught   [28]
> the truth, necessarily also thought that the gods whom they had preached were
> true gods, made known to diverse people under different names. The "translation"
> of the names of Manichaean gods by those of other deities must therefore be held
> an attempt by him to discover his own gods under their older, local guises. (Boyce
> 1962, 44)

In short, Mani's own teachings affirm the reality and worthy-of-worship status of these traditional Iranian deities, just as Zoroastrianism does. He highlights certain features of their identity in the existing lore, and selects mythic material regarding them, redacting it according to his religious views, just as Zoroastrian leaders did in their own work systematizing Iranian theology within a system where they were subordinate to Ahura Mazda and were made to embody the values of "Zoroastrianism." Iranian people, won to Mani's faith, brought with them additional popular understandings and mythologies of particular deities, which at times overpowered the deity's officially-sanctioned place and role, just as occurred in the Zoroastrian tradition. Both religions are heirs to a prior Iranian assortment of gods, which they seek to interpret in line with their respective theologies.   [29]

Veneration and Ritual Support of Natural Elements

Both Manichaeans and Zoroastrians have strict rules about contact with natural elements, believe that one contracts damning sin by polluting the elements, and do ritual work to support those natural elements. Fire and water in particular are ritually fed in the Zoroastrian *ātaš-zōhr* and *āb-zōhr* rituals (Boyce 1966). These rituals were also known and explicitly referred to by the Manichaeans, e.g. in the ritual script, *Gwyšn 'yg gryw zyndg*. The latter text explicates older Iranian ritual traditions in terms of the divinity of the elements and the identification of oneself with their plight.   [30]

> I am the fire which Zardrušt built, and which he bade the righteous build. From the   [31]

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15   Parthian identification of Mithra with the sun may be reflected in the report of Strabo, *Geographica* 15.13.732. He appears as a solar deity in Kushan coinage and, indeed, already on Greco-Bactrian coins. Moreover, he appears with solar attributes in official Sasanid reliefs and coins, and on Sasanian period seals (see Grenet 2006).

> seven consecrated, sweet-smelling fires bring to me, the fire, purified fuel. Bring
> clean firewood, and delicate and fragrant incense. Kindle me with knowledge, and
> give me clean *zōhr*. I am the water which is fit that you should give me the *āb-zōhr*,
> that I may become strong. (M 95.v.1-12; Andreas and Henning 1933, 317–18)

Previously, one might have contended that such references arose in Manichaeism as it in-   [32]
teracted and competed with "Zoroastrianism" in Iran in the centuries following Mani. New
evidence, however, suggests otherwise.

The Chester Beatty Kephalaia contains reports of Mani's teaching activity that similarly   [33]
references these rituals. A judge named Adurbat, who holds court "outside the gate of the
fire temple," speaks of the *ātaš-zōhr* and *āb-zōhr* rituals, saying, "We ourselves also gather the
sticks and the [flowers (?)] […] and we speak over them and we give power […] the fires
and the waters" (2Ke 358.12-359.12; Gardner, BeDuhn, and Dilley 2018, 36–39). The passage
goes on to speak about ritual acts connected to maintaining a consecrated fire, of which Mani
gives an esoteric interpretation (2Ke 360.25-364.3; Gardner, BeDuhn, and Dilley 2018, 40–
49). The contents of this late fourth-century Coptic codex, while certainly hagiographical and
idealized, go back to stories about Mani already set down in writing and put into circulation
in the late third century. The transmission of such material even in settings where it had
no missionary value, and would not even be fully understood outside of the Iranian context,
demonstrates that it does not represent a local cultural adaptation but concepts considered
core to Manichaean teaching.

Rather than see these rituals as integral parts of an organized "Zoroastrian church," appro-   [34]
priated and reinterpreted by Manichaeans as parasitical heretics, we need to consider them as
traditional Iranian religious practices that both religions took up and fit into their developing
ritual and ideological systems. After all, *Yašt* 5.8 associates the *āb-zōhr* with the worship of
Anāhitā, and there is every reason to consider it a traditional rite of that deity appropriated
and incorporated into Zoroastrianism. This rite is attested in an Avestan passage quoted in
Nērangestān 2.30, concerned with technical details of its proper performance. The Middle Per-
sian *Nērangestān* illustrates how a Sasanid-period (or later) commentator quoted ritual rules
and procedures from an Avestan source (or sources), and commented and expanded upon
them to fit them into a system of orthopraxis, quite evidently altering the sense of the origi-
nal in many cases to produce a different understanding of proper procedure (see Kotwal and
Kreyenbroek 1995–2009).[16] The Avestan material embedded in the text corresponds with the
type of priestly ritual instructions found in ancient Mesopotamian texts, as well as in Indian
ritual manuals and commentary. The *Nērangestān* itself is more akin to the *Mishnah*, by which
older Jewish ritual practices were recalled, codified, and commented upon as a means of
standardizing the practice of "Judaism."

Mani, too, undertook a process of codifying and commenting upon older ritual practices   [35]
from Iranian culture. He preserved the meaning and significance of such rituals as constituting
aid to the divine elements, but he subsumed the actual ritual acts of sacrificial libation within
a ritual meal; the divine elements take the form of food, and are strengthened by passing
through the Manichaean priests, the Elect, who consume the food. Since the *ātaš-zōhr* and
āb-zōhr as preserved in Zoroastrian practice include the consumption of part of the offering
by the priests performing the ritual, Mani's ritual reform can be seen as merely emphasizing
that part of the ritual (due to comparison to other regional ritual meals) at the expense of

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16   On the question of the date of the composition, see Kotwal and Kreyenbroek (1995–2009, III:17–18).

the accompanying libations directly to fire and water (BeDuhn 2000). Mani understood such ritual reform to be necessary, convinced that in their traditional form the rituals had become corrupted and useless (1Ke 217.2-20).

The retention of the traditional rites more or less in their ancient Iranian form can be seen as one of the principal points of separation between an emergent Manichaeism and an emergent Zoroastrianism. Kerdīr, in his inscription, appears to report his efforts to confirm the validity of the traditional rites as efficacious, implicitly in the face of those, such as the Manichaeans, who had declared them worthless or misunderstood. The inscription therefore attests the formation of a defined "traditionalist" reaction to ritual innovation, which was beginning to consolidate itself as the "Zoroastrian" religion, by reacting against the new prophet Mani and his claims to better understand the intentions of the cultural hero Zarathustra. To resist Mani's interpretations, some subset of the traditional priests had to organize, systematize, and justify those practices they wished to maintain. [36]

Use and Interpretation of Iranian Religious Literature

Kerdīr, in his inscription, appears to refer to a "nask," a sacred text (Skjærvø 1983, 276, 290–91), and a similar reference to a "nask" is made in the early Manichaean texts, e.g. in an account of Mani's exchange with King Bahram and in the *Sermon on the Soul* (Sundermann 1981, 72, 1997a, 76–81). Both traditions draw on this earlier Iranian religious literature, interpreting and applying it. For Kerdīr, it provides an antecedent to his own investigations of the other world, apparently in its descriptions of that other world. For the Manichaean *Sermon on the Soul*, the "nask" contains the five Gāthās, each correlated to one of the five "children of Ohrmazd," who constitute the natural elements: the air called Frawardin is "called in the Nask the Ahunavaiti-Gāthā (*'whnwyt g'ḥ*)," the wind is "called in the Nask the Uštavaiti-Gāthā (*'wyštwyt g'ḥ*)," the light is "called in the Nask the [Spəntamaniiuš-Gāthā?]," the water is "called in the Nask the Vohuxšathra-Gāthā (*whwxštr g'ḥ*)," the fire is "called in the Nask the [Vahištoišti-Gāthā?]" (Sundermann 1997a, 76–81). This Parthian Manichaean composition, which there is good reason to date to the third century, thus attests by that date the well-established reverence for the five Gāthās as a canonical set contained within a "nask" or "nasks" that might be referenced elsewhere in Manichaean literature as "the books of Zaradēs." [37]

The exact meaning of such Avestan ritual texts was already obscure in Sasanid times, as the Middle Persian glosses make evident (Skjærvø 1995a, 265–6). As Pallan Ichaporia has demonstrated, the creators of the Pahlavi "translations" misunderstood much of the language of the *gāthās*, or perhaps creatively read into them their own later religious culture (Ichaporia 2006). In these conditions, Manichaeans were as free as Zoroastrians to make what sense of these obscure chants they could, and to employ them in whatever ritual context they thought appropriate. Before we dismiss the associations made by the *Sermon on the Soul* between specific *gāthās* and elements as arbitrary, we should investigate a possible ritual basis for them known to third-century Iranian religious practice but lost to later Zoroastrian tradition. We owe to a later Arab Muslim writer the suggestion that Manichaeans were called Zandiks because they supplied an interpretation (*zand*) to the gathic texts that their religious rivals—that "traditionalist" reaction referred to above—chose to recite verbatim without interpretation.[17] For some parts of their tradition, at least, Zoroastrians were learning, memorizing, and recit- [38]

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17   This understanding of the term is found in Ma'sūdī (Reeves 2011, 167), Ibn al-Āthīr (Reeves 2011, 186), Nuwayrī (Reeves 2011, 188); cf. remarks of Sam'ānī (Reeves 2011, 104).

ing Avestan texts without even an oral instruction to elucidate their meaning (Skjærvø 1997, 319–21).

In other Manichaean texts, we see reflections of particular passages of the Gāthās, Yašts, and other Avestan literature. They were apparently quite capable of simply transmitting and using traditional Avestan texts, such as the *Ashem vohu* prayer, preserved in a Sogdian Manichaean text, as recognized by Ilya Gershevitch (Gershevitch 1976). The "Complaint of the Cow" of *Yasna* 29 appears to lie behind an allusion in the Coptic *Psalms of Thomas* 20 (Allberry 1938, 226–27). Werner Sundermann ingeniously demonstrated that Mani knew *Yašt* 10 in a Middle Persian version, based on the *Šābuhragān*'s identification of four of the five sons of the deity Living Spirit (Mihr) by epithets associated with Mihr in *Yašt* 10.115, not in their Avestan form, but in their Middle Persian equivalents: *mānbed, wisbed, zandbed, dahybed* (Sundermann 1979b). This discovery supports Skjærvø's view that Middle Persian versions of the Avestan texts were set down in writing by the early Sasanid period even before the original Avestan ones were, later in the fifth or sixth century CE (Skjærvø 1997, 319–21). He argues that, when Kerdīr cites "the nask" in Middle Persian in his inscriptions, he is quoting directly from such vernacular versions of the Avestan texts, which were the ones that could actually be read for their sense, not just recited by rote, as the original Avestan ones were. This view of the transmission history of Avestan texts is further supported by references in both Manichaean Kephalaia volumes to books holding traditions of the teachings of Zarathustra. In the Chester Beatty Kephalaia, interlocutors of Mani quote "written" words of Zarathustra and ask Mani to interpret them (2Ke 415.25-417.14; Gardner, BeDuhn, and Dilley 2018, 150–55).

But were these texts identical to those that became canonical in Zoroastrianism? The words of Zarathustra quoted in the Chester Beatty Kephalaia do not seem to correspond to anything preserved in Zoroastrian literature. Moreover, as mentioned, Mani's identification of the five sons of the Living Spirit correspond only in four out of five cases with the epithets of Mihr in *Yašt* 10.115; it diverges on the fifth. Mani's fifth term is *pāhragbed*, "head of the frontier post," whereas in the Zoroastrian version of the *Yašt* the fifth epithet is *zarathuštrōtəma* in Avestan, and in Middle Persian would have been *Zarduštrōtum* (the Middle Persian of *Yašt* 10 is not preserved), the one who carries the aegis of Zarathustra.[18] Sundermann assumes that Mani changed a source corresponding to a Middle Persian rendering of the current Zoroastrian Avestan text (*Zarduštrōtum* > *pāhragbed*; Sundermann 1979b, 785, cf. 1997b, 345). But it is also possible that Mani preserved the wording of the version of the *Yašt* known to him. He follows the exact order of terms, even though it forces an unusual sequence of the five sons of the Living Spirit. In the context of praise of Mihr, Mani's wording has a more consistent sense (i.e., Mihr as "lord of wide pastures" is "head of the house, head of the clan, head of the tribe, head of the country, head of the frontier post" vs. "head of the house, head of the clan, head of the tribe, head of the country, Zarathustra-bearer"). In light of parallel references to a corresponding five ranks of authority elsewhere in Avestan literature that differ precisely in the fifth term,[19] an alteration of "head of the frontier post" to "Zarathustra-bearer" would then be a Zoroastrian redaction of this passage of the *Yašt*, perhaps under the influence of a parallel passage from *Yasna* 19.18 (cf. 71.22), which in its Middle Persian version uses the five

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18   Sundermann bases this hypothetical reconstruction on a structurally parallel passage in the Middle Persian version of Yasna 19.18 (1979b, 784–85).

19   It is typical for the fifth term to vary: see *Yasna* 9.27; 13.1. Most significantly, the fifth term varies elsewhere in the *Mihr Yašt* (10.18; 10.87) where it is a secular governing figure, as the other four are.

epithets with *Zardušt* as the fifth term in a context not related to Mihr.[20] In other words, we cannot assume that where Manichaean and Zoroastrian versions of Avestan passages differ, the (medieval) Zoroastrian texts always preserve the original reading.

Zarathustra

Manichaeans knew traditions of Zarathustra as the ritual hero of Iranian culture. In Manichaean hands, these stories are not only recounted through the lens of Manichaean views, but begin to fashion a hagiography of Zarathustra as a prophet to the Iranian people earlier than similar developments in the Zoroastrian religion.[21] As in many younger Avestan texts and the content summarized from the Sasanid Avesta in medieval Zoroastrian literature, Zarathustra has question-and-answer dialogues with God in Manichaean texts. But, in the fashion of ancient Near Eastern wisdom literature, he also has a dialogue with his own soul (which reveals both its divine identity and its identification with all souls; see Asmussen 1975, 47–49). Manichaean texts, like Zoroastrian ones, report his confrontation with evil opponents in Babylon (Hom 11).[22] Skjærvø scours both Greek and Pahlavi sources for comparable stories, but connections are tangential at best. Only *Dēnkard* 7.4.72 alludes to Zarathustra destroying the sorcery and idolatry created by the dragon Dahāg in Babylon (Skjærvø 1995b, 611). He handles fire without himself being burned by it (2Ke 363.2-3; Gardner, BeDuhn, and Dilley 2018, 46–47). His death and funeral are alluded to (Hom 68-70). Zarathustra's associates also find mention, including Vīštāspa/Hystaspes,[23] his queen Hudōs (T II D 58; Henning 1943, 73–74), and Jāmāsp (TM 393; Henning 1944, 141). A fascinating aspect of this construction of Zarathustra as a full-bodied prophet is the explicit comparison Manichaeans made between his teachings and those of other prophet figures, such as Jesus (2Ke 415.25-420.28; Gardner, BeDuhn, and Dilley 2018, 150–61). The Manichaeans crafted an anachronistic depiction of him founding a "church," choosing "disciples," and introducing rites (2Ke 362.1-363.25; Gardner, BeDuhn, and Dilley 2018, 44–47)—a "Mani before Mani" or "Jesus before Jesus" (Sundermann 2005, 66). Zoroastrianism followed suit, similarly turning their legendary priest-preceptor into a "prophet," while carefully highlighting or inventing aspects of his image in reaction to Manichaeism to make clear his advocacy of anti-Manichaean values connected to hearth and home (Hutter 2009).

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Heroic Legend

It has recently become increasingly evident that early Manichaeans also took up the broader set of Iranian heroic legends, perhaps already with Mani's own *Book of Giants*. It must be noted that Skjærvø was not in a position to confirm that these Iranian heroes had any place

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20 The underlying Avestan passage must be corrupt, with *zarathuštrō* instead of the expected *zarathuštrōtəma*. Cf. Bivar (1988), who argues that *Zarduštrōtum* in the Middle Persian five ranks passages is a Zoroastrian interpretation/substitution for an original fifth secular administrative title, *xšathra-pati*. This very term (in the form 'xšyšpt) appears to have been used in Sogdian Manichaean versions of these titles for the five sons of the Living Spirit (Humbach and Skjærvø 1983, 100). I owe both of these references to the Addenda et Corrigenda appended to Sundermann (1979b), in its reprint in Reck (2001, 811).

21 E.g. the *Čīdag andarz ī pōryōtkēšān Pandnāmag ī Zardušt* and *Dēnkard* book 7. See Sundermann 1997a, 24, regarding his view that such literature follows and borrows from Manichaean precedents in some of its elements.

22 See also the Turfan fragment T II D 175/U4 discussed in Skjærvø 1995b, 618-620; cf. *Dēnkard* 4.72.

23 E.g. 1Ke 7.27-33 and 12.16-19; Hom 70.2-15; as well as an unpublished passage from the Chester Beatty Kephalaia.

in Mani's own writings; all that was certain twenty years ago is that Iranian translations of Mani's *Book of Giants* used the names of Iranian heroes in place of originally Semitic names, and this could have been simply a matter of cultural translation for Iranian audiences of a narrative that owed nothing to prior Iranian traditions. Only in recent years has Enrico Morano published additional fragments of Mani's *Book of Giants* that confirm that the Iranian heroic narratives themselves played a role in that book (Morano 2009). Confirmation of this engagement with the Iranian heroic tradition from the inception of Manichaeism, and not merely as a regional adaptation, comes, quite surprisingly, from the Coptic Chester Beatty Kephalaia, which contains a detailed recounting of the legend of King Khusrau's abdication of his throne in quest of Paradise, best known from the *Shah-nama*, but now in a text some five centuries earlier than the medieval Iranian epic. It bears noting that orthodox Zoroastrianism never had much use for many of these figures; they remained marginal intruders from popular Iranian culture.

Skjærvø has demonstrated that Manichaean Sogdian fragments preserve a version of a legend about Vīštāspa, his brother Zarēr, and the counselor Žāmāsp found in the Zoroastrian text *Ayādgār-ī Zarērān* (Skjærvø 1995b, 614–18). Although Skjærvø attributes the wide divergences between the Manichaean and Zoroastrian versions to "Mani, who distorted it to suit his own version of mythical history," the differences look more like the sort of changes typical of orally transmitted narratives. Key dramatic acts are retained, but the role of characters in connection with those acts shift and even invert. Whereas in the Zoroastrian tale the three aforementioned characters are all arrayed on one side against the evil hordes of the Xyōns, in the Manichaean version Zarēr and Žāmāsp oppose Vīštāspa and Zarathustra. Here again, we cannot assume either that the Zoroastrian version is older than the Manichaean one or that there is always an ideological motive for variations in traditional material. [43]

Ethos

Even though both Manichaeism and Zoroastrianism share a theoretical dualism, how they apply that dualism to rules of conduct in the world differs considerably. Both religions employ the structural moral triad of "thought, speech, action," which of course goes back to the Gāthās that they shared. The difference lies in the specific content of moral injunctions included in each category. Zoroastrian polemical literature strongly vilifies Manichaean asceticism. Besides the sharp division over sexuality, Manichaeans differed from Zoroastrians in how to apply antecedent Iranian traditions about the sanctity of life. Those traditions included reverence and protection of "good animals," such as cattle and otters, and Manichaeans extended this attitude to all animals, while Zoroastrians identified a category of "bad animals," the *khrafstra*, whom they would systematically slaughter as a manifestation of Ahriman. The confrontation of these two views is expressed in two stories in the Chester Beatty Kephalaia. In one, Mani encounters and confronts the slaughter of a wolf as part of a festival *khrafstra* hunt (2Ke 345.10-350.13; Gardner, BeDuhn, and Dilley 2018, 10–21; cf. Henning 1945, 476–77). In another, the aforementioned tale of King Khusrau, the latter's companion Iuzanes (= Vēžan) asks about this Paradise to which Khusrau wishes to go: "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?" To which the king replies, "There is not a single one of these things in that place" (BeDuhn 2015a). This passage encapsulates the Manichaean critique of popular Iranian values. [44]

Of course, there were ascetic strands in broader Iranian culture that even worked their [45]

way into some branches within medieval Zoroastrianism, where they were sharply contested. Buried deep within Zoroastrian literature are hints of attitudes closer to those of the Manichaeans. At the coming of the future restorer Hōšēdarmāh, Zoroastrians expect humankind to give up killing and eating animals (*Dēnkard* 7.10; *Bundahišn* 34.2), exactly as Mani espoused. Here, too, rather than assume Mani imposed a reversal of values on Iranian traditions, we need to consider how both Manichaeans and Zoroastrians chose to emphasize certain elements from a complex and ambivalent antecedent religious culture. One might even suggest that their competitive origins contributed to their emphasis of different elements as a means of demarcation and differentiation.

Eschatology

Mani correlated Judeo-Christian and Iranian eschatological traditions in his *Šābuhragān*. Of course, it has been long accepted that Judeo-Christian eschatology already reflects the influence of Iranian eschatological traditions. On the basis of the latter, both Manichaeism and Zoroastrianism posit an immediate post-mortem judgment unknown to orthodox Judaism and Christianity at the time, as well as the idea held in common by all four religions of an eschatological final reformation of the world. We are still in need of a careful comparison of these different strands of eschatology in Late Antique West Asia, including a convincing account of how an immediate post-mortem judgment like that found in Zoroastrianism and Manichaeism came to be added to Christian eschatology that did not originally have it. We have the advantage that Kerdīr includes an account of a visionary journey that emulates the path of the dead; it differs in a number of details from later orthodox Zoroastrian descriptions, and in some details it is closer to Manichaean accounts (see Skjærvø 1983). Especially notable is a judgment before an enthroned "prince" (*šahryār*) who measures the deceased's deeds with scales. This figure corresponds with Rašn in later Zoroastrian literature (e.g., *Mēnōy-ī Xrad* 1.118-120; *Ardā Wirāz-nāmag* 5.5), and the Great Judge in Manichaean teachings; but no such figure or weighing in scales appears in Avestan texts, and it appears to be borrowed from western religious culture—via the Manichaeans? Once again, we see a formative stage where older Iranian traditions are being parsed in different ways by different emerging communities of interpretation. In all such cases, we need to refrain from treating either Mani or Kerdīr as the norm from which the respective other deviates, but do what we can to determine possible earlier Iranian traditions from which both lines of interpretation and application may derive.

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   The idea of an immediate post-mortem judgment appears already in Avestan literature, even though many of its details appear in medieval Zoroastrian texts for the first time. The recently discovered tomb of the Sogdian couple Wirkak and Wiyusi from Xi'an provides significant confirmation of the existence of some of these elements by the sixth century (Gulácsi and BeDuhn 2012). Similar ideas of post-mortem judgment were embedded deeply in Hellenic and Hellenistic culture, however. In the century or two before Plato, "Orphic" groups had transformed older notions of judgments, rewards, and punishments awaiting the special dead into afterlife experiences everyone should expect at death, offering guides and remedies for avoiding possible bad outcomes.[24] Plato's inclusion of these ideas in his works spread the belief in intellectual circles. His *Gorgias* speaks of "suffering throughout eternity the greatest and most excruciating and terrifying tortures because of their misdeeds," following judgment

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24   These ideas of post-mortem judgment, followed by reward and punishment, are found, for example, in the fifth century BCE in Pindar's *Second Olympian Ode*, 58-68, and in Aristophanes's *Frogs*, 452-477.

after death (525c-526d), while his Myth of Er (*Republic* 614b-621d) combined judgment, punishment, and transmigration. Jewish and Christian accounts of judgment of the dead made use of this imagery for eschatological judgment, even before embracing the idea of an immediate post-mortem judgment, however much in tension with their earlier views. The *Apocalypse of Paul*, whose original date is debated,[25] has the rewards and punishments doled out by a "just judge" immediately after death, as in Manichaean belief. Michel Tardieu has argued that both Manichaean and Zoroastrian accounts of judgment in Late Antiquity derive some of their crucial details from this long-standing Hellenistic tradition, via Christian apocalyptic literature (Tardieu 1985). If that argument proves persuasive, the next question to investigate is whether both Manichaeans and Zoroastrians adopted these ideas directly and independently from western sources, or if one of them was the mediator of the ideas to the other. If Tardieu is correct that Christian apocalyptic literature serves as the primary source, then it would be much more likely that Manichaeans mediated the material to Zoroastrians, rather than the reverse.

Conclusions

This survey, therefore, both invites further investigation into Manichaean use of Iranian traditions and cautions against approaching that subject through the assumption that our medieval Zoroastrian sources give us a reliable picture of what those traditions looked like already before Mani. This reorientation in our approach parallels recent developments in the study of Christian origins. In the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, historians relied heavily on Rabbinic literature to reconstruct the Jewish religion from which Christianity developed and diverged. Only in the last generation have more and more researchers come to realize that Rabbinic texts are well removed from earlier conditions, and that Judaism and Christianity co-developed in the first half-millennium CE, both making use of prior Israelite religious traditions.   [48]

    In light of this dawning awareness, we can begin to think of Zoroastrianism as something that came into existence as a nativist and traditionalist reaction to conditions of religious options and innovations that existed in the third century. Like Judaism developing against the challenge of Christianity, or Hinduism developing against the challenge of Buddhism, such a nativist and traditionalist reaction has the quality of reinforcing the traditional interchangeability of religious and ethnic identity. Any "converts" must be incorporated into the ethnicity, not just into a theoretically separable "religion." The Zoroastrian "religion" emerged through a process in the third to seventh centuries CE out of the traditional religious practices of Iranian culture, in self-conscious response to the presence and challenge of alternative religious identities. Third-century Iranian religious leaders found themselves caught in the middle of the cultural tensions that exist within multi-ethnic and multi-cultural empires, such as the new Sasanid Empire was. The traditional local priesthoods could parlay their existing status into access to imperial power. This can be seen clearly in the rise to power described in Kerdīr's inscriptions. Although he repeatedly claimed being given absolute authority over religious rites, he acknowledged a progression of becoming 'more absolute' from reign to   [49]

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25   For an introduction and translation, see Hennecke and Schneemelcher (1965, 755–98). Most versions contain an account of the miraculous discovery of the text in 388 CE; but this passage is lacking in the Coptic version and is moveable in other versions (at the end of the Syriac and the beginning of Greek and Latin versions), and may be a secondary addition to a text possibly already known to Origen in the first half of the third century (see Himmelfarb 1983, 16–19).

reign, acquiring higher titles, and only eventually being given authority over some of the key traditional pilgrimage and ritual sites of the empire. Aligned with state power, Kerdīr could aspire to suppress alternative religious practices and even to impose the native Iranian 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 an emergent "Zoroastrianism."

That which later Zoroastrian tradition describes as the gathering of scattered fragments of their sacred literature in the Sasanid period needs to be understood as the formative process of Zoroastrianism against the background of cultural materials they were selecting and codifying. As with any new religion or reform, they imagined a past they were simply rediscovering and reinstituting, projecting their own situation and needs onto their cultural forebears. Read in that light, the Zoroastrian account is quite informative. Still, we must be cautious about picturing a highly centralized and organized process until very late in Sasanid history. Notoriously, the later tradition celebrates a certain Tansar wholly missing from inscriptions, while the loudest voice in the inscriptions, Kerdīr, is completely absent from the later tradition. We now recognize that a precise written form of Avestan texts was undertaken only later in the Sasanid era, and the supposedly ancient content of those texts shows signs of redaction and interpolation, even fresh if stilted composition, right up to the end of that era. [50]

Manichaean sources, including the newly edited material highlighted here, put us in a new position with regard to reconstructing and understanding the state of Iranian religion in the third century, and extrapolating from that which aspects go back to earlier centuries and which arose in the process of forming two rival religions on the basis of those earlier traditions. That material should be taken full advantage of by those working on the history of Zoroastrianism, and of broader Iranian religious culture, even if they hesitate to embrace the particular historical argument of this article. [51]

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Teaching with Images among the Jews and Manichaeans of Late Antique Mesopotamia

A Comparison of Doctrinal Content, Didactic Function, and Oral Context

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ABSTRACT Although much has been written about the art of the famous synagogue at Dura-Europos, its rootedness in Mesopotamia has gone largely unexplored. This study looks south along the local trade routes to Iranian Babylonia and examines evidence available about the religious function of Durian Jewish and Sasanian Manichaean pictorial art as part of a shared regional development of techniques of instruction. It reveals that the distinctly different forms of pictorial art used by these two communities in mid-third-century Mesopotamia are nevertheless comparable based on their didactic function. They both: (1) displayed a visual library of doctrinal subjects, that is, they captured, in pictorial form, a large sample of core tenets which were also recorded in the respective sacred texts of these religions; (2) fulfilled a primarily didactic function, that is, their pictorial genres (narrative scenes, didactic portraits, and diagrams in the Manichaean case) played a dominantly instructional role; and (3) effectively supplemented oral instruction, that is, the paintings were sermonized about and discussed in light of living interpretations. I argue that these correlations result not from direct influence between the two communities, but rather from a shared approach to what images can do for a religion. The Jewish and Manichaean paintings in question emerged simultaneously and in relative closeness to one another. While the Jewish archeological records of the painted synagogue are all but silent, various characteristics of the mid-third-century Manichaean paintings are noted in literary records, including what they portrayed and, most importantly for this study, the pedagogical reasons for how and why they were used. As evidenced by Iranian, Coptic, and Syriac textual sources from between the mid-third and the late fourth and early fifth centuries, the founding prophet of Manichaeism, Mani (active from 240 to 274/277 CE), not only wrote down his own teachings, but also created visual representations of them on a solely pictorial scroll—the *Book of Pictures*—that he and his highest-ranking elects used in the course of oral instructions while missionizing across greater West Asia and the East Mediterranean region.

KEYWORDS Dura-Europos, synagogue, Mani, Book of Pictures, Mesopotamia, religious art, murals, book paintings, function of art

Introduction[1]

The question of Mesopotamian rootedness has been on the minds of scholars of ancient Judaism who worked on the Dura synagogue. Its exploration, however, rarely has gone beyond the walls of the city. Recently, it was addressed by Lee Levine in his *Visual Judaism in Late Antiquity*. Levine stresses that the stunning pictorial program of the Dura synagogue that emerged with the renovation of the building in 244/45 CE owed its existence to its local cultural heritage and dedicates an entire chapter to it under the title "Eastern Religious Setting." Levine's focus stays within the city and on three places of worship—the synagogue, the church, and the Mithraeum—since these portrayed doctrinal teachings on their walls:

[1]

> …each emphasizing something of the adherents' own historical or mythological heritage. […] These religious communities—all relative newcomers to Dura, emerging under Roman rule—built or refurbished their buildings at the same time, each using a decorative scheme that highlights its particular *Heilsgeschichte*, its sacred icons or symbols […], its god and his *aretai*. (Levine 2012, 78–79)

[2]

Skeptical of explanations speculating about conflict and/or competition among these communities, Levine is inclined to see some other "stimulus," stemming from the "unique configuration of religious cults at Dura," as the catalyst behind the decision to add narrative panels to the synagogue's meeting hall, the exploration of which is beyond the scope of his study.

[3]

The local stimulus alluded to by Levine was greater than Roman Dura and had a broader regional character that did not stop at the often changing and economically and culturally porous eastern border of the Roman Empire. Besides Semitic, Greek, and Roman elements, it included defining Iranian traits, which were more dominant in the southern, Sasanian-held regions of Mesopotamia. I argue that the exploration of the "eastern religious setting" does more justice to the Mesopotamian context of the Dura synagogue when it is extended—beyond the city's church and Mithraeum—further south along the local trade routes to include the artistic culture of another religion, Manichaeism, that emerged with a doctrinal and entirely didactic pictorial program roughly simultaneously (in the year 240 CE) and in relative spatial closeness to Dura (about a ten-day walking distance from it, Fig. 1) in and around the Sasanian capital city of (Greek) Ctesiphon / (Parthian) Ṭīsfūn (Perkins 1973, 3–4).

[4]

Numerous reasons call for bringing third-century Manichaean art to bear on understanding the Jewish murals at Dura in their Mesopotamian context. In addition to writing down his own teaching, the founding prophet of the Manichaean religion, Mani (active from 240 to 274 or 277 CE), authored visual representations of them in a solely pictorial scroll—the *Book of Pictures*. The images of this scroll depicted Mani's doctrine about soteriology, prophetology, theology, cosmology, and eschatology in diagrams, narrative scenes, and didactic portraits of deities. Fitting the itinerant lifestyle of Mani and his missionary elects, this portable work of art and its contemporaneous copies were used in the course of oral instructions while proselytizing across Mesopotamia, the Eastern Mediterranean, West Central Asia, and northern India. At the same time, the Jews at Dura renovated their synagogue, apparently in 244/245CE. They added a pictorial program to their meeting hall by covering its four walls with narrative panels, encircling the community in three dense registers of figural art. Independently of one

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1   A condensed version of this study was invited for publication in a thematic volume of the *Journal of Ancient Judaism* under the title "Visual Catechism in Third-century Mesopotamia: Reassessing the Pictorial Program of the Dura-Europos Synagogue in light of Mani's *Book of Pictures*" (Gulácsi 2018).
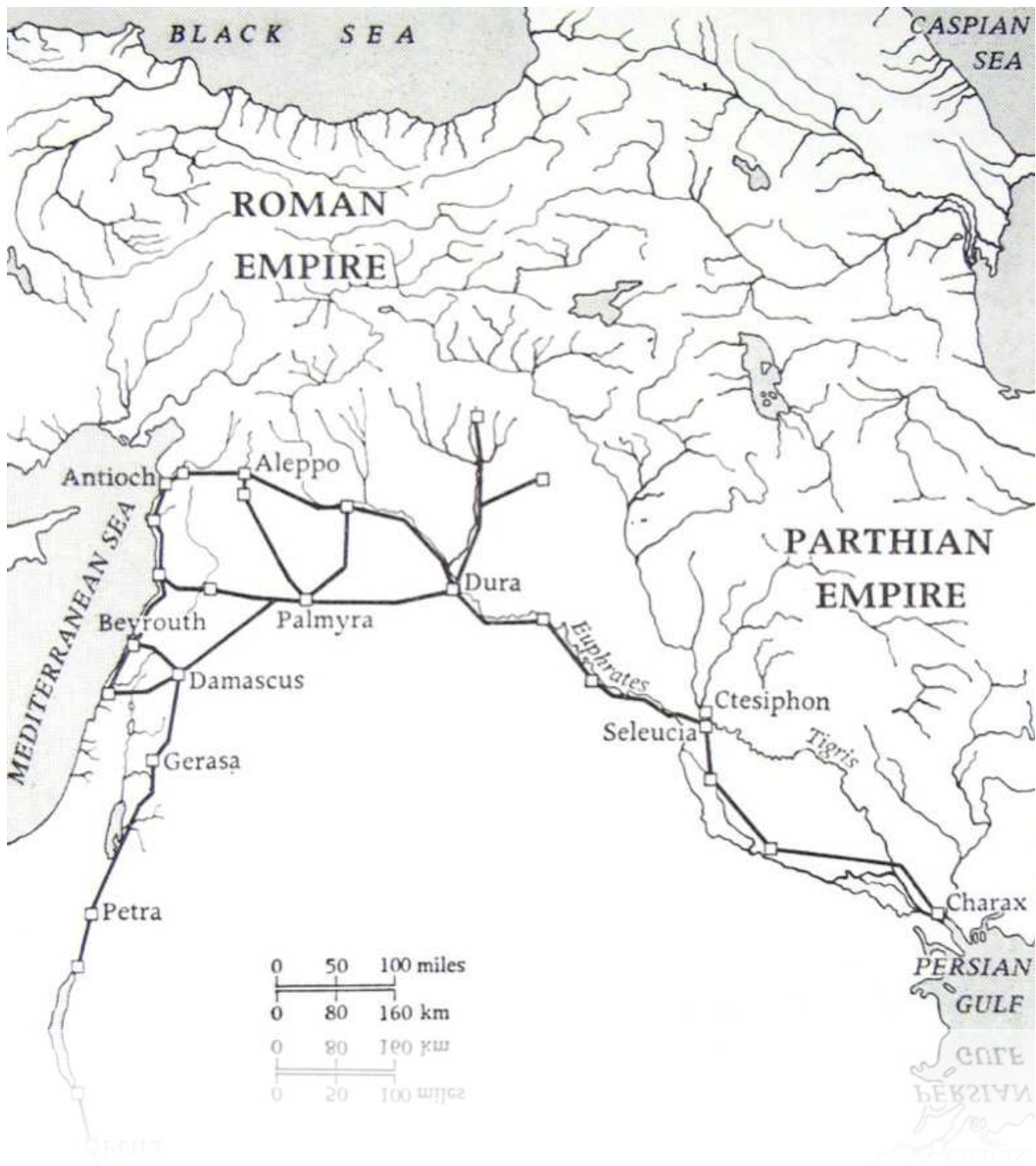
Figure 1   Map showing the location of (Aram.) Dura / (Gr.) Europos and (Gr.) Ctesiphon / (Part.) Ṭīsfūn on the trade routes of Mesopotamia, after Perkins (1973, 3).

another, the leaders of both communities proselytized and invested heavily into making art. This is extensively documented in late ancient sources about the Manichaeans. In the case of the synagogue, it is frequently overlooked that one of the three leaders of this community is explicitly called "the proselyte," implying that the community not only welcomed proselytes but even accepted them in high positions.[2] Along with the next generation, the new converts needed instruction, for which images supplied one tool within regional practice. In both cases, the art in question had associations with the divine and its worship, but was not intended to be the focus of devotion. Moreover, it fulfilled a 'decorative' function only in a sense that it was pictorial and created by skilled artisans in an aesthetically pleasing manner. Its presence undoubtedly enhanced, that is, 'made special,' the religious experience. Extensive content and figures identified by labels as we find in the Dura synagogue, however, are not needed for decoration. If this art served primarily neither a devotional nor a decorative function, what function did it serve? The contemporaneous and nearby example of Manichaean practice offers an alternative function as a logical point of comparison—images employed as a tool of instruction. At minimum, visual representations of doctrine can indirectly reinforce religious teaching. When directly engaged in the course of a sermon, a visual representation can aid comprehension and facilitate the mastery of religious knowledge—and the Duran Jews may have recognized this as readily as their Manichaean neighbors as part of a regional development of techniques of religious instruction.

While the murals of the Dura synagogue and Mani's *Book of Pictures* clearly overlap chronologically, geographically, and arguably in function, their *distinctions* are still considerable. The former retains only about fifteen identifiable narrative scenes from what originally was a program of about sixty[3] framed and large-scale depictions, displayed permanently on the walls within the main hall of a community building, engaged possibly on a weekly basis in front of a large group of people. The latter is attested in late ancient texts as a portable work of art and its copies, containing an estimated 20-30 framed images, painted on a scale to fit onto the surface of a horizontal parchment handscroll that was accessed one or two images at a time in an itinerant setting, in front of a smaller group of people. Such distinctions of survival, scale, and conditions of use, however, do not detract from evidence of a similar function.   [6]

The goal of this study is to demonstrate that correlations between third-century Duran Jewish and Manichaean art go beyond surface similarities in three regards: (1) They both *displayed a visual library of doctrinal subjects,* that is, they capture, in pictorial form, a large sample of core tenets that were also recorded, independently from the art, in the sacred texts of their respective religions; (2) they both *fulfilled a primarily didactic function*, that is, their pictorial genres (narrative scenes, didactic portraits, and emblems in the Jewish case; and narrative scenes, didactic portraits, and diagrams in the Manichaean case) had a dominantly instructional role; and, (3) they both *were utilized in the course of oral instruction*, that is, the paintings were referenced during sermons and were the subjects of living interpretations.   [7]

The comparative analyses of these points requires working with two different types of sources (archaeological and textual) about the function of art produced and used during the third century by the two distinct communities. While Mani's collection of paintings from   [8]

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2   Recorded on ceiling Tiles A-B, the Aramaic dedicatory inscription of the synagogue mentions "those who stood in charge of this work," including "the proselyte" a person whose name does not survive, see Kraeling (1956, 263).

3   Only one-quarter of the narrative program survives in a condition for its subjects to be identifiable, which explains why many books of the Hebrew Bible (Genesis, large parts of Exodus, and later books) are not found among the panels today. For further discussion, see note 46 below.

ancient Mesopotamia does not survive, a significant body of textual references written between the mid-third and late fifth centuries in primary Manichaean and secondary polemical accounts do survive, discussing what the paintings showed, how they were used, and why they were needed. These texts were collected for the first time in a recent monograph that accessed their evidence on the pictorial content and the religious function of Mani's *Book of Pictures* (Gulácsi 2015).[4] In contrast, no textual sources discuss the Dura synagogue, its paintings, and their use. Beside a prayer (on three fragments of a parchment scroll) and the various inscriptions (on the ceiling tiles and murals of the synagogue), the Duran Jews and their visitors did not leave behind textual records. It is the physical remains of their synagogue—one of the best-studied and best-preserved archeological sites of late antique Mesopotamia—that provides rich data on subject matter and architectural context suited for studying the religious function of art in mid third-century Mesopotamia (Fig. 2). Comparative Manichaean data allows us to see the Jewish paintings at Dura in a new way—as a visual tool for oral instruction in late ancient Mesopotamia. These two contemporary cases vividly document that the display of doctrinal images and the practice of using them for instruction was integral to Mesopotamian religious art during the middle of the third century.

The temporal and geo-cultural relatedness of the synagogue's murals at Dura and Mani's   [9]
Book of Pictures justifies the comparative assessment of their function. Without arguing for direct influence between the two communities, I view their use of pictorial art as part of a shared phenomenon of techniques of religious instruction. Just as the Jewish pictorial program, the Manichaean pictorial scroll is a product of Mesopotamian Late Antiquity. Although nothing Manichaean was discovered at Dura, it is well documented that Mani and his elects traveled across Mesopotamia (on the local trade routes), and thus must have passed through this city on their missionary journeys during a period of more than 17 years between the start of their activities in 240 CE and destruction of the city sometime after 256 CE. In addition, there is a vast array of indirect ties connecting Mani and Dura, which, I argue, now include the didactic function of the doctrinal murals of the synagogue. Although this study is not concerned with the origin of the art under discussion—that is, the story of how they came about, including the technical aspects of the craftsmanship associated with the production of their respective mediums—it is likely that both had artistic ties to Ctesiphon.[5] At Dura, pattern-books or model-books were used by local paintings workshops,[6] some of which could have come from the nearest metropolis—Ctesiphon.[7] The early Manichaeans also relied on workshops for the production of their books, including the *Book of Pictures* that Mani "ordered […] to be painted" (*Kephalaion* 151, 371.25)—most certainly in Ctesiphon. Similarly, Mani's followers were noted for sparing no expense in commissioning their books from the most ac-

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4   This monograph also assesses pictorial sources, including five images that survive from Uygur editions of Mani's *Book of Pictures* (ninth/tenth centuries) and 36 images that were adapted to other, non-canonical mediums (sculpture, wall painting, silk hanging scrolls, illuminated manuscripts, and mortuary banners) of Manichaean art in Uygur (mid-eighth to early eleventh centuries) and Chinese (twelfth to fifteenth centuries) contexts.

5   It is beyond doubt today that neither of them derived from illuminated manuscripts. For the critique of Weitzmann's theory on the origin of the Jewish murals at Dura, see e.g. Gutmann (1992); Hachlili (1998); Lowden (1992, 116–17); Williams (1999, 48–58). For the critique of Sundermann's theory on Mani's *Book of Pictures*, see Gulácsi (2015, 8–9, 78).

6   "Pattern books" (Gutmann 1983, 104) and "modelbooks" (Wharton 1995, 48). The murals these artists produced were not frescoes painted onto wet plaster. Their paint, "powdery tempera," was brushed onto dry plaster (Gutmann 1992, 503). On painters working on multiple sites at Dura, see Jensen (1999, 184–86).

7   Model-books from the nearest metropolis, Ctesiphon, would explain the systematic use of Iranian visual language (garments, throne, investiture, and triumph motifs) throughout the panels of the synagogue.
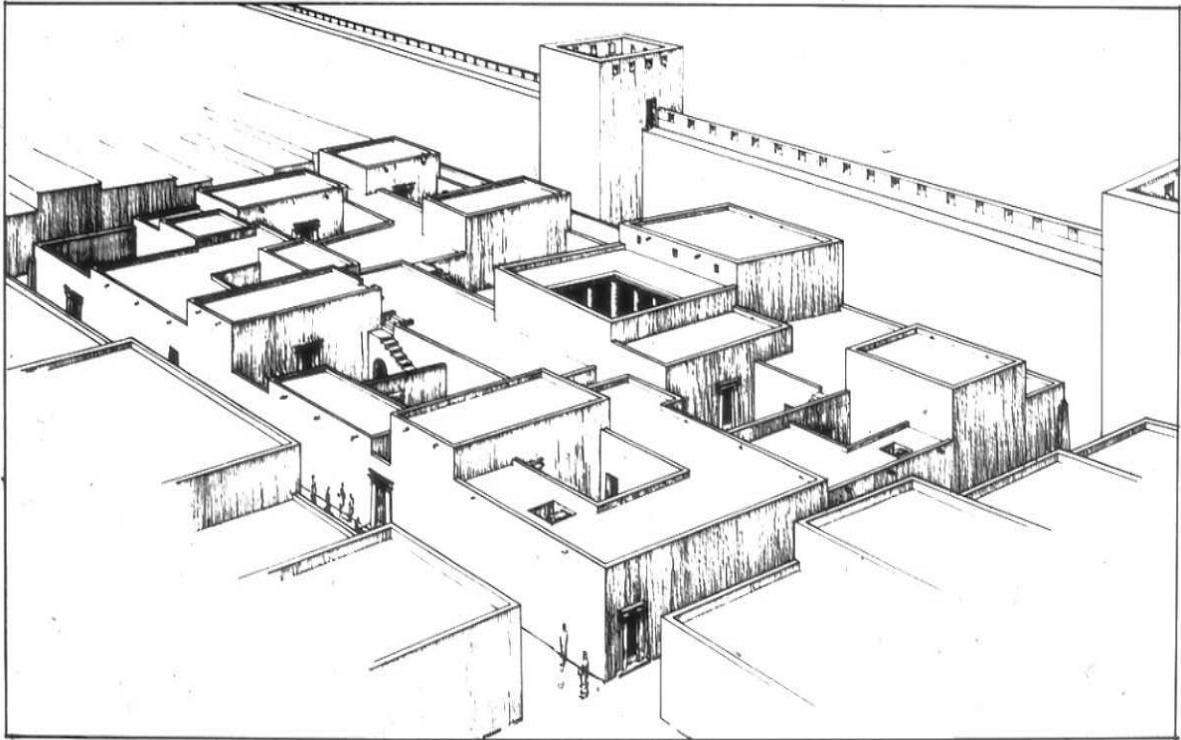
2a Isometric Reconstruction
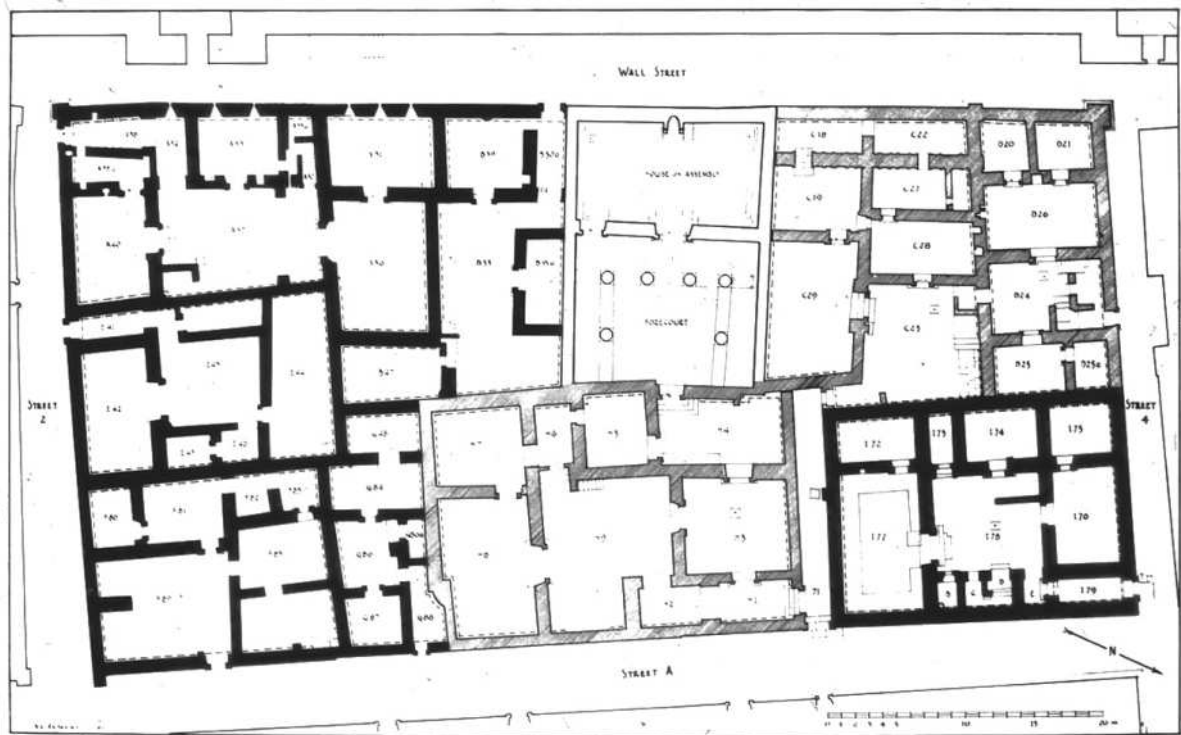
2b Plan

Figure 2   Block L7 of Dura with the synagogue, after Kraeling (1956, Plans II-III)

complished calligraphers—600 years later in Abbasid Baghdad (Al-Jahiz, *Kitab al-hayawan*, before 847 CE; Reeves 2011, 226).

Manichaean Didactic Art in Late Antiquity

Mani's *Book of Pictures* is a new topic in Late Antique Studies, mostly because 'classical' (Latin and Greek) sources do not mention it—only Coptic, Syriac, and Parthian sources do, which have been traditionally marginalized and until recently were much ignored. Indeed, Mani's volume of paintings first became known not from the abovementioned ancient sources, but through studies of medieval Persian literature that started to supplement the previously exclusively Latin-based studies in this field in the late eighteenth century.[8] The discovery of ancient Coptic as well as Parthian and Middle Persian Manichaean texts during the early twentieth century in the deserts of Egypt and East Central Asia further contributed to this emerging topic. Nevertheless, during most of the twentieth century, remarks about Mani's paintings remained dominantly philological in nature, confined to brief discussions, often in footnotes, in the critical editions of Parthian Manichaean texts. The first exception to this was a paper by Peter Nagel about Coptic and Syriac sources (Nagel 1981). Until the second decade of the twenty-first century, discussions of Mani's *Book of Pictures* were based on the above data and did not involve artistic remains.[9]

[10]

Mani and his elects were active in Mesopotamia on both sides of the border during the middle of the third century. Coptic Manichaean literature places Mani in Ctesiphon, Mesene, and Babylon,[10] recording that Mani went "to the land of Babylon, Mesene, and Susiana" and taught three disciples along the flooded bank of the River Tigris on a spring day in Ctesiphon (*Kephalaion* 61, 152,21-155,5 and *Kephalaia* Prologue, 15.30-31; Gardner 1995, 160–61, 20–21, respectively); and on another occasion, he held a debate with a member of a regional sect "in the midst of the land of Babylon," in southern Mesopotamia (*Kephalaion* 121, 288.22; Gardner 1995, 290). While writing about Manichaeism in the Roman Empire, Samuel Lieu concludes that Mani started to send his missionaries into Roman territories most likely as early as 244 CE, following the peace treaty between Persia and Rome that year; he points out that Mani's "Epistle to Edessa" (quoted in the *Cologne Mani Codex*) presupposes a community established there (Lieu 1992, 3, 4). Palmyra is mentioned in a Middle Persian text in connection with a mission lead there by a chief disciple (Mar Adda, M 2; Boyce 1975, 9:h2, 40), while a Coptic text discusses Mani in "Adiabene, and [on] the borders of the provinces of the kingdom of the Romans (*Kephalaia*, Prologue, 16.1-2; Gardner 1995, 21)."

[11]

Moreover, the late ancient sources considered in this study document specifically the use of Mani's *Book of Pictures* in the region to the immediate east of Mesopotamia during the middle and the second half of the third century. Among their geographical references closest to Mesopotamia are the city of Holvān, located northeast of Seleucia-Ctesiphon along the road to Hamadan in the Zagros Mountains, in what is today the Hulwan province of modern

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8   Latin polemical texts did not know about Manichaean pictorial art. Augustine of Hippo even noted the aniconic nature of the religion in the form known to him (*Contra Faustum* 20:9 and 20:10).

9   For an overview of history of research, see Gulácsi (2015, 3–12).

10   Ctesiphon (*Kephalaion* 76, 183.14-15; cf. Hom. 44.16; 67.14; 76.28), Mesene (*Kephalaion* 76, 186.6-7; cf. Hom. 44.14; 76.27), and Babylon (*Kephalaion* 76, 186.25). See Gardner (1995); Pedersen (2006) respectively.

Iran (Boyce 1975, 9:40);[11] and Gondeshapur (Syro-Aram, Bēth Lāpāṭ), whose Sasanian ruins are still visible near the modern city of Dezful in the province of Khuzestan, north of the Persian Gulf along the western border of Iran.[12] Other locations include Abarshahr, a northern province of the Sasanian state that translates as the 'Upper Lands,' that is, the old Parthian homeland, known today as Ancient or Greater Khorasan (Boyce 1975, 9:40n3; Klimkeit 1993, 217n19). During Mani's time, the latter region constituted the northeastern provinces of the Sasanian empire and included cities such as of Merv (a major oasis city and religious center along the Silk Routes, located today in Turkmenistan) and Zamb (modern Karkhî) on the left bank of the Oxus River (Pers. Amu Darya), about 220 miles northeast of Merv.[13] The sources in question are diverse in term of their preservation. Some are primary texts in their original Iranian languages. Others are primary texts that originally were written in Syriac, but survive in the Coptic translation. One text was written in Syriac as a secondary, outsider account.

The only secondary source from the Mediterranean region that mentions Mani's *Book of Pictures* was written by Ephrem Syrus (306-373 CE), who lived in the Syrian city of Nisibis (modern Nusaybin in southeast Turkey) and later, after the Sasanian capture of the city in 363 CE, became active in the Syrian refugee community in Roman Edessa. He spoke and wrote in Syriac. His books include some of the earliest anti-Manichaean texts, in poetic (*Hymn Refutations*) and prose (*Prose Refutations*) form, that target the major competitors of Ephrem's version of Christianity in Syro-Mesopotamia—the followers of Bardaisan (154-222 CE), Marcion (second century CE), and Mani. Despite its polemical tone, Ephrem's passage about Mani's *Book of Pictures* in his *Prose Refutations* is highly relevant, since its author lived within a century of Mani and shared with him not only temporal closeness but also a common linguistic and cultural environment. Moreover, Ephrem quotes directly from Manichaean texts and credits Mani's disciples as his sources of information. [13]

The Coptic Manichaean sources are well-preserved papyrus codices that were discovered in Egypt during the 1920s at a site known as Medinet Madi in the Faiyum Oasis, and subsequently sold on the antique book market. They are the thickest ancient codices (over 400 pages) known to date. They were made locally, written in the Coptic language and script, sometime between the late third and late fifth centuries as translations of earlier works. One such codex, passages of which will be considered below is the *Kephalaia of the Teacher* (Coptic/Gr. *kephalaia* 'chapters') in the Berlin State Library that was composed, most likely in Syriac, by an unnamed early disciple sometime during the late third century with the intent to preserve Mani's oral instructions to his followers (Gardner 1995, xviii–xix). Another is the *Homilies* in the Chester Beatty Library in Dublin. It dates from the second half of the fourth century, but contains a collection of sermons that were originally composed in Syriac by early disciples in Mesopotamia probably soon after the death of Mani (274 or 277 CE), to which the manuscript refers.[14] Thus, these Coptic texts are regarded as highly authoritative early primary sources in which Mani's words take the reader back to mid-third-century Mesopotamia. [14]

The Iranian Manichaean sources are the closest to Mani's time. They survive as fragments [15]

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11   (Aram.) Māḥōzē, (Ar.) al-Madāʾen (lit. 'the Cities') reference the metropolis formed by Seleucia and Cte-siphon on the opposite sides of the Tigris River in present-day Iraq. Hamadān or Hamedān (Gr. Ecbatana) is the capital city of Hamadan Province of modern Iran (Le Strange 1930, 191).

12   Founded in ca. 260 CE by Šāpūr I and built by prisoners of war from the Roman army, Gondeshapur was the capital of Sasanian Ḳūzestān and occasionally the location of the Sasaian royal court. Bahrām I (r. 273-76 CE) held his court there during Mani's imprisonment and death, see Morony (1989).

13   The name *Zamb* (later Zamm) connotes 'shore' after the Persian noun *damb, dam* (Boyce 1975, 9:49; Klimkeit 1993, 268n26).

14   For other proposed dates to the fifth century, see Pedersen (1993, 80–82).

of texts that were subsequently copied into paper codices that were found between 1902 and 1914 among the ruins of Kocho (located near the Turfan Oasis in the Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region, China) and its neighboring archaeological sites by Prussian expeditions. Today, they are archived in the Turfan Collection of the State Library in Berlin, each catalogued under a capital letter indicating its script. "M" stands for fragments with Manichaean script writing. Considered below are Parthian and Middle Persian texts about Mani's *Book of Pictures*. They include letters on missionary history (M 2, M 5569, M 5815), written during Mani's time and shortly after his death, as well as transcripts of image-based sermons (M 219, M 4570) and a teacher's notes for an image-based sermon (M 35) that date from after Mani's passing. These texts were composed by the first generation of elects in Mesopotamia and West Central Asia during the middle and the second half of the third century. In the course of their subsequent use, they were copied into anthologies of Manichaean literature. Thus, they preserve late ancient content in manuscripts made during the Uygur era of Manichaeism (752/755-1024 CE), when the agricultural and trading center of Kocho functioned as the winter capital of the Tien Shan Uygur Kingdom (866–1209 CE).

These late ancient Manichaean sources convey that Mani and his followers had a distinct   [16] understanding of what a book was, which somewhat differed from modern associations with the word. Under 'book,' they meant any portable medium, made from locally available materials and formats, to store records of thoughts or ideas. The record itself could either be verbal (i.e., written by using a suitable writing system and a language) or exclusively visual (i.e., painted or drawn by using a locally available painting style and a locally comprehensible iconography). The visual record could be a diagram (in order to illustrate structure), a portrait or an icon of a deity (to show the likeness of the being), or a narrative scene (in order to reflect time, change, or events).[15] As is to be expected from a missionary religion equipped with a volume of didactic paintings, multiple copies of the *Book of Picture* are attested to in the early history of the Manichaean missions. In a sense, the Manichaeans had just one (*Book of*) *Pictures*, just as they had only one *Gospel, Treasury of Life, Pragmateia*, (*Book of*) *Mysteries*, (*Book of*) *Giants*, (*Book of*) *Epistles*, (*Book of*) *Psalms,* and (*Book of*) *Prayers* in their canon (*Homilies 25*). But multiple copies of these books were needed, even within one community. Already during Mani's time, their reproduction is attested. Making copies of the canon's written books and its one pictorial volume was standard activity throughout Manichaean history.

These sources also convey that Mani instituted the employment of visual art for teaching in   [17] the religion he founded. In a deliberate and definitive manner, he established the systematic exposition of his complex doctrine in a set of images stored in a book format. He intended his paintings to be a standard part of his legacy—a visual record of a worldview that he also explained in his writings. The volume that contained these images was titled the (*Book of*) *Picture(s)*: *Hikōn* in Coptic, *Yuqnā* in Syriac, *Ārdhang* in Parthian, and *Nigār* in Middle Persian.[16] This book itself was a work of art and so, too, were the individual images it contained— diagrams, icons, and pictorial narratives. As all the other holy books of Mani, this volume had a doctrinal content, was created with the intent to preserve the authenticity of Mani's teachings, was stored with them in the library room of the *manistans*, and functioned as a reference work and a didactic tool.

Manichaean art does not survive from third-century Mesopotamia, with one remarkable ex-   [18]

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15   The solely pictorial nature of the *Book of Pictures* is unambiguous in the sources; see Gulácsi (2015, 279–312 and Tab. 5/5).

16   Although the title is not attested in Greek sources, Manichaean studies scholarship has routinely employed an assumed Greek version (*Eikon*) in reference to *Book of Pictures*.

ception: Mani's own rock crystal sealstone, from what originally was a pendent seal, housed in the Bibliothèque nationale de France.[17] Recently, however, four fragments of Uygur editions of Mani's *Book of Pictures* (containing a total of five images) were identified in the collection of the Museum für Asiatische Kunst in Berlin (previously Museum für Indische Kunst, Gulácsi 2015, 214–26). Since they were made about 700 years after Mani, during the ninth or tenth century in Kocho, their artistic language is Central Asian, and not pertinent to this study. It is their doctrinal content, attested to have originated in mid-third-century Mesopotamia, that offers the point of comparison to be considered below.

The Mesopotamian pictorial roll mentioned in Manichaean sources is an elusive painting [19] format in ancient art. Unlike codices with Coptic, Greek, and Latin texts, handscrolls that contained third-century 'copies' and later editions of Mani's collection of images do not survive from the first 700 years of Manichaean history, and thus will not be considered in this study. The earliest Roman record of a pictorial scroll dates from about 150-years before Mani. It is referenced in a sculptural interpretation of a pictorial roll on *Trajan's Victory Column* (113 CE, Rome) where a spiral frieze, which winds 23 times from base to top around the 35-meter tall shaft, portrays a continuous narrative of the Dacian Wars.[18] Physical examples likely related to ancient pictorial rolls include a Byzantine imperial handscroll that combines a pictorial program with small excerpts of a biblical text on a parchment scroll about the prophet Joshua,[19] and a twelfth- or thirteenth-century copy of a Roman map containing useful information about the most-traveled places and roads between Western Europe (Spain, England, France) and South Asia (the Indian peninsula and Sri Lanka) between the first and fourth centuries, known as the *Peutinger Map* (Levi and Levi 1978; Ball 2000, 123).

The practicalities of using Mani's *Book of Pictures* for religious instruction in ancient [20] Mesopotamina is well understood. As all pictorial handscrolls, this, too, was a private and elite medium. It would have been placed on a solid surface and opened up for viewing in approximately two-feet-long increments, never in full length. Using the handscroll in the course of a teaching would have required a person to operate the scroll by rolling it from scene-to-scene as the instruction proceeded. Once the sermon was completed, the painted handscroll would have been rolled up and put away for storage, much like textual scrolls and codices. The nature of the handscroll format would have allowed only a relatively small group of people to listen to an image-based sermon, requiring them to be close to the scroll to see the images. Therefore, not only the value of such a painted scroll, but also the intimate nature of its viewing would have made the teaching and learning with the *Book of Pictures* a truly special occasion and a rare event.[20]

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17 Mani's sealstone is a double-sided clear rock crystal carved into the shape of a cabochon and originally set in gold to fulfill a dual function. Its curving side was a seal, incised with a negative inscription and an image. Its flat side was an engraved gem pendent, on which the carving showed through from the other side as a legible inscription and the main figure facing to the right (Gulácsi 2010).

18 The theory that the design of *Trajan's Column* imitates a "book-scroll" is discredited today due to the fact that such a pictorial format remains unattested in Roman art. Historical narration—painted or carved in stacked registers of frieze bands—is known only from earlier funerary chambers as well as later triumphal monuments (see Kuttner 2015).

19 The origin of the *Joshua Roll* (Constantinople, Bibliotheca Apostolica Vaticana) remains debated: Kurt Weitzmann suggested that this mid-tenth-century scroll was a product of the "Macedonian Renaissance" with no ancient prototype. Meyer Schapiro saw in its tenth-century picture frieze an ancient prototype transmitted via intermediaries. John Lowden argued that it was an antiquarian copy of a seventh-century original. For an overview, see Lowden (1992, 105–22).

20 The horizontal codex format (best known today from Kufic Korans) is also attested among the Uygur editions of Mani's *Book of Pictures* from ninth/tenth century Kocho; see Gulácsi (2015, 220–26 and Fig. 5/4).

The Manichaeans had religious buildings in ancient Mesopotamia. Established by Mani himself, the *manistan* was an institution of learning, ritual, and medical care. Based on its functions, it may be best compared to either a temple complex (but built on a modest scale and with a library and an infirmary in it) or a monastery (but without any permanent sacerdotal living quarters).[21] There is no evidence that members of the sacerdotal class spent their lives in *manistan*s in a monastic fashion during this time. The elect lived with the auditors, who hosted them for short periods of time and, in return, gained social prestige and merit for a good rebirth. This arrangement is similar to the one followed in Jainism in northwestern India, visited by Mani early in his career.[22] It is possible that certain rooms of the *manistan* started to feature figural decoration at one point, since a Manichaean wall painter was mentioned from early sixth-century Constantinople in a Byzantine source.[23] But these later developments are not considered in the comparison between Manichaean and Jewish employment of didactic art that follows. This study keeps it focus on Mesopotamia during the middle of the third century.

[21]

Comparative Assessment of Duran Jewish and Third-Century Manichaean Art

Doctrinal Content

The pictorial program of the Dura synagogue and Mani's *Book of Pictures* are analogous to one another in the sense that they both constitute self-standing *visual libraries* of religious teaching. By assembling them, the Duran Jews, just as the first Manichaeans, curated a conscious pictorial collection of doctrinal expositions—significant in quantity, systematic in coverage, and deliberate in artistic language. As a whole, the sum of paintings, which survive in the Jewish case and are documented in the Manichaean case, convey core themes of doctrine, showcasing a large group of select subjects on prophetology, eschatology, and polemics that were deemed important by the leaders of their communities. In both cases, the doctrinal significance of each individual image is attested by the existence of its written/verbal account, housed separately, in the holy texts of the religion.

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The complementary duality of text and image was crucial to the first Manichaeans. Documentary evidence attests that Mani fostered a religious culture in which his wisdom, his visions, and his insights would be conveyed and recorded in two equally significant ways—in a written form in his books and in a painted, artistic form in his pictures. The deliberateness of this act is attested by Ephrem, who quotes Mani as he writes: "I have written them (the

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21   A Parthian fragment (M 4579) notes that, during his last journey, Mani sought shelter in a '*mānistān* building' in the city of Ohrmizd-Ardaxšihr. A Middle Persian fragment (M 2) states that Adda founded many *manistan*s during his missions to the Romans "up to Alexandria." The etymology of the Middle Iranian noun *manistan* has been explained in various ways (including the verb *man-* 'to think' and even the personal name Mānī), but it likely derives from either the verb *māndan-/mān-* 'to remain, to stay' or the noun *mān* 'house, dwelling' (Utas 1985, 655–57). For later sources about the various rooms of the *manistan*, specifying the function of each room, including its library that held the "scriptures and the *Book of Pictures*," see Gulácsi (2015, 116–17, 118–26).

22   Jain influence has been noted in Manichaean attitudes of non-injury (Jones 2010, 383–98); also see Gardner (2005); Deeg and Gardner (2009).

23   The earliest textual evidence about murals painted by a Manichaean elect in Constantinople is preserved in Theophanes Confessor's *Chronicle* on the events of 506/7 CE (see Gulácsi 2015, 42–44). Physical evidence of painted walls in later *manistan*s survives from two buildings from tenth-century Kocho (see Gulácsi 2015, 138–41, 226–33).

teachings) in books and painted them in colors." It remains unknown what gave this idea to Mani, but an advantage of it is stated in *Kephalaion* 151:

> As for this [immeasurable] wisdom I have written it in the holy books—in the [24]
> great [*Gospel*] and the other writings—so that it not be altered [after] me. Just as
> I have written it in books, so [I have] also ordered it to be painted. [...] For all
> the [apostles], my brothers, who have come before me, [have not written] their
> wisdom in the books as I have written it. [Neither have] they painted their wisdom
> in the *Hikōn (Copt. 'picture, image' < Gr. eikon)* as [I have painted] it. (*Kephalaion*
> 151, 371.20-30)[24]

Mani is not talking about making an illuminated manuscript (that medium is unattested   [25]
among the Manichaeans for another 700 years). What Mani claims here is committing his
teachings to two different kinds of records: writing them down in *text books* and painting
visual representations of them in a solely pictorial *picture book*. Ephrem specifies the format
of the latter as a scroll (Syr. *mgalltâ*)—a pictorial roll.[25]

   Although physically separate from one another, the two different kinds of records of Mani's   [26]
doctrine—verbal/written vs. visual/painted—were routinely mentioned together. The *Book
of Pictures* was used in close connection with the canonical literature. The early sources note
the practice of pairing the painted book with one of Mani's written books and taking both for
missions across the western regions of Sasanian Empire. One Middle Persian text mentions
this in connection with Mani launching a new mission to Parthia, sometime during the 260s
CE (M 2):

> And when the Apostle of Light (Mani) was in the provincial capital of Holvān,   [27]
> he let the teacher Mār Ammō come, who knew the Parthian script and language
> and was familiar with [...] He sent him to Abarshahr. He [Mār Ammō] went to
> Abarshar with prince Ardabān[26] and brother-scribes, with books and the *Nigār*.
> He said, "Blessed be this religion. May it flourish through teachers, hearers, and
> soul-service. (Sundermann 2005, 382–83)

Other sources give specific titles. Mani's *Gospel* is paired with the *Book of Pictures* in a Parthian   [28]
text (M 5569) about the events surrounding Mani's passing in prison, written by Uzzi, an elect
with the rank of a Manichaean Teacher. It notes that Mani carried his *Gospel* and his *Ārdhang*
on his last journey in 274 or 277 CE, when he was imprisoned in the town of Gondēšāpur;
and that after Mani's death, these two volumes were taken to Sisin (Sisinnius), who succeeded
Mani in heading the Manichaean Church until his own martyrdom in 291/2 CE (Boyce 1975,
9:3, 48). Another text, a Parthian letter about another early mission (M 5815), pairs the *Book
of Pictures* with the *Book of Giants*:

> And you should know this: When I came up to Merv, I found all the brothers   [29]
> and sisters to be devout. And to dear brother Zurvāndād, I am very very grateful,

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24   Middle Persian (M 5794) and Sogdian (Ch. 5554) versions of this passage survive from Kocho (Klimkeit
      1993, 216).
25   Ephrem, *Prose Refutations* 126.31ff: "According to some of his disciples, Mani also painted (Syr. *ṣār*) (the)
      figures of the godless doctrine, which he fabricated out of his own mind, using pigments (Syr. *b^{e}sammānē*)
      on a scroll (Syr. *mgalltâ*)" (Reeves 1997, 262).
26   Boyce notes that the Parthian prince Ardabān belonged to the house of the Arsacids, and thus he was a
      kinsman of Mani's (Boyce 1975, 9:40; also cited in Klimkeit 1993, 217n20).

because he, in his goodness, has watched over all the brothers. And I have now dispatched him to Zamb, and I have sent him to dear Mār Ammō and to (the province of) Khorasan. He [brother Zurvāndād] has taken the (*Book of the) Giants* and the *Ārdhang* with him. I have made another (copy of the *Book of the) Giants* and the *Ārdhang* in Merv. (Klimkeit 1993, 260)[27]

It is well attested that passages from Mani's writing were read aloud as part of regular sermons, while images from the *Book of Pictures* were shown in the course of image-based sermons. Mani's writings might have also functioned as a verbal resource for an elect, who could consult them to refresh his understanding or to be inspired by Mani's words before giving a sermon built around the visual record of the doctrine displayed in front of the auditors.   [30]

A comparable duality of doctrinal communication is evidenced at the Dura synagogue. Once the three registers of narrative scenes were added to the plastered interior walls (Kraeling 1956, 15) in 244/245 CE under "the leadership of the priest Samuel son of Yeda'ya,"[28] the Jews of Dura also had two means of conveying doctrine associated with their synagogue that were distinctly different in nature and physically independent of one another. From then on, their meeting hall not only held the *written/verbal* collection of doctrine (rolled up in a scroll chest) placed in the dedicated space of its aedicula, but also included a *painted/visual* collection of the biblical narratives displayed panel by panel on all four walls in three registers. This duality, however, is lost in most studies of the synagogue's pictorial program, owning to a focus on the written Law. To be fair, the interior architecture and, to some extent, the pictorial program itself *do* prioritize the scriptures, and scholarship has readily picked up on it. For example, Levine's assessment of the doctrinal themes starts with "the sanctity of the Torah" as expressed through the Torah aedicula (Levine 2012, 112–13). Indeed, the Torah remains the main visual focus in the renovated meeting hall through the protruding design of its sizable and elaborate shrine, approximately centered on the wall opposite the entrance.[29] The scripture was placed into its niche[30] under the white motifs of a niche-head (conch and rolled up curtain) and protectively framed by a pair of side columns and topped with an arched façade that crowned the shrine with three groups of small images: the frontal image of the temple in the middle, flanked by a narrative scene with the sacrifice of Isaac in the left and ritual implements on the right (a lighted menorah, a lulav, and an ethrog). The visual prominence of this symmetrical structure continues in the symmetry of the reredos above it on the wall (two large central and four small wing panels), in sharp contrast with the distribution of the rest of the panels. Steven Fine emphasizes that a reverence toward the Jewish scripture   [31]

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27   Boyce provides a detailed discussion of the letter in her *Reader* (Boyce 1975, 9:48–49). The authenticity of this text is not in doubt.

28   This name and title are preserved in the Aramaic inscription on ceiling "Tile A" (Kraeling 1956, 263).

29   The aedicula was set up this way in the meeting hall, when the originally private dwelling was converted to a synagogue sometime between 165 and 200 CE (Kraeling 1956, 327). It is the most elaborately accessorized Torah niche known from ancient synagogues (see Hachlili 1976, esp. 43, and 52-53), thought to be "the point of orientation of the worshipers at prayer" (Kraeling 1956, 54).

30   As indicated by its size, the niche of the aedicula could display only the scroll(s) used for the reading on that day. The niche opening is 0.84 m. wide and 1.48 m. high to the top of the arched opening, imbedded 0.50 m. in the rubble wall (Rostovtzeff et al. 1936, 320; Kraeling 1956, 16, 54–55). The full set of books was kept elsewhere in the complex; and what they were remains unknown. Charles Perrot notes that a standard set included "the five scrolls of the Tora, kept in a portable chest or a special niche (or again 'in a corner' *B.T. Kiddushin* 66a, or in jars at Qumran). All synagogues must surely have possessed the whole Tora in five volumes (*Aristeas*, second century BCE, says 'cases') and some other Bible scrolls, like Isaiah and the Twelve Prophets, and no doubt the Psalms. These were the books most in use. The Palestinian synagogues, small and numerous could probably not afford all the scrolls, which were in any case expensive" (Perrot 1990, 155).

is "projected onto the walls of the synagogue, pointing to its centrality in the ritual life of the community" (2005, 58). He draws attention to specific images in this role, such as the depiction of Moses (at the right corner of the façade), holding an open scroll as if he were reading from the scriptures; the text of the Moses scroll bleeding through to emphasize the importance of the scripture; and the Ark of the Covenant (further to the right in the same register) shown as a tall gold chest with a rounded top in the form of a Torah shrine.[31]

The pictorial program of the synagogue is in itself an esteemed depository of doctrine.   [32]
Stories familiar from the Hebrew Bible are readily recognizable in the murals, which provided the impetus for matching their contents to texts. Most publications could only depict the visual catechism of these paintings as illustrations of these biblical and rabbinic texts.[32] In Annabel Wharton's critique of this prevailing scholarly trend, they "intend on identifying *the* text that explains the image" and assert "the priority of the text over the image" (1995, 45, 48). The murals, however, are fixed to the walls. They are physically independent of the scriptures, neither displayed only while the text is read nor put away when the text is rolled up. Thus, the question here is not with which biblical passages the paintings can be matched, but rather what doctrine they showed. Levine's approach to their overall doctrinal content departs from previous interpretations in the sense that it starts with the paintings and "evoke[s] literary sources only secondarily." By keeping this focus, he is able to see beyond textual parallels and discern the main themes of visual catechism on the most intact, west wall.[33] This approach is worthy of a closer look because the main themes portrayed by these Jewish murals accord with certain documented themes of Mani's *Book of Pictures*. Both were concerned with (1) prophetology, (2) eschatology, and (3) polemics.

Prophetological teachings are well articulated in Mani's writings, including two main sub-   [33]
jects that are specifically attested for the *Book of Pictures*.[34] One of them concerns Mani's heritage as a prophet. Mani saw himself as a successor of past teachers, who acted upon divine inspiration to serve as religious leaders within their own communities. He called them "messengers," by which he meant human envoys of God. He built them into a prophetological doctrine, integrating some of their teachings into a uniquely Manichaean synthesis (Tardieu 2008, 13–19). Mani identified himself as one such human envoy through the Syriac term *šᵉlīḥā* ('messenger')[35] on his sealstone and the starting formula of his letters. To express the

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31 Fine (2005, 58–59) also points out the presence of this correspondence in rabbinic literature. The Art of the Covenant is part of three panels: The Battle of Eben-Ezel (NB 1), The Ark in the Land of the Philistines (WB 4), and the Consecration of the Tabernacle (SB 1) (see Kraeling 1956, 98, Fig. 29, Plates LIV, LVI, LX).

32 E.g. Gutmann tabulates the panels' textual identifications and the scholars who prosed them (1984, 1315–22); Kraeling surveys thematic parallels between the panels and the Bible, as well as the Midrash and the Targum (1956, 349–54).

33 Levine reasons: "Those themes appearing repeatedly on this wall, we can assume, would have represented core ideas and beliefs of the Duran Jewish community as a religious and ethnic group." In no particular order of hierarchy, he identifies four on the west wall: (1) "the centrality and sanctity of the Torah," (2) "the promise of Moses," (3) "the centrality of the Tabernacle-Temple" and (4) "messianic/eschatological themes" (2012, 112–17).

34 Concerning the doctrinal content of Mani's *Book of Pictures*, early textual sources allude to what the images showed, which convey six themes: (1) *Dualism* (i.e., Light and the Darkness), (2) *Soteriology* (i.e., soul departing body, judgment after death, the fate of the righteous, the fate of the sinner), (3) *Prophetology* (i.e., the Four Primary Prophets of Manichaeism, the Life of Jesus), (4) *Cosmology*, (5) *Eschatology* (i.e., Jesus' second coming and the Great Fire), and (6) *Polemics* (i.e., false beliefs of idol worship) (see Gulácsi 2015, 46–47, 96–96, 316).

35 In Parthian and Middle Persian, he most likely used the noun *frēštag* 'messenger, apostle, or angel' (Durkin-Meistererernst 2004, 3.1:3.1:160).

religious and philosophical rootedness of Mani's message,[36] the founding prophets of Zoroastrianism, Buddhism, and Christianity are grouped with Mani in the text (*Kephalaion* 1, M 42) and on the artistic representations of this teaching, including a fragmentary diagram surviving from an Uygur edition of the *Book of Pictures* that depicted the "Four Primary Prophets of Manichaeism" (Gulácsi 2015, 356–74, 2017b). The other prophetological subject attested from the *Book of Pictures* was the life story of Mani's personal savior, Jesus, that Mani taught according to the harmonized account of Tatian's *Diatessaron* (Gr. διὰ τεσσάρων, lit. 'through four')—the earliest known gospel harmony, dating from the 170s CE. Composed in Syriac, this gospel text remained standard in the Syriac-speaking world until the late fifth century. The earliest direct evidence on the use of the *Diatessaron* in Mesopotamia is provided by 'the Greek Fragment,' found in the Church at Dura. Dating from before the mid-250s, it is one of the earliest Christian manuscripts known today.[37] As such, this fragment gives a date for the circulation of the *Diatessaron* in the region that coincides with the activities of Mani.[38] The life of Jesus narrated with *diatessaronic* characteristics survives not only in a sermon of Mani (*Kephalaion* 1, 12.21-13.11), but also on a fragmentary series of small vignettes that were adapted to an Uygur Manichaean illuminated service book from a rendition of this teaching in a now-lost earlier edition of Mani's *Book of Pictures* (Gulácsi 2008).

A similar kind of prophetology—where human messengers of God play defining roles in the history of their religions—is conveyed in the murals of the Dura synagogue. While almost all panels center on a figure of religious significance (Abraham, Aaron, David, Elijah, Esther, Ezekiel, Jacob, Job, Solomon, Samuel, and Saul), the focus on Moses is striking. Levine stresses that Moses dominates the west wall and his centrality is "inextricably intertwined with the sacrality and centrality of the Torah" (2012, 113–14). The three narrative scenes dedicated to Moses's life claim approximately one-third of the west wall—one panel in each register. Moses's birth story is in the lower right, his parting the sea is in the upper right, and his miracle at the well of Be'er is along the left edge of the middle register. Moreover, Moses is also portrayed on his own four times in the wings of the reredos directly above the Torah shrine. As convincingly argued by Erwin Goodenough, Moses is not simply one among many biblical teachers, but the supreme priest of all time—"the Lawmaker of the Jews or rather the author of the mystic Torah" (Goodenough 1953, 9:119). Moses is shown in such a role when portrayed with the burning bush (upper right), receiving the Law (upper left), reading the Law (lower right), and offering a final prayer (lower left). In this visual emphasis on Moses, the pictorial program produced by a Hellenized diaspora community at Dura is close to contemporaneous Manichaean prophetology, where one prophet, acting as a human messenger of God, founds

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36   Textual sources mention ten prophets from West Asia: Mani, Jesus, Zoroaster, and Shakyamuni, plus various Jewish prophets (Adam, Seth, Enos, Noah, Sem, and Enoch). No text names all. One early Chinese Manichaean account (731 CE) also mentions Lao-tsu (Tardieu 2008, 13–19, Fig. 1).

37   It contains fourteen Greek lines from a harmonized Passion narrative that retains linguistic traces of a Syriac language original, suggesting that it is a translation of Tatian's work (Petersen 1990, 413). Kraeling hypothesizes that the parchment scroll to which the fragment belonged was made somewhere in Mesopotamia, possibly in Edessa (Kraeling 1935, 7).

38   In a series of studies between 1968 and 1993, Gilles Quispel argues that the Manichaeans preserved the most authentic version of Tatian's *Diatessaron* in the Latin-speaking part of the Roman Empire (Quispel 1993). Unlike the *Diatessaron* in Syriac Christian use, where its content was gradually brought into greater alignment with the standard texts of the Greek gospels, the Manichaean version of the *Diatessaron* in the Latin West remained 'archaic' and 'wild,' since the Manichaeans were under no pressure to 'vulgatize' or 'domesticate' it. Direct quotations from Tatian's prose in the Parthian translation survive from Manichaean Kocho (Sundermann 1968).

a religion (Goodenough 1953, 9:113–23; Levine 2012, 114–15). Ezra and Abraham are other possibilities for the lower two panels (Kraeling 1956, 227–39).

Eschatology is another theme that overlaps between the doctrinal images of these two communities during the middle of the third century. Manichaean salvation theory encompasses the entire universe. Its doctrine is light-centered, for the liberated divine essence or soul can only be a form of light. In Mani's teachings, God created the universe as a mechanism to heal the devastation caused by the catastrophic mixture of light and darkness and to liberate the divine essence from its mixture with evil. Thus, salvation is integral to cosmic history (pre-creation, cosmogony, theogony, and eschatology), just as it is to cosmic structure (cosmology, theology, and prophetology). Cosmic eschatology was portrayed in Mani's *Book of Pictures*. A Parthian fragment written about the *Book of Pictures* (M 35) preserves two passages about the eschaton of the universe. Both deal with events that take place at the end of time and include Jesus' second coming, which remains a largely unexplored theme of Manichaean teaching, and the "Great Fire" (also known as the "World Fire") that consumes the universe at the end of time. No known visual records of these scenes survive.[39] Mani's teachings about the Realm of Light/God and the full restoration of the Realm of Light at the end of time are well attested in Manichaean literature. No known texts mention these subjects in connection with the *Book of Pictures*. Nevertheless, later Manichaean art that was produced based on the *Book of Pictures* about a 1000 years after Mani in southern China still portrays an image of the divine court in the Land of Light—showing the enthroned Father of Greatness (God) and his two attendants (the Mother of Life and the Living Spirit) surrounded by the twelve aeons—in a composition not unlike the assembly of the messianic court in the reredos at Dura (Gulácsi and BeDuhn 2011–2015, 69–70).

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Eschatology receives significant attention in the pictorial program of the renovated synagogue. Its prominence is direct in some panels and detectable in subtler ways in others. (1) Levine emphasizes how messianic teachings are depicted on three panels (2012, 117; cf. Kraeling 1956, 215–27). One of them is the extensive parable about the resurrection of the Jewish state (i.e., the "Destruction and Restoration of National Life"), a teaching that is also described in Ezekiel's vision of the Valley of the Dry Bones (Ezek. 37), shown in three parts across the entire bottom register of the north wall (NC 1) (Levine 2012, 117; cf. Kraeling 1956, 179–81). Two eschatological panels were chosen for the reredos on the west wall. This prestigious location underlines their utmost significance. The upper panel depicted a messianic court—a throne-room scene with a regal image of an enthroned figure (possibly David or the messiah) surrounded by an entourage of thirteen men "representative of the eleven tribes and the two half tribes that together make up the entirety of the Hebrew nation" (Kraeling 1956, 226). The panel below portrayed Jacob blessing his sons and grandsons while David plays a harp for animals (Kraeling 1956, 221–25). Herbert Kessler suggests that together, these two functioned as a "bipartite anagogical design. In the lower panel were reminders of the historical promises, Jacob blessings, David, and the branch; above was pictured the fulfillment of those promises, the Messiah king, the men who would rebuild the Temple and reinstitute the cult, and the tribes of Israel returned to their kingdom."[40] (2) Carl Kraeling notes that some panels on the west wall imply a messianic message by alluding to the rebuilding of the Temple

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39   More records discuss individual human eschatology (soteriology) in connection with the *Book of Pictures* (Gulácsi 2015, 316–55).

40   In Kessler's view, the depiction of the messianic king in this scene countered Christian claims that the messiah had already come (Weitzmann and Kessler 1990, 169). Paul V. M. Flesher argues against the messianic interpretations of the reredos (Flesher 1995).

through a Tabernacle-Temple theme that runs horizontally across the middle register passing through the axis of the reredos just above a Temple motif in the façade of the Torah shrine.[41] In the more cautious view of a historian of Judaism, Levine concludes that while these visual references reflect a deeply rooted "loyalty" to the Jerusalem Temple, "there is no way to determine how this third-century community related to the Temple, which was destroyed 150 years earlier—as a historical memory, a religious symbol, a future hope or some combination of thereof" (Levine 2012, 117).

Polemics against idol worship was addressed in the doctrinal paintings of the Duran Jews just as in those of third-century Manichaeans.[42] In their own respective ways, the leaders of these two communities instituted images for religious teaching in a world where statues of gods were actively worshipped. Therefore, it seems logical that they addressed the topic directly in the art itself they created. Manichaean documentary evidence about this is preserved in a Middle Persian transcript of an image-based sermon (M 219) given about the false belief of idol worship with the aid of a polemical image in Mani's *Book of Pictures*. This passage records how the elect began his teaching by pointing out the main motifs portrayed on one "painting" (*nigār*) that showed an idol temple, its priests, and its worshippers: [37]

> Direct eye and face (towards this and see) how it is depicted (….) here in front of you. On this *nigār*: idols, idol priests, altars, and their gods […] depicted here, this is the temple of the idols, which they call 'The Dwelling of the Gods.' And corresponding to the name of the dwelling, there are many gods (there). Many are running about, (and) when you ask: 'Where (are you going)?' they say: 'To the Dwelling of the Gods. To offer reverence, love, gifts in front of them!' The idol priests raise their voices: 'Come forth to The Dwelling of the Gods!' However, inside The Dwelling of the Gods, here are no gods! The deceived do not realize that, because their spirits have been made intoxicated. But you […]. (Asmussen 1975, 13)   [38]

The passage concludes by expressing what the Manichaeans found objectionable in idolatry. For them, it is the belief of the "deceived," whose "spirits have been made intoxicated," who falsely trust that one can "offer reverence, love, [and] gifts" by "com[ing] forth to The Dwelling of the Gods."   [39]

The Duran Jews' objection against idol worship is expressed vividly on the main wall of their synagogue (WB 4) through the portrayal of broken statues of gods in the *Ark in the Land of the Philistines Panel* (Fig. 3). The subject concerns a teaching also recorded in the first Book of Samuel about the history of the Ark of the Covenant in the Torah: the damage done by the Ark to the Temple of Dagon (I Sam. 5.1-5) on the right, and the Ark beginning its journey observed by the prince of the Philistines on the left, alluding to the misfortune and destruction   [40]

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41   Jodi Magness (2010, 155) finds that, in addition to the "horizontal thematic connections" noted by Kraeling (1956, 168, 225), there are also "vertical thematic connections" between the motifs of David being anointed (directly to the right of the Torah shrine) and David as the ruler of all Israel (above the Torah shrine). Magness concludes that the iconography of the synagogue documents eschatological and messianic expectations (Magness 2010, 164).

42   Religious historians of Late Antiquity dispute the claim that these murals hide polemics against Christianity, argued by Kessler (Weitzmann and Kessler 1990, 154–83). Although polemical literature was produced by the early church fathers during the second and third centuries, in Lee Levine's summary, "there is no way of knowing whether such polemics reached or effected the local Christian community, much less its Jewish counterpart," since there is no "unequivocal evidence that such issues were known in Dura or were of importance in Mesopotamia as far back as the early third century" (Levine 2012, 107).
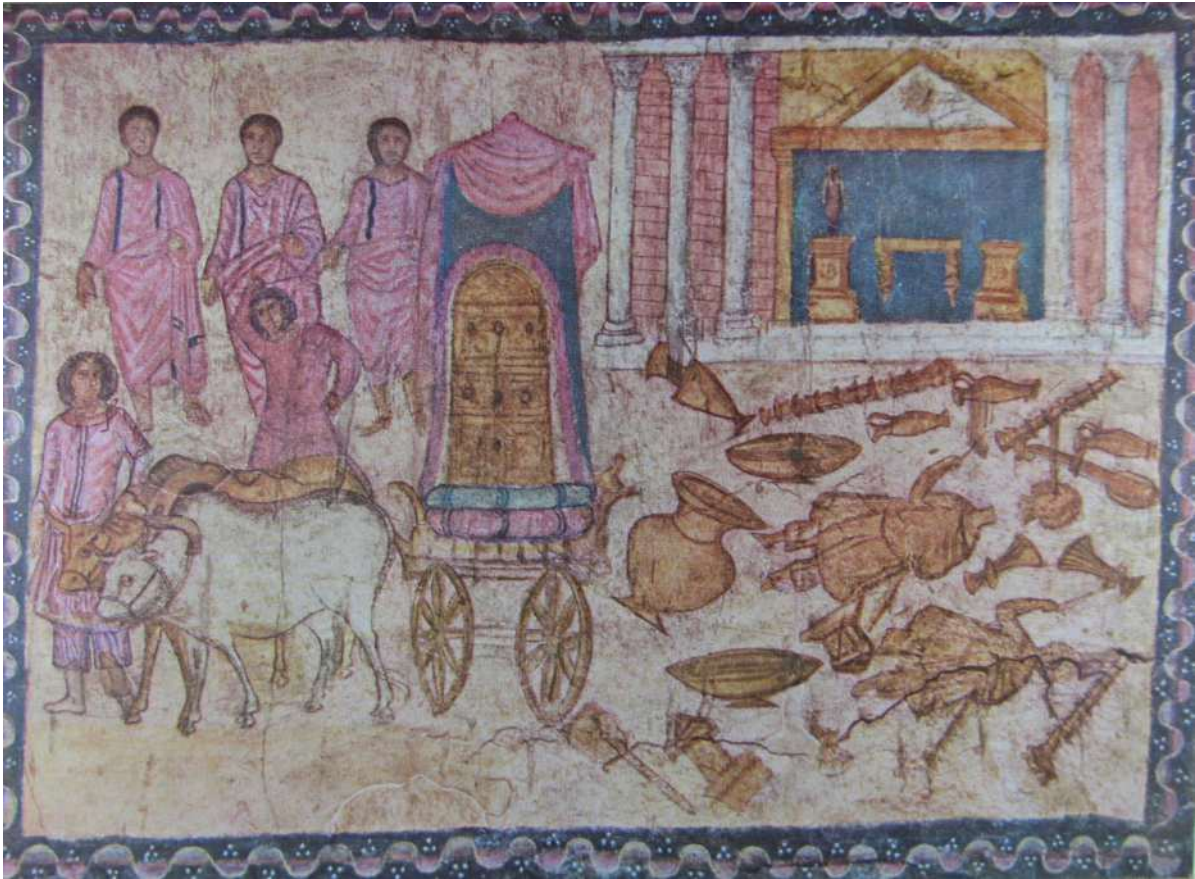
Figure 3   Panel conveying objection against idol worship after Kraeling (1956, Color Plates)

that the Ark caused on its way (I Sam 6.1-12) (Goodenough 1953, 10:74–80; Kraeling 1956, 99–105). The unambiguous polemical tone of the visual language of this panel corresponds to a teaching from *Deuteronomy* 12:3: "Tear down their altars, smash their pillars, put their sacred pots to the fire, and cut down the images of their gods, obliterating their name from the site."[43]

Likewise, the mural shows to the beholder the sculpted images of two deities (dressed in attire similar to Palmyran gods), smashed (one without a head and the other with a foot missing) and scattered among a large array of ritual implements littering the ground in front of an empty temple (Kraeling 1956, 101–3, with the inventory of objects in Fig. 30; see Goodenough 1953, 10:75). Compositional elements of this panel and its location impart a polemical tone. Not only is this panel placed furthest away from the Torah shrine on the west wall, but the chaotic rhythm of its destroyed idols is also blocked from the aedicula by the motifs of the frontally projected Ark (shown on a turning ox-cart as it is being driven to the left) and the massive walls protecting the Herodian Temple in the next panel on the left. Concerning the panel on its right depicting *The Battle of Eben-ezer* (NB 1) in the same register on the north wall, Kraeling entertains the idea that the portrayal of "the great victory of the God of Israel over the pagan gods" is "the appropriate counterpart of the disastrous defeated on the preceding panel" (Kraeling 1956, 103). Jaś Elsner sees a thematic counterbalance

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43   Gutmann remarks: "In fact no other sacred ancient Near Eastern text is so concerned with images, high places, and their evil connotations as is *Deuteronomy*" (1977, 7). For a study that traces the evolution of the assumption of Jewish iconophobia, see Bland (2000, 1–11).

between the "negative miracle" of the fall of the Philistine idol of Dagon and the "positive miracle" of the well shown in the *Moses and the Wells of Elim Panel* (WB 1), and notes a composition contrast between them, since in the well image, "the ritual objects of the Jews preside beneath the aedicula representing the Tabernacle; [while] in the Dagon scene, the cult implements of the Philistines are scattered with their gods." Many other panels portray sacrifice in contexts of polemical stories, but their visual language gives a "less aggressive commentary on local religion." Taken together, their analysis leads Elsner to conclude that polemics against pagan cults was prominently conveyed in the program of the synagogue (Elsner 2001, 282–83, 299; see Rajak 2013, 95–96).

Didactic Function

The doctrinal images of the Duran Jews and third-century Manichaeans fulfilled a variety of functions. While the images of both of these communities have associations with the divine and its worship, they also exhibit an educational character. Conveying doctrine by pictorial means is especially handy in multi-lingual missionary contexts possibly associated not only with the Manichaeans, but also with Jewish diaspora communities that increased converts to Judaism at this time.[44] The didactic use of Mani's *Book of Pictures* forces us to reassess certain aspects of the physical remains of the Dura synagogue, including the interior design of its meeting hall, which signals the possibility that the Jews of Dura also involved their murals in teaching. This comparative approach allows us to see that both of these two distinctly different Mesopotamian communities (1) valued visual learning, (2) used their art for image-based instruction, and (3) embedded educational tools into their images. [42]

Literary sources specifically discuss the pedagogical value of images in third-century Mesopotamia by articulating the advantages of visual learning from both the instructor's and the pupil's point of view in connection with the Manichaean case. Mani gave a pedagogical rationale for why he made his *Book of Pictures* (*Syr. Yuqnā)*, quoted in Ephrem's *Prose Refutations*: "Let the one who hears about them (the teachings) verbally also see them in the *Yuqnā (Syr. 'picture, image' < Gr. eikon*), and the one who is unable to learn them from the word(s) learn them from the picture(s) *(Syr. ṣurtā 'picture, image, illustration')*" (Ephrem, *Refutations* 126.31–127.11; Reeves 1997, 262–63). [43]

Speaking as a teacher, Mani distinguishes between auditory and visual learning in this passage. He states that those who were good auditory learners among his followers could easily understand and absorb what they heard, and to benefit those who learn more easily through visual means he made the *Yuqnā*. The efficacy of visual learning is conveyed from a pupil's point of view in *Kephalaion* 92, where an anonymous layman expressed the advantage of being exposed to images while learning about salvation, stressing the importance of learning to recognize events and deities in the afterlife based on their portrayal in the *Book of Pictures* (Copt. *Hikōn*): "For if we can see [. . .] the path of the catechumen, and know [. . .] so have we recognized him with knowledge. If we can also see him face to face in this *Hikōn* [. . .] in the sighting of him" (*Kephalaion* 92, 235.13-17; Gardner 1995, 241–42). [44]

Although this record is fragmentary, the pupil's reasoning still comes through. He contends that seeing something "face to face in this *Hikōn*" facilitates learning. An analogous argument is preserved in *Kephalaion* 7 in connection with an image that helped the disciples learn about [45]

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44   Gutmann (1992, 504) agrees with Kessler's argument (Weitzmann and Kessler 1990, 188) that the murals of the Dura synagogue functioned as "a vehicle for religious propaganda, possibly to win converts," but firmly reject its anti-Christian claims.

what happens after they die. With the aid of the painting under discussion, they were taught about a female deity (the Light Maiden, referred to here as "this Form of Light") who will come forth with three gift-gearing angels to greet them upon entering the afterlife. One again, the passage states that the deity will be familiar to the disciples, because she will look just as Mani ("the Apostle") depicted her in the *Book of Pictures*:

> This Form of Light (is) the one who appears to everyone who will come out of his body—corresponding to the image of the *Hikōn* of the Apostle (Mani)—with the three great glorious angels who have come with her ("this Form of Light"). One holds the prize in his hand. The second bears the garment of Light. The third is the one who holds the diadem and the wreath and the crown of Light. These are the three angels of Light, the ones who come with this Form of Light, and appear with her to the elect and catechumens. (*Kephalaion* 7, 36.12-20)[45]

[46]

Whether it was an icon (that is, a portrait of the Light Maiden with her three angels) or a narrative scene (that showed the deity with her three attendants approaching the righteous elect and catechumens), the depiction of these figures imparted key information with which a core soteriological subject was taught. By using such an image for teaching, Mani ensured that his disciples could visualize an event pertaining to a supernatural stage of their religious career.

[47]

The physical remains of the Dura synagogue demonstrate that visual communication was valued by its community. The Jews of this city invested considerable financial resources to create "the largest and most elaborate monument of decorative wall painting in the entire Roman Near East" (Kraeling 1956, 40), which constitutes "one of the most extensive figural painting cycles salvaged from antiquity" (Wharton 1995, 38). Indeed, they painted an extensive pictorial program onto the walls of their meeting hall that literally encircled them—three times, in three dense registers (see Fig. 4). They put eighteen panels on the west wall (if we count the three units—the Temple, the ritual implements, and the Sacrifice of Isaac—framed by the façade of the aedicula, as one panel). The other three walls are too damaged for an accurate count. Since the two side walls were shorter and the available surface of the back wall was reduced by the two doors, the total number of panels was likely around sixty (Kraeling 1956, Plans IX-XII).[46]

[48]

Yet the Mesopotamian Jewish context, in which this visual learning could have taken place, is poorly understood. Little to nothing is known about it. Gutmann stresses this point: "Let us state at the outset that we will not, or better, cannot hypothecate the precise kind of Judaism that flourished at Dura. No other similar synagogue has been found, no contemporary texts are available to explain the program, and the primary literary documents on hand are of such nature that they yield few clues to help us understand the many regional variations of the dominant and prevailing Judaism of that period" (Gutmann 1975, 217).[47] Besides the archeological record of the Dura synagogue, there are no other third-century sources for Mesopotamian Judaism.[48] Its assessment starts and ends with the nearly voiceless physical

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45   For a new translation of this passage by Jason BeDuhn, see Gulácsi (2015, 32–33).
46   Gutmann estimates about fifty-eight (Gutmann 1984, 1314).
47   Jodi Magness draws attention to another poorly understood aspect of this Mesopotamian synagogue by arguing that the foundation deposit of finger bones found under the main door of its meeting hall (Kraeling 1956, 19) most likely played a Jewish apotropaic function (Magness 2010, 145–47).
48   Later traditions identify this period as the beginnings of the Rabbinic movement, which remained small and circumscribed to a few areas and spoke disapprovingly about non-Rabbinic Judaism practiced throughout Mesopotamia (see Neusner 1984, 122–77, 1999, 251–59, 274–87).

4a Reconstruction in the National Museum of Damascus (floor space: 13.7x7.7m, wall height: ca. 7m)
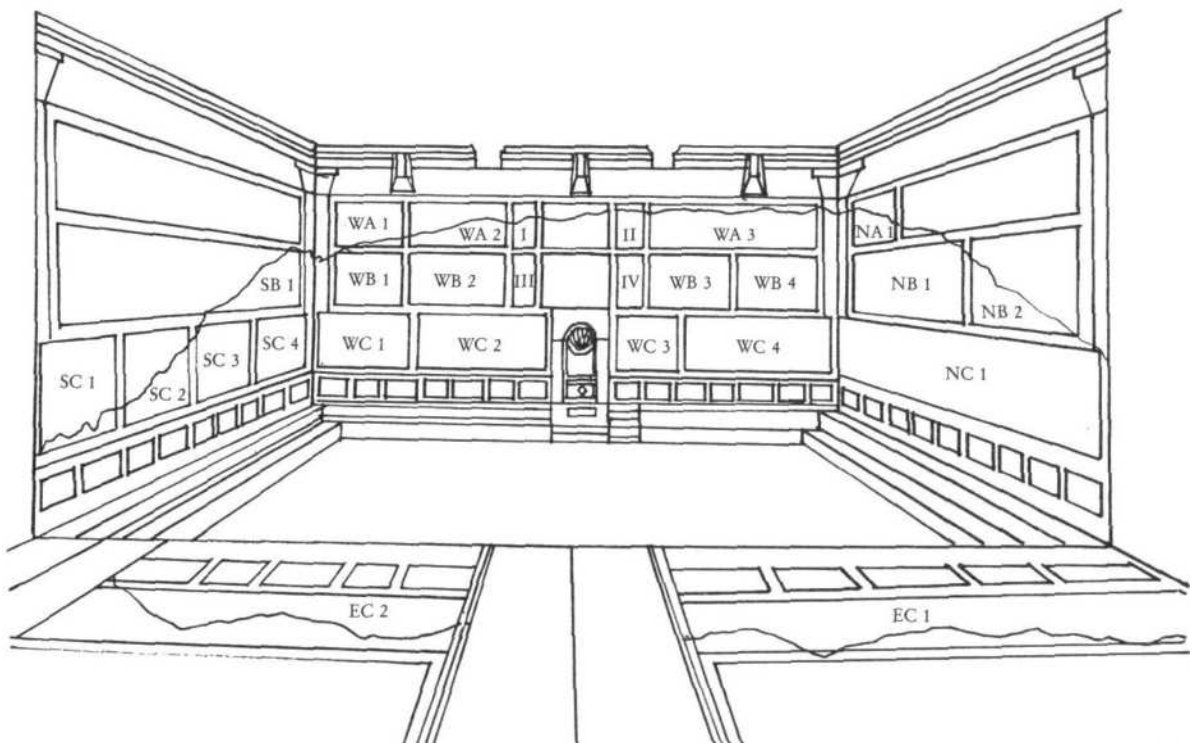
4b Distribution of panels based on Kraeling's codes for cardinal directions (N, S, E, W) and registers (A, B, C)

Figure 4   The meeting hall of the Dura synagogue, after Gutmann (1984, Plate I and Fig. 2)

remains of a remarkable monument with a pictorial program that does not fit what is known about Judaism elsewhere at this time.

Jewish teaching has been traditionally associated with texts in the course of liturgy, that is, "public religious rituals within the context of the synagogue" (Levine 2000, 501). Levine writes: "There is no dimension more reflective of the growth and evolution of the synagogue in antiquity than liturgy. From contributing one of many activities in its early stages, the ritual component of the synagogue eventually became a dominant and definitive element" (Levine 2000, 501).[49] This understanding, when applied to the Dura synagogue, has contributed to overlooking the didactic function of Jewish art in third-century Mesopotamia. As the Dura meeting hall is "the best-preserved Jewish liturgical space from late antiquity" (Fine 2005, 41), so is its pictorial program thought to be for teaching only as a component of liturgy—sermons given about the sacred texts. The didactic role of the art is folded into liturgy, since sermons have been imagined to belong exclusively to formal Jewish liturgy during the third century. Accordingly, it has been assumed that the panels of the synagogue were used in such a 'liturgical' context. Gutmann's hypothesizes that the "program at Dura probably was, as is the case in the later churches, the visual accompaniment of novel liturgical ceremonies, movements, and prayers recited or sung by the congregation" (1992, 504). Fine urges us to "imagine a preacher within the synagogue turning to the images and using them to homiletic effect—and to different effects, according to the content of his homily. The use of synagogue decorations as 'props' by homilists is known from rabbinic sources, as a similar process within somewhat later church contexts" (Fine 2005, 66–67).[50] Another approach that has circumvented recognizing the educational significance of this painted synagogue is thinking about the doctrinal content of its paintings *not* as an essential religious tool, but as a decoration that celebrates ethno-religious identity. Levine explains: "while these other religious settings [the Mithraeum and the Church at Dura] were markedly focused on offering their congregants personal salvation, the synagogue's art vividly expressed the common ethnic and religious background of this Jewish community and of the Jewish people as a whole" (2012, 118). Either way, the Dura synagogue, as a place dominated by visual means of teaching and learning religion, is lost. Its interior design and pictorial program, however, express a reverence towards *both* text *and* image, signaling that this building fulfilled two religious functions—liturgical and didactic.

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Sermons were noted to be the attraction of the ancient synagogue, fulfilling an integral didactic function for the community, sometimes independently of liturgy. The educational role of ancient sermons is noted by Charles Perrot, who distinguishes the different functions fulfilled by a "reader" (who, in Philo's words, "takes the books and reads" from them) versus a "teacher," "lecturer," or "communicator" (who, in Philo's words, "comes forward and explains anything that is not easy to understand"). While writing about the 'Covenanters' at Qumran, who were probably Essene-leaning, Perrot quotes from Philo:

[51]

> They use these laws (those of the Pentateauch) to learn from at all times, but especially each seventh day, […] they abstain from other work and betake themselves to the sacred places which they called synagogues. They are seated according to age in fixed places, the young below the old, holding themselves ready to listen

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49   While writing about liturgy during the third century, Levine points out that in addition to a *formalized prayer*, liturgy had a "secondary focus," a *Torah-reading ceremony*, that consisted of reading the scripture and giving sermons/homilies about them on Sabbaths and holidays (Levine 2000, 523–56).

50   Fine references an essay on teaching with images in later Judaism by Mark Bregman (Bregman 1982).

with proper good manners. Then one of them takes the books and reads. Another comes forward and explains anything that is not easy to understand…. (Philo, *Quod Omnis Probus Liber Sit* 81-82; Perrot 1990, 152)

The words "comes forward" indicate stepping in front of the community to claim the attention of its members. Perrot argues that in some cases, the architecture of the synagogue itself confirms the paramount role of teaching in the synagogue: "Reading and teaching go hand in hand, as is mentioned in the inscription of Theodorus […].[51] Teaching calls for reading and vice versa. May it not be said that unlike the *proseuchae* perhaps of the Diaspora, which appeared primarily as 'house of prayer', the Palestinian synagogues aimed originally at responding to a need for instruction?" (Perrot 1990, 150). Indeed, sermons played a vital role in the life of the community—they served to instruct all people in at least an elementary knowledge of the Torah as well as provide a forum of guidance in a variety of issues relevant to their lives. In his entry about ancient sermons for the *Encyclopaedia Judaica*, Joseph Heinemann emphasizes that the sages employed "at times daring methods of interpretation" to inspire and strengthen their community. Through their "bold use" of biblical material and "the application of ancient tradition to new circumstances," they "succeeded in keeping the Bible alive and meaningful for their own generations." The "entertainment value" was important in attracting people "in masses to hear sermons especially of well-known preachers (TJ, Hor. 3:7, 48b). They would come even from outlying villages, and would make special arrangements beforehand to permit them to exceed the 'Sabbath-limit' of 2000 cubits (Er. 3.5)" (Heinemann 2007, 467–68). Both Heinemann and Perrot call attention to the fact that the occasion of the sermons, that is, the days and times of their delivery, could vary. Some did not parallel the prescribed reading of the Torah and were independent of the regular rhythm of liturgy. Some could be "delivered on Friday nights (TJ, Sot. 1:4 16d), on Sabbath mornings after the reading of the scripture (Luke 4:16 ff.), or on Sabbath afternoons (Yal. Prov. 964). It appears that many sermons were given before the scriptural readings, serving as introductions to or preparation for the latter."[52] Applying this understanding to the Dura synagogue raises the possibility that the narrative pictorial program of its meeting hall fulfilled a didactic function in a special sermon, separate from liturgy.

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Archeological records document how ancient synagogues accommodated teaching —and in one case, arguably also image-based teaching—in relation to the community.[53] In Perrot's word, "the layout of these buildings […] may be said to 'petrify' as it were the seating arrangements of the disciples in a circle around their Master. These ancient synagogues were not oriented towards Jerusalem but towards the reader and lecturer in the middle of the building. And of course these masters taught on the Sabbath above all" (Perrot 1990, 150). At Dura, the act of reading from a scroll is documented by being depicted. In a wing panel of the reredos just above the right corner of the Torah shrine, the reader is portrayed stand-

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51   To highlight these two equally important roles of the synagogue, Perrot's study starts with a quote from a dedicatory inscription: "Theodotus, son of Vettenus, priest and archisynagogue, son of an archisynagogue, and grandson of an archisynagogue, constructed the synagogue for the reading of the Law and the teaching of the commandments." It was found on the Ophel in 1914 among the remains of a synagogue that was built before 70 CE for Greek-speaking Jews and pilgrims in Jerusalem (Perrot 1990, 137).

52   Quotes above are from Heinemann (2007, 468). Perrot cites P.T. Sota 1:16b for Sabbath afternoon, and Lev. Rabba 9:9, p. 191 for Friday evening (Perrot 1990, 151).

53   Not all ancient synagogues were oriented towards Jerusalem, and about half of them have no Torah niche, either. Among the 27 surveyed conveniently a table by David Clausen (seven from Galilee, two from the Golan, twelve from Judea, and six from the diaspora), fourteen have no niches and only five have an aedicula (Clausen 2016, 170–71 and Tab.1).

ing and holding his scroll at chest level (see Fig. 5). There is no evidence for a built-in *bema* platform to stand on, nor is the act of teaching portrayed on the walls. The space that the teacher and the community occupied, however, does survive (see Fig. 3). Built along the base of the four walls, the orientation of the community seated on the benches intersects in the middle of the floor. About the function and role of these benches, Rachel Hachlili writes: "it is clear that their placement directed the attention of those present to the focal point, in the center of the hall. The congregation sat there during the reading of the Torah, and during sessions of instructions, lectures, and political and social discussions, while the readers and lecturers either stood in the center or stood up in their place while leading, and the community members responded from their places. This layout of the hall functioned as a kind of theater in the round" (Hachlili 2013, 43), providing, in Levin's view, a "community-oriented framework […] facilitating communal participation, be it for political, religious, or social purposes" (Levine 2000, 69). A total of three ancient synagogues are known for having benches along the four walls (Second Temple Gamla, Masada, and pre-renovation Dura) (Levine 2000, 131).[54] Oriented in the manner described above, the seating marks either the center of these meeting halls or possibly one of the seats as the focal point of their communities' attention. Newly added in Stage 2, murals at Dura were fitted into an interior design set up already in Stage 1. Based on this fact, an argument can be made that the benches and the murals were employed in the course of the same event. In other words, the pictorial program was added to an activity already practiced in these meeting halls, fulfilling its function in conjunction with that activity, which not only relied on the benches encircling the center of the meeting hall, but also benefited from three registers of didactic murals depicting episodes of Jewish teaching. Focusing on one person who stood up to speak from the rings of benches built at the base of the four walls is not unlike focusing on one mural from the rings of registers painted on the four walls. The practical religious purpose of this feature begins making better sense when the meeting hall is viewed as a place of teaching and its narrative images as didactic tools—especially when considered in light of the third-century Mesopotamian evidence on specific didactic traits in art remarked about in connection with Mani's paintings.

Some elements of third-century Manichaean painting were specifically noted for their educational role. In his *Prose Refutations*, Ephrem remarks on how and why Mani used (1) labels and (2) contrasting aesthetic values. He explains that the positive and negative doctrinal roles of figures were captured via their appearances ("odious" vs. "lovely") in Mani's *Book of Pictures*. He also adds that this contrast was supposed to generate an emotional reaction in the viewer to "loathe" the "hideousness of Darkness" and "desire" the loveliness of the "sons of Light." Thus, the image conveyed visually an essential cognitive component of Mani's doctrine—its fundamental dualism. Ephrem writes: [55]

> He (Mani) labeled the odious (figures) 'sons of Darkness' in order to declare to his disciples the hideousness of Darkness, so that they might loathe it; and he labeled the lovely (figures) 'sons of Light' in order to declare to them its beauty so that they might desire it. (Ephrem, *Refutations* 126.31–127.11; Reeves 1997, 262–63) [56]

This passage further notes that some figures were "labeled," that is, identified by an inscription. Similarly, a Middle Persian text (M 219) suggests that a building depicted in a polemical image was labeled as "The Dwelling of the Gods." The practice of using labels was still present [57]

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54   For a table tracking the interior design elements of ancient synagogues in Galilee, Judea, and the diaspora from between 50 BCE and late third century CE, see Clausen (2016, 170–71 and Tab.1).

700 years later in Uygur editions of Mani's *Book of Picture*.[55] The known fragments of these preserve (1) the practice of labeling figures together with many additional features, which were too archaic for their own time and place in East Central Asia during the ninth and tenth centuries. Likely, their use was preserved through generations of earlier editions of the *Book of Picture*, which ultimately lead back to third-century Mesopotamia,[56] including (2) the horizontal scroll format, in which (3) decorative borders (often with wavy lines) frame the images and separate them from one another.[57] These elements all facilitated a didactic application of art in the course of image-based sermons.

Considering the Dura synagogue in light of the above points brings to focus a possible [58] educational role of Jewish painting in third-century Mesopotamia. Once the biblical scenes were added to its walls, the synagogue became a location where teaching with images and visual learning could take place. As a permanent display, the images were set up to facilitate these practices (see Fig. 5). They were defined with the viewer in mind.[58] Painting them on a scale large enough to be visible from across the room allowed for three stacked registers. To assure an unobstructed view for all present, the lowest register (register C) was set at a height just above the heads of the people seated in the second row of benches—directly behind their backs was a decorative band.[59] In this well-designed space, each panel functions as a cohesive pictorial unit separated from the adjacent units by ornamental borders with wavy lines (i.e., horizontal "register bands" and vertical "panel bands"). All figures are outlined in black and are shown against a monochromatic surface, often close to the foreground with little definition of depth to the picture space. A distinctly didactic element of the murals is the labeling of certain figures. Moses, Elijah, Mordecai, Ahasuerus, Esther, Samuel, and David are identified by inscriptions (Kraeling 1956, 269–72). Other figures of religious prominence and/or secular authority are shown beneath cloth canopies or seated in an Iranian fashion on a throne. Aided by these means, the panels at Dura were set up to function as visual tools for teaching.

The possibility that art could have played a leading rather than a subordinate role in a sermon has not been considered before in connection with the Dura synagogue. This principle— [59] attested in connection with Mani's *Book of Pictures* in third-century Mesopotamia—contrasts with Fine's interpretation about the homiletic function of narrative panels at Dura, which assumes that the images are secondary to the leading role played by scripture within the context

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55 This fragment retains the word "Buddha" written vertically in the Sogdian script ("B-U-T") to identify Shakyamuni as one of the four primary prophets of Manichaeism [see Gulácsi (2015), p. 357, Figs. 5/2 and 6/5]. Labels are written vertically in Uygur Manichaean art. Labels are also used to identify actual members of the living community in depiction rituals and in images of salvation seen on mortuary banners and in a frontispiece of a prayer book (**Gulácsi 2005, 46-52**; Gulácsi 2015, 265–70 and 335-345). No labels are attested on the remains of Chinese Manichaean art (twelfth to fifteenth centuries), suggesting that labels represent a West Asiatic element in Uygur Manichaean art, which was abandoned as the religion became Sinicized.

56 On Mani's commissioning his *Book of Pictures* from a local workshop, **see notes 6-8 above**.

57 Other such archaic, originally Syro-Mesopotamian characteristics of Uygur *Book of Pictures* fragments include (4) the use of a solid background, (5) keeping the figures in the foreground, (6) adding canopies to mark significance, (7) using the sun and moon symbols to flank the head of an important figure, (8) making God's hand reach down to the scene from above, (9) dressing figures in Iranian garments while (10) positioning them on a throne with knees spread, and (11) using hovering winged figures when needed.

58 This is often not the case when art is meant to serve a ritual function, as seen, for example, in early Tibetan Buddhist temples surviving from Ladak and Guge, where the painting and sculpture are arranged to create a *mandala* of deities essential for the ritual performed in that space.

59 Kraeling (1956, 67) notes that although they look similar to one another, the three registers are actually uneven in height, fluctuating about 0.1 m from end to end. They measure: 1.1 m (A), 1.5 m (B), and 1.3 m (C). Below register C, the decorative band was approximately 0.7 m tall.
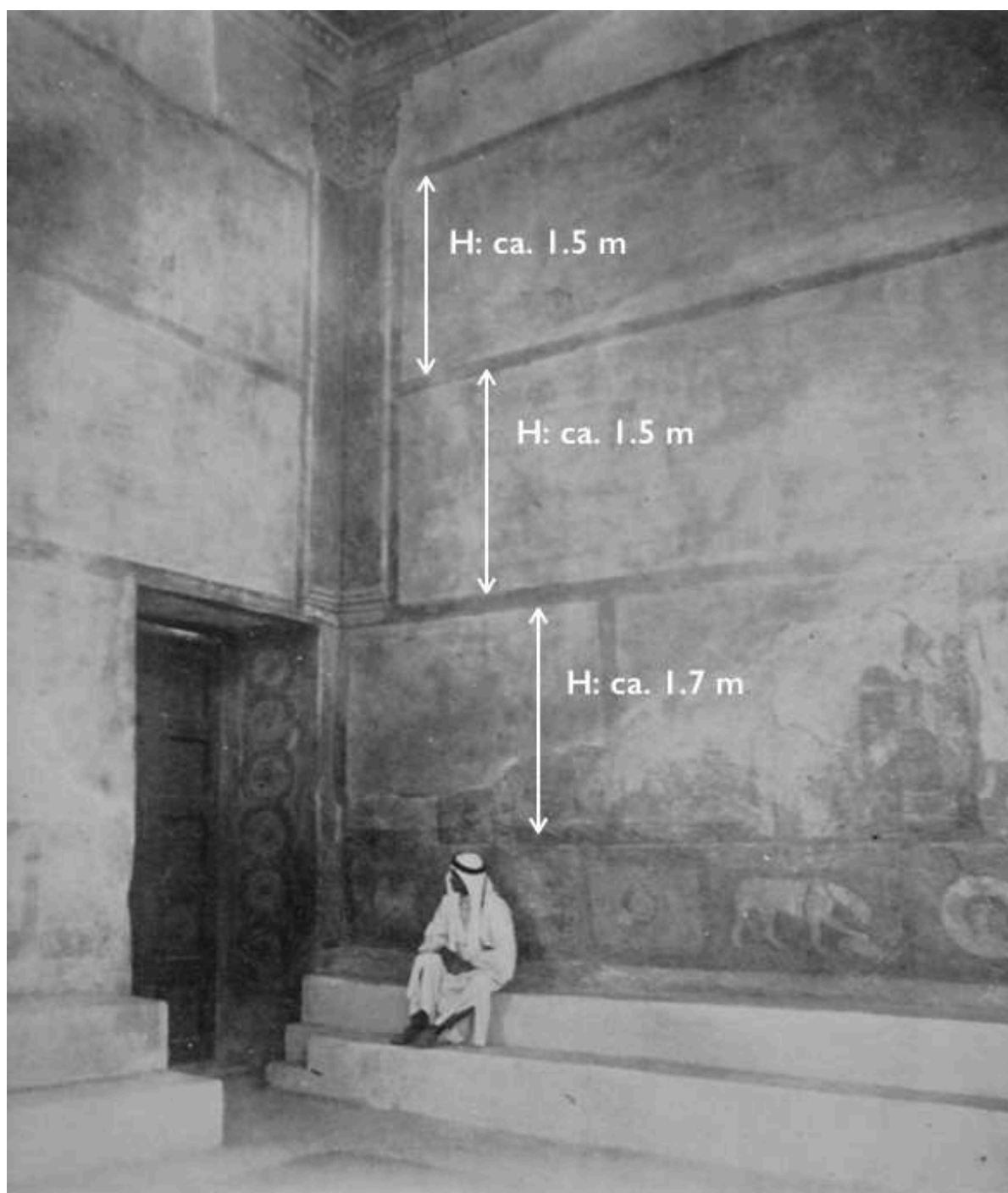
Figure 5   Scale of meeting hall (southeast corner) as reconstructed in the National Museum of Damascus (after Kraeling 1956, Plate XXV)

of a sermon. Without elaborating, he imagines a preacher "turning to the images and using them to homiletic effect—and to different effects, according to the content of his homily" (see full quote above). If an image does not guide the instructions, however, what Fine describes would indeed have required turning around, that is, changing the direction of one's attention (maybe multiple times) during a homily. The preacher would have had to turn, just as would the entire community present. They all would have had to reorient themselves as the content of the sermon dictated, or else ignored the images. At any such sermon, some of the referenced images would have been out of the range of view of a significant portion of the audience, due to their seating position. In short, the imagined subordinate, supplementary role of the image in a text-based sermon is physically impractical, if not impossible. Effective didactic utilization of the pictorial program would require that a single panel (or a set of contiguous panels) served as a starting point of an image-based sermon. In addition to the Manichaean comparative evidence, therefore, the physical evidence of the Dura Synagogue itself demands a different explanation of how the images were used when the local Jewish community assembled there. Moreover, there is further Jewish data to support the claim that the narrative panels of the Dura synagogue played the leading role in planning and staging an image-based sermon by serving as the starting point of instruction. Jewish Studies scholarship about this may best be explored in connection with the oral context to teaching with images.

Image-Based Oral Context

The didactic paintings of the Duran Jews and third-century Manichaeans were used in an oral   [60]
context. They were both designed to be part of communal teachings, functioning as props of speech in the context of live interpretations. Documentary evidence about this is especially strong in the Manichaean case, where a learned member of the community gave image-based instructions. While the archeological records of the synagogue are all but silent, certain iconographic features in its pictorial program signal that the Jews of Dura also involved their murals in live instructions. The data supplied by these two different communities about the purpose of their paintings reveals shared characteristics, including (1) the defining importance of an oral religious culture surrounding them, (2) evidence about live discussions of religious teaching preserved in them, (3) the need for a skilled teacher to sermonize with them, and that (4) they most likely played a leading role in image-based sermons.

Orality is firmly attested from third-century Mesopotamia in connection with Manichaean   [61]
sermons—both with and without images. Mani's lay followers were urged to regularly listen to sermons in order to increase their knowledge (and so increase merit for their reincarnation). The utmost importance of this is reflected in the very designation of the laity. Laypeople are "catechumens" (< Gr. *katēchoumenos* 'one who is being taught orally'), that is, someone who is under instruction, or "auditors" (< Lat. *auditor* 'hearer' or 'listener'), that is, someone who literally listens to religious instruction. Manichaean sermons given by the highest-ranking elects could be illustrated in third-century Mesopotamia only by the images of the *Book of Pictures*; but, starting from the fourth century, also by icons of Mani.[60] The early Manichaeans

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60   Icons of Mani (most likely panel paintings) are attested from Byzantine Levant, Umayyad Iraq, and pre-Uygur Central Asia between the early fourth and early eighth centuries, including an illustrated sermon. Writing about 65 years after Mani's death, Eusebius of Caesarea (ca. 264-339 CE) mentions, in his *Letter to Augusta Constantia,* that he once saw "an icon (Gr. *eikoni*)" of Mani "escorted (or 'attended,' Gr. *doruphoroumenon*) by the Manichaeans." Early Islamic historiography discusses the defiling and destruction of icons of Mani in Baghdad and other cities of Iraq in 743-744 CE. A Manichaean primary source, the *Compendium of the Doctrines and Styles of the Teaching of Mani, the Buddha of Light* (short: *Compendium*), pre-

even had a phrase for an image-based version of a live teaching, which survives in the Parthian language. (Part.) *Ārdhang Wifrās* translates as '(oral) sermon on the *Ārdhang*,' that is, on Mani's *Book of Pictures*.[61] In its verbal form, *wifrās-* is a transitive verb with meanings such as "to teach something," "to show something" or "to proclaim something;" as a noun, it connotes "teaching," "instruction," "sermon," "homily," and "oral sermon" (Durkin-Meisterernst 2004, 352).[62] Its connotation as a live teaching is especially relevant in connection with the *Ārdhang*, since the mention of a *wifrās* on the *Ārdhang* confirms the practice of giving an 'oral sermon' on the '*Book of Picture*.' The language of the phrase signals an early origin, when Parthian was one of the primary Iranian tongues during the third and fourth centuries.[63]

[62] In contrast, the oral context of the Jewish murals at Dura has been routinely overlooked in favor of a focus on their relationship to scripture. Most publications see these paintings merely as illustrations to the Hebrew Bible. "Deeply embedded in the scholarship on the synagogue," this approach is critiqued by Annabel Wharton in her *Refiguring the Post Classical City*. Writing about the Jewish pictorial program at Dura, Wharton notes that "scholars have been intent on identifying *the* text that explains the image" in order to find "unitary meaning" in art. Such "assumptions give priority to the literary text and repress alternative narratives offered by nonliterary texts and by the image itself. Indeed, the preoccupation with identifying explanatory texts seems to be a peculiarly scholarly form of policing meaning" (Wharton 1995, 43 and 45, respectively). Restricting meaning to the written word ignores the oral context of much of the religious discourse of the ancient world within which these paintings were made and used. Moreover, it yields a limited appreciation of their potential as visual sources of discussion independent of texts, leaving an important aspect of third-century Mesopotamian Judaism unexplored.

[63] Evidence about the practical details of how pictorial art was employed for live instruction in third-century Mesopotamia is preserved in textual sources in connection with Mani's *Book of Pictures*. They attest that during one part of the teaching, art was a catalyst for dialogue and referenced by teacher and pupil alike. The disciples sat in front of it and stood up to ask questions.[64] They were asked to look at an image, implying that it was pointed to: "Look, he (the righteous) is drawn in the *Hikōn*" (*Kephalaion* 92) and "direct eye and face (towards this and see) how it is depicted [....] here in front of you" (M 219). While looking, they were urged to "Listen …!" (M 219) to the instructor, who used phrases such as "on this picture …" (M 219) and "as it shows […] so it shows" (M 4570). In one text, the question-answer part of an image-based instruction is recorded in its entirety, when an auditor inquires about the reincarnation of the laity (*Kephalaion* 92). He wants to know why, among the three possible destinies, Mani depicted only the two extremes in the *Book of Pictures*, the fate of the sinner

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serves in Chinese translation from 731 CE a sermon about an icon of Mani that was given by an anonymous, most likely Sogdian, high-ranking elect (see Gulácsi 2015, 117–18).

61 Werner Sundermann translates *Ārdhang Wifrās* as 'Sermon/discourse/commentary of/on the *Ārdhang*' and 'Treatise (or sermon) on the *Ārdhang*' and 'Oral Proclamation/teaching/recitation' as the original Parthian meaning of *wifrās* (Gulácsi 2017a).

62 In his study about the use of *wifrās* "teaching, sermon, etc.," Sundermann (1984) points to a Syriac pattern in Manichaean literature, with *wifrās* rendering Syr. *mēmrā*.

63 Its survival among the Turfan fragments as a Parthian text suggests a continued usage that stretched from the Parthian era through the Uygur era of Manichaean history until the early eleventh century in East Central Asia. By that time, Parthian was no longer a living language, but used only as a *lingua sacra* of the Manichaean Church.

64 *Homilies* 27: "… one who will sit in front of his *Hikōn*," (Pedersen 2006, 27) and *Kephalaion* 92: "at … one of the occasions, the catechumen […] stood up. He said to our enlightener (Mani) […]" (Gardner 1995, 241).

(anyone who does not accept Mani's teachings) and the fate of the righteous elect, whereas he did not show the fate of the auditor/catechumen. Mani explains that the fate of the auditor is to be reborn in numerous bodies before his ultimate salvation. Therefore, to show the countless possible ways of rebirth in art is not practical:

> Once again, at one of the occasions, the catechumen [...] stood up. He said to our   [64]
> enlightener [...]: 'Why have you marked every thing [... that exists], and what is
> provided to happen, in the great *Hikōn*? You have made clear in that great *Hikōn*;
> you have painted (Copt. *zōgraphe* < Gr. *zōgraphein*) the righteous one, how he
> shall be released and brought before the Judge and attain the land of light. You
> have also drawn the sinner, how he shall die. He shall be set before the Judge and
> tried [. . .] the dispenser of justice. And he is thrown into gehenna, where he shall
> wander for eternity. Now, both of these have been painted depicted by you in the
> great *Hikōn*; but why did you not paint the catechumen? How he shall be released
> from his body, and how he shall be brought before the Judge and reach the place
> ordained for him and [. . .] that he can rest in the place of rest forever. For if we
> can see [. . .] the path of the catechumen, and know [. . .] so have we recognized
> him with knowledge. If we can also see him face to face in the *Hikōn*] [. . .] in the
> sighting of him!'

> Then speaks the enlightener to that catechumen: 'It is not possible to paint the   [65]
> catechumen in the *Hikōn*, because many [. . .] worlds and [. . .] before him from
> place to place [. . .] there are others existing [. . .] because to depict it, [...] since
> alone in a single place [. . .] you know [. . .] that the end of the catechumen [. .
> .] his path comes to be with the elect [. . .] of the elect. Look, he is drawn in the
> *Hikōn* [. . .] as the elect will [. . .] the catechumen will go [. . .] the path of the
> elect [. . .] will not go into the land of life [... of the] elect and the catechumen is a
> single one. However, it is not possible to paint the middle way of the purification
> of the catechumen, because he shall not be purified in a single place; nor cleansed
> and washed there.'

> When that catechumen had heard these things, he was persuaded and [agreed]   [66]
> and kept his silence. (*Kephalaion* 92, 234.24–236.6; Gardner 1995, 241–42)

This passage mentions images employed as didactic tools, facilitating a discussion during an   [67]
instruction on a soteriological topic. The remarks in the text about how the auditor "stood up"
and addressed Mani "at one of the occasions" give the impression that we are joining in for
the question-answer part of the teaching, most likely after Mani's introductory sermon had
already been concluded.

The Dura synagogue also contains some clues indicating that live interpretations of Jewish   [68]
teachings took place in its meeting hall. Seamlessly incorporated into the iconography of its
murals, non-biblical motifs document popular knowledge familiar to the community. Jarl E.
Fossum notes how a Hellenistic anthropology of body, spirit, and soul became integral to
late ancient Jewish interpretations of biblical creation and revivification stories offered in
both text and art. For a textual example, he points to Flavius Josephus, who *renders* Genesis
2:7 according to this trichotomy by inadvertently adding to it the concept of "spirit," while
paraphrasing it as "God fashioned man by taking soil from earth, and sent spirit, and soul
into him" (*Judean Antiquities I. 34*). For a Jewish visual record of this anthropology, Fossum

Figure 6   Panel reflecting Hellenistic anthropology (after Kraeling 1956, Color Plates)

points to the non-biblical exegesis of the Ezekiel panel at Dura (NC 1), where the raising of the dead shows three Psyches as symbols of spirits flying above the three dead bodies about to be resurrected (Fig. 6) (Fossum 1985, 210–11; cf. Schubert 1976, 213 ff.). Joseph Gutmann traces the presence of Jewish religious folklore on the walls of the synagogue by discussing five "novel features which depart from the biblical narrative" (Gutmann 1983). He calls them "aggadah-inspired illustrations" and explains how they do not correspond with the textual treatments of the same subjects in the Hebrew Bible. What they document visually from mid-third-century Dura are alternative, apocryphal versions of stories attested from Jewish folklore as preserved in later Mesopotamian rabbinic literature from the fifth to seventh centuries CE.[65] The correspondences between the later collection of legends and the non-biblical motifs of the Dura murals indicate the longevity of religious folklore shared within the two temporally different oral cultures they document from Jewish Mesopotamia.

Late ancient Jewish religious folklore has a significant presence in the Dura synagogue, impacting over one-third of the panels that are intact enough to be positively identified (Fig. 7).[66] There are at least twelve such motifs, five of which were noted by Gutmann. Gutmann started surveying them with the *Sacrifice of Isaac* scene on the façade of the Torah shrine, where (1) the ram motif is not shown according to Genesis 22:13, "caught in the thicket by its horn," but rather quietly standing next to a tree awaiting its fate (Gutmann 1983, 92). He also mentioned the *Samuel Anoints David* panel (WC 3), where (2) David is shown with six brothers, and not seven, as in First Samuel 16:10 (Gutmann 1983, 96). The *Infancy of Moses* panel (WC 4) in itself contains five non-biblical motifs that accord with material in Ginzberg's

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65   The stories were collected by Louis Ginzberg (Ginzberg 1937).

66   Listed from right to left, the fifteen identifiable narrative panels are NA 1 and WA 1 in the upper register, NB 1, WB 4, WB 2, WB 1 in the middle register, as well as the three-part panel NC 1 (counted here as three: NC 1 left, NC 1 middle, and NC 1 right) plus WC 4, WC 3, WC 2 WC1, SC 4 and SC 1 in the lower register.

collection of Jewish legends about Moses. In accord with the latter, (3) the midwives are Moses' mother and sister, Jochebed and Miriam (Ginzberg 1937, 2:250–254), (4) the ark is covered with a "tiny canopy" (Ginzberg 1937, 2:265), (5) it is the pharaoh's daughter who retrieves the baby, (6) her arm is miraculously lengthened to reach the ark, and by so doing (7) her body is shown healed from leprosy (Ginzberg 1937, 2:266–267).[67] In contrast, in Exodus 1:15-2:14, the midwives (Shiph'rah and Pu'ah) are not related to Moses, the ark has no cover, a servant retrieves the baby from the water, and there is neither mention of a lengthened arm nor reference to the body of the princess being healed from leprosy. The *Moses and the Well* panel (WB 1) contains a folkloric conflation of two separate biblical episodes: "the twelve springs of Elim" (Exodus 15:27) and "the miraculous well of Be'er" (Numbers 21:16). It is by bringing these stories together that the oral tradition produces the story of "Miriam's well" in the Jewish legends, from which the panel depicts three key elements: (8) the well that travels with the tribes and sets itself down in front of the Tabernacle at the campsites, (9) the tribal leaders that sing "the song of the well" in front of their tents, and (10) the well that responds to their songs by emitting a stream to each tent (Gutmann 1983, 98–99; Ginzberg 1937, 3:53). The story of *Elijah and Priests of Ba'al*, shown in two panels (SC 3 and SC 4), also contains non-biblical motifs that correspond with the Jewish legends. These are (11) Hiel, the priest of Ba'al hiding under the altar to light it secretly, and (12) the serpent sent by God to kill Hiel (Ginzberg 1937, 4:198),[68] neither of which is found in the biblical text. These twelve elements are not what the community would have heard read out from scripture, which points to an independent sermonizing practice. Their presence further suggests that these paintings are visual references to midrash-like oral expositions.

Image-based sermons were conducted by leading elects among third-century Manichaeans, who relied on specialized teaching resources. These distinguished teachers were highly literate and learned, were involved with missionizing, and also handled the holy texts of their religion (the books of Mani's writings). During the third century, only the two uppermost positions in the hierarchy of the sacerdotal class are mentioned together with the *Book of Pictures:* (1) Mani and his successor, that is, the head of the Manichaean Church (Parth. *sar*, Lt. *primate*); and (2) Mani's own disciples, who belonged to the rank of 12 "Teachers" (Parth. *āmōžāg*, Lt. *maior*). They are routinely noted to also have carried a written book of Mani while missionizing with the *Book of Pictures*.[69] Verbal records of Mani's wisdom could offer a handy reference for an elect preparing for a sermon. This impression is given by a unique genre of early Manichaean literature developed to aid image-based sermons. Still remembering the words of sermons Mani conducted with images, the first generation of disciples wrote one of them down, most likely in Syriac, as if it were a transcript, including what questions were asked and how they were answered; this survives in Coptic translation (*Kephalaion* 92). Other transcripts of image-based sermons were written in Parthian (M 4570) and Middle Persian (M 219) (Gulácsi 2015, 152–53). In addition, a unique teachers' guide was composed in Parthian titled "(Oral) Sermon on the *Book of Pictures*," the Parthian *Ārdhang Wifrās* (discussed above). It is important to emphasize that none of this literature describes details of the art. They reference a corresponding image only as the starting point of the instruction. They document that the instruction is *not* about the image; it needs the image only as a tool for a live teach-

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67   Gutmann also discusses the "nude princess" (Gutmann 1983, 93–94).

68   Gutmann also discusses the Hiel motif (Gutmann 1983, 96).

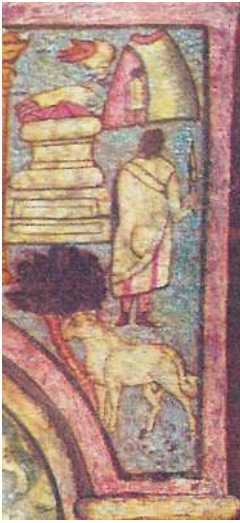69   *Kephalaion* 151*, Homilies* 27*,* M 2, M 5596, and M 5815 (Gulácsi 2015, 108).

7a *Sacrifice of Isaak*   **7b** *Samuel Anoints David* panel (WC 3)   **7c** *Moses and the Well* panel (WB 1)

7d *Infancy of Moses* panel (WC 4)

7e *Elijah and Priests of Ba'al* panels (SC 3 and SC 4)

Figure 7   Panels with motifs of Jewish religious folklore, after Kraeling (1956, Color Plates)

ing about Manichaean doctrine. The elect who gave image-based sermons in third-century Mesopotamia had a more nuanced task among an already distinguished group of peers.

Being the 'house of the Sabbath' (Gr. *sabbateion*),[70] ancient synagogues had a tradition of specialized sabbatical teaching. Perrot emphasizes a division of labor among specialists who had separate tasks on the Sabbath. The skills necessary for the reader of the Torah's Hebrew text and its Aramaic translator (distinct from the reader)[71] were different from those of its commentator. While all of them had to be literate and learned in the Torah, rhetorical skills were also needed for the commentator. Perrot considers the challenges that small communities in Judea and Galilee must have faced for filling these roles: "contrary to the rich and important *proseuchae* or synagogues in Antioch or Alexandria, the buildings housing synagogues in Israel must have seemed meager and poor with no great architectural quality. But they were numerous, especially in Jerusalem and even in remote places like Nazareth. Under these circumstances one can guess how hard it was to find large numbers of readers and commentators at a time when schooling had barely begun to develop. It seems that one reader was enough for the Sabbath morning. This at any rate is what Philo gives us to understand, as do some later Jewish sources. If a priest was present, he could be asked first to take on the task, providing of course that he could read" (Perrot 1990, 154).

[71]

In contrast, the diaspora community at Dura was "at the height of its prosperity" during the middle of the third century (Kraeling 1956, 329–36). Its archaeological footprint leads Kraeling to conclude that it was sizable and well-off; its members owned Block L7 (see Fig. 2), which likely offered lodging for Jewish travelers (room 6); and it invested significant resources into the renovation and improvement of its property by adding to its meeting hall a large aedicula with a painted reredos for its "Torah chest" and masonry seating in Stage 1,[72] followed by a narrative pictorial program in Stage 2.[73] This prosperity gives no reason to question the fact that the Dura synagogue could afford to have or host specialized teachers—readers, translators, and commentators—even before the narrative paintings were added to its meeting hall.

[72]

Image-based teaching seems to have had a place in this third-century Mesopotamian synagogue. Scholars of ancient Judaism agree that very little is known about homiletic practices prior to the time of the Talmud. They likewise agree that what survives as "literary midrashim" are collections and condensations of material from actual oral sermons, which could be used

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70   Josephus, *Ant.* 16:164 (Perrot 1990, 146).

71   By "translator," two different functions could be implied: (1) Perrot discusses the "translator" who provided the reading in a different language: "During the reading of the Tora each verse, readout in Hebrew, could be translated into Aramaic, but by some other than the reader. In the case of the Prophets, the translator comes in after a group three verses. Only a few passages of the Tora are not to be translated: […]. The Mishna wants the reading to be done from a leather scroll written in the Hebrew 'square script' (*M. Megilla* 2:2), not with the ancient Hebrew characters still known in the time of Bar Kokhba (died 135)" CE (Perrot 1990, 144). (2) Heinemann notes the "translator" (*turgemen*) whose task was "to broadcast the *sermon* in a loud voice—a service that sometimes was offered to the preacher as a token of respect (Heinemann 2007, 468).

72   Located on the façade of the aedicula below the base of the menorah, inscription No. 2 commemorates two donors (Uzzi, who "made" the aedicula, and Joseph, son of Abba, who "made" another object that no longer survives) in connection with the building of the Torah shrine (Kraeling 1956, 269. 332). The aedicula must have been added after the benches were in place, since its projection rests upon them. The Elder's seat, however, is built up against the side of the Torah shrine (Rostovtzeff et al. 1936, 323). Aramaic personal names, such as Uzzi and Abba, are also found among Mani's leading disciples, further indicating the geo-cultural relatedness of the Duran Jews and the third-century Manichaeans.

73   Seating capacity in Stage 2 doubles from 65 in Stage 1 (Kraeling 1956, 334), based on the length of the built-in benches but not the possible use of additional seating on mats and/or wooden benches (Levine 2012, 99). Rostovtzeff estimated it for about 90 people (Rostovtzeff et al. 1936, 324).

in the creation of new ones (Heinemann 2007, 468–69; Perrot 1990, 158); in this respect, they resemble similar notes and outlines of sermon found in Manichaean texts. Without intending to claim anything about the contents of ancient sermons in light of medieval records, Perrot stresses that their *character* was likely similar to what is captured in later sources (Perrot 1990, 158). The literary midrashim presuppose a variety of approaches to the oral sermon. Heinemann explains that they could start either with a *proem* cited from scripture or with a *halakhic* question, which were followed by "the body of the sermon (whose structure is not clearly defined)," and many examples concluded with a "messianic" emphasis that some researchers claim to have detected in the Dura mural program. Nevertheless, he cautions that literary homilies "must not be confused with the actual live sermon as preached in the synagogue (in a variety of forms)" (Heinemann 2007, 469). Accordingly, when Wharton turns t the midrash literature in her study about the Dura synagogue, she is *not* in search of the meaning of specific scenes, but in search of analogous uses to explain what could happen to art in "an *oral* tradition intimate with both the sacred text and the narrative embellishment that so affectively integrated scripture with the daily life of the community."[74] She argues that "instead of treating the frescos as illustrations of scripture or midrash, it is possible to read the frescos as *prior* to the written text," functioning in an oral context. Thus, the fortunate discovery of the extensive painting program at Dura opens to us a possibility undetectable from just the literary sources on Jewish sermons, namely, that an image itself could serve as the starting point of a sermon.

The claim that images could be the starting points of sermons given about larger doctrinal themes in third-century Mesopotamia is documented, in the Manichaean case, by the *Ārdhang Wifrās*. This text was not written as regular prose but rather as an abbreviated list of references to well-known stories suited for bringing up during instruction to help explain and contextualize the doctrine portrayed. It may be best compared to an outline that a teacher uses during teaching or notes that can be reviewed before oral instruction begins. One of its sections is a list of parables/stories. Each starts with the phrase "about/of," such as: "About a man who is granted much desire," or "About a ruler who [gave] a meal to the noblemen, …" Another part contains a list of similes, each of which begins with the phrase "(it is) like."[75] For examples, in one passage (M 35), the main theme is the "Great Fire" (also known as the "World Fire") that will consume the universe at the end of time. Instead of a simple exposition of this subject, the character of fire is referenced through a series of allegories, each of which is could be evoked while explaining the Great Fire shown in art:

[74]

The story of the *Great Fire*: Like the fire, with powerful wrath, swallows this world and enjoys it; Like this fire that is in this body, swallows the exterior fire that comes in fruit and food, and enjoys it; Like two brothers who found a treasure were lacerated by a pursuer, and they died; Like Ohya, Leviathan, and Raphael lacerated each other, and they vanished; Like

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74   In Wharton's view, the pictorial program itself is a sermon: "Both midrash and fresco exemplify how the juxtaposition of narrative fragments produces a text. […] Just as the midrash comment on fragments of scripture—letters of the alphabet, words, phrases, episodes—so, in the fresco details invite associations outside the narrative. […] Just as lessons drawn by the rabbis and reported in the midrash manage an entire range of communal experience from the mundane to the celestial, so the frescos participate in the construction of reality by the rabbi for the viewer. The manipulation of images may have been as important then in the construction of authority in the synagogue as it is now in a public lecture on the history of art (Wharton 1995, 48, all quotes above are from this page).

75   M 8255 folio 1 and M 8255 folio 2 and M 205, respectively (Gulácsi 2015, 81).

a lion-cub, a calf in a wood (or in a meadow), and a fox, who lacerated each another, [and they vanished or died]; So [the *Great Fire* swallows] both of the fires.[76]

The subjects of these references are clearly stated, mentioning elements of local Mesopotamian popular culture and Manichaean religious folklore that were readily comprehensible in the world of the intended audience at the time when its Parthian prose was written; but their nuanced meanings are not self-evident today. They were meant to provide an *aide memoire* to the teacher while preparing to give a sermon (*wifrās*) about the Great Fire with the help of an image in the *Book of Pictures* (*Ārdhang*). In other words, the Manichaeans' image-based sermon was about doctrine. The art used in it was a catalyst of discussion—teaching and learning as well as questions and answers.   [76]

Analogously, the panels in the meeting hall at Dura could have functioned as the starting point or a visual reference of a specialized sermon, but not its ultimate focus. The subject of such a sermon still addressed a teaching or some concern of the community, building on but not limited to an exposition of the artistic scene. Just as with a biblical quote, a sermon could start with art in this painted synagogue. Instead of jumping from detail to detail or scene to scene, the Manichaeans' *Ārdhang Wifrās* suggests the possibility that one panel (or a part of a panel) was employed as the basis for a sermon in the Dura synagogue. This practice would also have made use of all the benches, with the preacher standing either in the center of the room or in front of his seat, as Perrot and Hachlili explained. With a bit of advance planning, the design of the seating and the placement of the panels above head-level allowed for a comfortable view of each image for the community present.   [77]

The comparative textual evidence presented above on how third-century Manichaeans used their images in Mesopotamia compels us to consider the Dura synagogue as a place where image-based instruction took place. Moreover, it allows us to see for the first time a point of connection among Perrot's and Heinemann's views on the role of teaching in the ancient synagogue, as well as Wharton's view on the importance of orality and Levine's view on doctrinal themes for the pictorial program at Dura. Taken together, they suggest that its narrative murals could have brought an addition to the already existing didactic function of the ancient synagogue—one that, instead of being text-based and read, was image-based and oral in character.   [78]

Conclusion

Canonical texts have been the fundamental focus of what a religion is and where its teachings are to be found. Yet in late ancient Mesopotamia, even within the two most highly textual traditions, Judaism and Manichaeism, art was a practical tool in live teachings—providing that one rejects the notion that the Dura murals were only 'decoration' in a solely 'liturgical space.' Data suggests otherwise. The Jewish pictorial program at Dura had a doctrinal content and was well suited to fulfill a didactic function in an oral context, analogously to what another Mesopotamian religion did with its own art during the middle of the third century.   [79]

Evidence about the didactic function of Mesopotamian Jewish and Mesopotamian Manichaean art considered in this study fits a broader religious practice that spread across the trade routes of the Asian continent during Late Antiquity to become a pan-Asiatic   [80]

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76   M 35 mentions some figures from the Hebrew Bible (see Henning 1943, 71–72).

phenomenon that Victor Mair has called "picture recitation" or "teaching with images."[77] Although Manichaean analogies to Duran Jewish art have not been explored before,[78] the foundations of this study are akin to previous scholarship about orality in ancient Judaism[79] and the Iranian ("eastern"/"oriental") cultural elements in the pictorial program of the synagogue.[80] To address the larger question of how Mani and the Jews of Dura were part of a broader presence of teaching with images in West Asia will require future comparative studies with a focus on materiality of religion and a scope that extends to analogous evidence from other religions (Mandaeism, Armenian Christianity, Sogdian Zoroastrianism, and Kushan Buddhism) that were active across the Iranian cultural region during Late Antiquity. Nevertheless, the narrower scope of this study serves to demonstrate for the first time that the Dura synagogue belongs to this larger regional phenomenon of religious artistic practice, and in particular has close affinities to a contemporaneous didactic use of art among a neighboring (and rival) religious community formed around Mani and the first generation of his disciples during the middle of the third century.

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77 Victor Mair does not discuss Dura and third-century Mesopotamia, but mentions the Manichaean archeological remains that survive from their Uygur era (Mair 1988, 50–53).

78 While the Manichaean analogies of Duran Jewish art have not been explored before, preliminary remarks to this study were published in (Gulácsi and BeDuhn 2011–2015; Gulácsi 2015).

79 For studies on orality in Ancient Judaism, I rely on Susan Niditch (1997) and the only study that considers the murals of the Dura synagogue in context of living sermons by Annabel Wharton (1995).

80 The Iranian (Parthian and Sasanian) elements of Duran Jewish art have been noted since the 1930s in the garments and the regal sitting position used for distinguishing men of secular authority. In addition, Dalia Tawil (Tawil 1979) showed the visual jargon of Iranian imperial art in the investiture motif and triumph motif of the *Mordechai and Esther* panel (WC 2).

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'Religion' in Late Antique Zoroastrianism and Manichaeism

Developing a Term in Counterpoint

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ABSTRACT This article evaluates the development of a generic term for 'religion' in late antique Manichaeism and Zoroastrianism. It examines linguistic indications of the use of *dēn/δēn* as a generic term in the Manichaean Middle Iranian corpora, i.e. Middle Persian, Parthian, and Sogdian, as well as in the corpus of Zoroastrian Middle Persian. The paper considers declination in the plural, the attribution of universal quantifiers or demonstrative adjectives, comparison, and selection as they occur in the above corpora to be indicators of generic concepts. Acknowledging that third-century Manichaeism shaped the term for 'religion' in the Persian Empire, the paper scrutinizes the reflections of this formative process in Sasanian and also early Islamic Zoroastrianism. The resulting analysis of the linguistic evidence indicates that the newly coined Manichaean concept of 'religion' did not find considerable echoes in late antique Zoroastrianism. Furthermore, an investigation of the term *daēnā-* in the Avestan sources provides earlier evidence for the formation of the term 'religion' in pre-Sasanian Zoroastrianism. Finally, the paper highlights the significance of religious contact for the formation of a generic concept of religion.

KEYWORDS generic concept of religion, Manichaeism, Zoroastrianism, Sasanian period, early Islamic period, *daēnā/dēn*

Introduction

'Religion' as a Generic Term

In his essential contribution "Mani and the Crystallization of the Concept of 'Religion' in Third Century Iran" in *Mani at the Court of the Persian Kings*, Jason BeDuhn (2015) analyzes the development of a generic term in Manichaeism for the concept that we now call 'religion.' In his discussion of the conditions necessary for this development, he asserts: "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 [1]

identity" (2015, 248). He aptly shows that Mani and Manichaeism fulfilled these conditions in Sasanian Iran for the first time: "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" (2015, 270). The corresponding Iranian term which Mani and Manichaeans used in their text in Iranian languages is *dēn*, a word that designated different concepts in pre-Manichaean Zoroastrianism. The long conceptual history of the term started in the Old Avestan texts, around the twelfth century C.E., and led to the contemporary New Persian term *dīn*, for 'religion,' on the Iranian scientific metalanguage level[1] of Religious Studies. The formation of the generic concept of RELIGION[2] seems to have depended on religious contacts, as has been shown to be the case in its development in other religious fields.[3] Thus, BeDuhn's study raises the following question: To what extent was the development of the generic term of RELIGION in Manichaeism restricted to this religion and to what extent has the generated abstract term found its way into other religions which were in contact with it in Sasanian Iran? In this article, I examine the case of Zoroastrianism to answer the question whether Zoroastrian authors used the substantive *dēn* in Middle Persian texts as a generic term nearly equivalent to Manichaean 'religion.'

Despite years of discussions, we have to acknowledge that there is no general consensus on a definition of 'religion.' The postcolonial study of religion even denies the existence of the notion 'religion' in pre-modern societies.[4] As a rough orientation for that which follows, we need a basic definition-like localization of 'religion' among socio-cultural entities. I assume that the following working definition, advanced by Volkhard Krech (2018, 10), founded on his assumptions for an analysis of religious evolution and against the deconstructive approach to religion, presents such a basis: [2]

> […] religion is a societal communication system, which intrinsically emerges, reproduces, and further develops. Based on specific sign processes within societal differentiation, it is responsible for ultimately coping with undetermined contingency by the means of the code transcendent/immanent. [3]

To highlight the components of this definition that are more relevant to my discussion, I will [4]

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1   In Religious Studies, following Linguistics, scholars distinguish two different but related levels: the level of religions under investigation is known as object language level. Scholars, however, attempt to use a more formal language to describe and analyze religions, which differs from the object language. This level is called metalanguage level. For this differentiation in Linguistics, see Allan (2006).

2   In the field of Metaphor Studies, linguists differentiate between conceptual metaphors, which are more or less general to all languages, and their instances, linguistic metaphors, i.e. the realization of the conceptual metaphors in a particular language. To demonstrate this difference, they render the conceptual metaphors in SMALL CAPITALS; see e. g. the leading reference *Metaphors We Live by* (Lakoff and Johnson 1980). Following this, I render the abstract concepts in this article in SMALL CAPITALS to clearly differentiate between them and the linguistic expressions of the concepts.

3   In the context of the Käte Hamburger Kolleg *Dynamics in the History of Religions in Asia and Europe* at the Center for Religious Studies, Ruhr-Universität Bochum, Reinhold Glei and Stefan Reichmuth (2012) studied the process of the development of a generic term of *religio* in Latin by concentrating on the Latin translations of the Koran. In doing so, they study the semantic development of the Arabic term *dīn* as well. Another research from this context deals with material from the medieval period: Knut Stünkel (2013) addresses a similar question in his book *Una sit religio: Religionsbegriffe und Begriffstopologien bei Cusanus, Llull und Maimonides*. He points out that contact situations are an important factor for the genesis of the term 'religion.'

4   This issue has been intensively discussed in the last decades, starting with Wilfred Cantwell Smith (1962) and continued, to mention only some of the prominent publications, by Asad (1993), McCutcheon (1997), J. Z. Smith (1998), Ford Campany (2003), Fitzgerald (2007), Nongbri (2013), Schalk (2013), and Barton and Boyarin (2016).

adopt from the above that religion a) is a communication system, b) has a social dimension, c) helps coping with undetermined contingency, and d) uses for this the transcendent-immanent differentiation. In the following, I will start my engagement with the representation of the linguistic indications of the use of a noun as a generic term (next section). The proposed working definition on the metalanguage level will be contrasted by the pre-Sasanian semantics of the lexeme *dēn-* on the object language level. For this, representing the prehistory of the development of the generic concept of religion in Sasanian Iran, I will examine the semantics of Avestan *daēnā-* (section "Daēnā in Antique Zoroastrianism"). This section highlights the semantics of the term that developed into 'religion' in its pre-Sasanian Zoroastrian context and demonstrates with which components of 'religion' pre-Sasanian Zoroastrianism provides Manichaeism. Afterwards, I will retrieve the use of the linguistic means in the Middle Iranian Manichaean Corpora, Middle Persian, Parthian, and Sogdian,[5] for the use of the noun *dēn* as a generic term for RELIGION (section "The Existence of the Term 'Religion' in Manichaeism"). I will divide the attestations in three categories: morphological and syntactical evidence, semantic evidence, and pragmatic evidence. This section aims to zoom in on the historical development of the term 'religion' in Manichaeism and will provide more evidence for the crystallization of the Manichaean concept of RELIGION than BeDuhn aptly summarizes in one passage. Subsequently, I will examine the Zoroastrian Middle Persian corpus to demonstrate the rare use of the lexeme *dēn* as a generic term (section "The Term 'Religion' in Sasanian and post-Sasanian Zoroastrianism"). The corpus linguistic approach, in comparison to the philological study of religion or other historical approaches to religion, offers the considerable advantage of being able to quantitatively compare the use of the term *dēn* as a generic concept in both religions. The article, moreover, attempts to point out the textual departure point of the development of the term 'religion' in Sasanian Iran (section "The Departure Point of the Development of the Term RELIGION in Sasanian Iran") and to show that the process was at its very beginning in Mani's lifetime. The centuries that followed, the article tries to demonstrate, witnessed further development of this concept (section "Conclusion").

A comparison between two instances is possible only when the scholar doing the comparison presupposes an ABSTRACT CONCEPT which would include both instances. In the absence of a more abstract concept of 'religion,' it is not possible to compare Manichaeism and Zoroastrianism. This operation, the comparison of different religions, would elude theologians of a particular religion if they did not have a generic concept of religion at their disposal. Similarly, the same kind of elusion appears in the case of scholars of religious studies: A scientific comparative study of religions can take place only with a scholarly agreement on a generic concept of RELIGION. Therefore, such an abstract notion is necessary on the object language level as well as the metalanguage level. The study of the development of the generic concept of RELIGION on the object language level, therefore, can contribute to an inclusive definition of RELIGION on the metalanguage level. This article will also attempt to do this. [5]

Linguistic Indications for Generic Terms

The use of a substantive as a generic term can be linguistically expressed in different ways. Two such ways seem to be the most frequent ones: Firstly, a lexeme can be used in the singular so that it does not denote a concrete entity but designates a generic concept. Secondly, a lexeme can be used in the plural to designate a group of entities. Although the entities in this [6]

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5   In addition to these three languages, a Bactrian fragment in Manichaean script is known as well; see Sims-Williams (2009).

group could be concrete entities, their grouping together implies the existence of a generic concept which groups the entities together. Therefore, the use of a lexeme in the plural could signify the implicit existence of a generic concept. Correspondingly, the examination of the plural declination of a substantive on the object language level that designates a similar concept to our scientific notion of 'religion' is reliable evidence for the existence of the generic term RELIGION in the religious field that chronologically and geographically corresponds to the searched corpus. In terms of a research question which requires the examination of the whole occurrences of a lexeme in a corpus, focusing on formulations in the plural seems to be a reasonable delimitation to reassess the existence of a generic term. This method appears appropriate especially when the singular form of a lexeme is much more frequently attested than its plural form. This is actually the case for the Middle Persian lexeme *dēn/δēn* in Manichaean and Zoroastrian corpora.

Regarding the plural form, it is important to notice a Western Middle Iranian syntactical rule. One should remember that, in Middle Persian and Parthian, a morphologically singular noun can be syntactically used with a plural verb as a plural subject. Therefore, lexical searches either in lexicons or in transcriptions can provide only morphologically plural words. Because of the absence of an adequate instrument, the search for plural forms should for the moment be restricted to morphologically plural forms, i. e. *dēnān* or *dēnīhā*. Without searching for morphological as well as syntactical plurals, a definitive statement about the uses of *dēn* in the plural is not possible. Such comprehensive search options are possible only by producing and investigating corpora that are morphologically annotated with parts of speech tags as well as a minimum of syntactical annotation.[6] These still remain a desideratum for Middle Iranian texts at the current stage.[7]

[7]

Another form of expression which points to the use of a substantive as a generic term is its formulation with a universal quantifier, such as 'every,' 'each,' and 'all' in English. In the languages that this article deals with, the above quantifiers include MP/Pa. *wisp* and *har(w)* as well as Sog. *wisp-*. Another linguistic formulation that might indicate the generic use of the substantive 'religion' is its formulation in comparison. This could take place in a comparative phrase, such as "That religion is superior," or "Which religion is better?"[8] or, more generally, through ascribing a differentiating attribute to the substantive 'religion.'[9] The use for an annotated corpus is thus quite indispensable both when searching for such expressions and also when searching for the forms of syntactical plurals we pointed out above. Therefore, while this article does not claim being exhaustive in its enterprise, its author hopes to have found out some of the most significant instances for the use of *dēn* as a generic term.

[8]

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6   In a corpus including parts of speech tags and syntactical annotation that determines the relation of subject and verb in a sentence, one can search for the syntactical plural by searching for the singular noun as subject of a plural verb.

7   I hope that we can provide it as a first step for Zoroastrian Middle Persian texts through the project *Zoroastrian Middle Persian Digital Corpus and Dictionary* (MPCD) in the near future. This is a long-term project which will make the texts of Middle Persian literature accessible to philologists and historians in digital ways through their manuscripts, transliterations, transcriptions, as well as their Middle Persian-English dictionary built upon the components of the corpus. As a digital corpus, it will not only provide the texts in electronic form but also include tagging and parsing information which provide the possibility for such queries.

8   See e.g. AWM 185 in paragraph 76 below.

9   As in the case of the syntactical plural, the lexeme *dēn/δēn* used with comparative (or superlative) adjectives can be easily searched for in an annotated corpus. The examples discussed in this article are not results of a systematic search.

'Religion' before 'Religion': *Daēnā* in Antique Zoroastrianism

The Middle Persian lexeme *dēn-*, which, according to BeDuhn (2015), designates RELIGION, [9]
derives from Av. *daēnā-*, from the root *di* 'to see.'[10] It is worth noting that *daēnā-*, as many other
Avestan lexemes, is highly polysemous (see Ēmētān 1979, xxx–xxxi; Skjærvø 2011, 334f.). The
exhaustive and precise study of Firouz-Thomas Lankarany, *Daēnā im Avesta: eine semantische
Untersuchung* (1985) investigates its semantics. In this study, written in 1985, he assigns too
easily the meaning RELIGION to the term in the Young Avestan texts, however.[11] Nevertheless,
his semantic analysis can be used without the consequential step of identifying the meaning
'religion' in my study. I will reorder the semantics advanced by Lankarany within another
scheme, especially because I think that two meanings of the term, '(traditional) text' and
'(textual) tradition', did not receive due attention in his study.

Daēnā as Vision: Old Avestan texts

The representation of two different aspects by the same term is significant for the semantics [10]
of *daēnā-* in Old Avestan texts, as is the case for many other Old Avestan terms.[12] According
to this, the term designates an aspect of both human beings as well as non-human entities.
Lankarany (1985, 20) calls these two aspects the 'subjective' and the 'objective' notion. By
subjective notion, he means an entity which is related to human beings themselves, belonging
to their mental sphere, such as vision, view, knowledge, perception, insight, self, the state of
the self, nature, character, conscience, spirit, sense, and attitude. The objective notion, in
contrast, designates a (socio-cultural) entity outside the human being, as, for instance, law,
teaching, formula, doctrine, and, last but not least, religion. In his illuminating article, Jean
Kellens extends this semantics to a trilateral relationship with the act of viewing—active,
passive and causative: *daēnā-* sees, is seen, and allows seeing (Kellens 1995, 51).

The Old Avestan texts ascribe *inter alia* two different souls to the human being: *uruuan-* [11]
and *daēnā-*.[13] The latter designates a soul component connected to viewing. According to
this etymological meaning and the textual usages of the word, Old Avestan philologists trans-
late *daēnā-* as 'vision-soul,' *uruuan-* as 'breath-soul.'[14] The breath-soul and the vision-soul
are tightly connected with each other in the Old Avestan conception of communication with
transcendent beings. According to Old Avestan texts, the aim of the ritual—as much as we
can speak of an aim for ritual—seems to be the priests' encounter with transcendent beings.
Ahura Madzā's House, which is called 'house of song (reception)' (*garō dəmāna-*), constitutes

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10   In the last century, philologists discussed the etymological relationship of Av. *daēnā-* to Vedic *dhénā-*.
     For an evaluation of these discussions, see e.g. Schmidt (1975) and Ognibénine (1980); for a more recent
     reassessment, see Pirart (2012, 129–48).

11   "In summary, we can assert that in Young Avesta, in contrast to the Gāthās, Yasna Haptaŋhāiti, and Airiiəmā
     Išiiō-prayer, there is a relation between *daēnā-* and the terminological terms. Equating *daēnā-* with these
     terms shows that it has been used in Young Avesta as a terminological term in the sense of 'religion'"
     (translated by author; original quote: *Zusammenfassend ist festzustellen, daß im Jungavesta, im Gegensatz
     zu den Gāthās, dem Yasna Haptaqhāiti und dem ā-Airiiəmā—Išiiō-Gebet, der Bezug zwischen daēnā und den
     terminologischen Begriffen evident ist. Die Gleichsetzung daēnā's mit diesen Begriffen verdeutlicht, daß daēnā wie
     diese selbst im Jungavesta terminologisch im Sinne von Religion aufgefaßt wird*, Lankarany 1985, 151).

12   M. W. Smith (1929, para. 15) calls this double representation by the same term 'aspect theory.'

13   Y. 45.2, 46.11, 49.11, 51.13. According to Lankarany (1985, 40f.), *daēnā-* designates a mental power as
     well, mentioned with *xratu-* 'efficacy, intelligence' and *manah-* 'faculty of thought' (Kellens and Pirart
     1988–1991, II/231, 279).

14   See Kellens and Pirart (1988–1991, II/312), Kellens (1994, Kellens_eschatologie_1994b; 1995), Skjærvø
     (2005, 268f. and 272f.), Humbach and Faiss (2010) and Rezania (2017a, 226–49).

the most important place of encounter. According to this concept, the priests send not only their songs and offerings to this house, but also their breath-souls from the ritual surface. The Old Avestan texts represent the breath-soul as responsible for the transport of hymns and sacrifice to the gods. In contrast to this, the function of the vision-soul is to lead the breath-soul to the destination of the ritual journey. The Old Avestan texts represent the ritual course (*aduuan-*) between priests and gods as consisting of more paths and turns, whereas the encounter with Ahura Mazdā takes place at the last turn of this course (*apǝ̄ma- uruuaēsa-*). At this point, the soul components arrive at the bridge of mason (*cinuuaṇt- pǝrǝtu-*), where they find out whether their ritual has reached the right gods or not. If the vision- or breath-soul strays from straight paths, then the breath-soul fails and goes to the 'house of deceit' (*drujō dǝmāna-*), and therefore no encounter with Ahura Mazdā will take place. If they stay on straight paths, they traverse the bridge of mason and reach Ahura Mazdā's dwelling. After traversing the bridge, the mission of the vision-soul ends and the breath-soul alone reaches Ahura Mazdā's house.[15]

The last chapter of the Old Avestan texts, the *Vahištōišti* Gatha (Y. 53), envisages—as Jean Kellens (1995, 38–54) convincingly shows—the meeting of breath-soul and vision-soul as an incest marriage with the consequence that *daēnā-* (active) lets *uruuan-* see (causative) the *daēnā-* 'vision' (passive).[16] According to Alberto Cantera (2013, 115–35), this union is the moment of consultation (*hǝ̄m.paršti;-* Y. 33.6) with Ahura Mazdā. He points out that the passive meaning of *daēnā-*, 'vision,' has a crucial role in its later semantic development to 'religion': "this vision includes in itself the contents of the consultation with god […] The consultation itself is part of the Vision obtained through the Vision" (Cantera 2013, 130).[17] Moreover, he points out that "the contents of the Vision obtained in the sacrifice constitute a *corpus* of texts" (2013, 130), namely some ritual texts, which the priests intercalate in their main liturgy. Through this, *daēnā-* appears as a synonym of *dāta-* 'prescription,' *t̰kaēša-* 'teaching,' or *srauuah-* 'text, hymn.' The double meaning of the lexeme *daēnā-*, the capacity for consulting Ahura Mazdā, as well as the contents of said consultation is, according to Cantera (2013, 135), the reason why the term took the meaning RELIGION.

[12]

According to Jean Kellens and Eric Pirart (1988–1991, II:252), a passive meaning 'vision' for *daēnā-* might be attested in some Old Avestan passages.[18] In some,[19] *daēnā-* is declined in the plural,[20] but only in Y. 46.6 the designation of an objective meaning, 'vision,' cannot be ruled out. As Lankarany (1985, 62) demonstrates, the lexeme does not designate RELIGION in Old Avestan texts.[21] He asserts a relationship between *daēnā-* and religiosity, however.[22]

[13]

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15   For an elaborate analysis of the Old Avestan transcendence space with references, see Rezania (2017a, 226–42). Lankarany (1985, 76) considers some attestations of *daēnā-* (Y. 31.20, 46.11, 49.11, 51.13) and its relationship to postmortem life. A reference to this, however, seems to be absent in the Old Avestan texts (Rezania 2010, 37–45).

16   According to Kellens (1995, 53), this trilateral semantics stemmed from the bilateral characteristic of aurora, which allows seeing and being seen. Daēnā is, in his opinion, the transposition of Indo-Iranian aurora (*uṣā́s*) to the eschatological domain.

17   See Cantera (2013, 130); for an extension of this Old Avestan epistemology by introducing *xratu-* into the model, see König (2018, 73–102).

18   Y. 45.11, 48.4, 49.4, 51.21 and 53.2.

19   Y. 31.11, 33.13, 34.13, 39.2, 40.1, 45.2, 46.6, 49.9, 53.5.

20   Pirart (2012, 122f.) considers the use of *daēnā-* in the singular where he expects a plural (Y. 31.20) as the attestation of the meaning 'religion' already in the Old Avestan texts. The approach used in this article, however, regards such formulations as clear evidence for the absence of the abstract concept of RELIGION.

21   Older investigations, e.g. Bartholomae (1904, 662–66) and Molé (1960, 155–70), surmised the parallel designation of two semantics of RELIGION and 'a soul component' by the lexeme *daēnā-*.

22   "In the Gāthās, *daēnā-* does not designate religion as an objective term because there is no relation between it and terminological terms. In contrast, it designates religion as practiced and lived by a person, as his or her 'religiosity.' The most significant form of this form of practiced religion is realized in the Gathas in

In this regard, the passages that denote *daēnā's* relationship with the Zoroastrian moral triad good thought, good word, and good deed are notable (Lankarany 1985, 43).

It is worth mentioning here that Old Avestan texts already attest the negative connotation [14] of the term *tkaēša-* with the meaning '(wrong) choice' or '(wrong) teaching' (Y. 49.2f.).[23] As we will see in the following, the term is of relevance for the development of the abstract notion of RELIGION in the Iranian religious field.

Cistā as a (Ritual) Guide in the Young Avestan Texts

As Benveniste and Renou (1934, 56–64) convincingly show, Cistā is a goddess of path and [15] trip. The epithets ascribed to her in the first verse of the hymn indicate her function as a guide (Kellens 1994, 281f.): *hupaθmainiiā-* 'provider of good paths,' *huuaiβitacinā-* 'provider of good tours,' *huuāiiauna-* 'provider of good ways,' as well as *barat̰.zaoθrā-* 'carrier of libation.' Her epithet *razišta-* 'the straightest' correlates a transgressive function with herself: in her company, one can reach his/her destination without indirection. The etymological meaning of the name, 'considered' or 'observed,' should be connected to a function of hers as well: followers must consider their guide and therefore intently observe her. One should add to Cistā's general transgressive functions a special one: In collaboration with Vaiiu and *daēnā-*, she transmits priests' offerings to the gods. She seems to be responsible for leading people through mountains, woods, and lakes in their immanent daily life as well as for the transmission of offerings to transcendent gods.

The Young Avestan lexeme *daēnā-* designates a personified goddess whose functions are [16] derived from its passive meaning 'vision.' In the first verse of Yt. 16.1, Cistā is identified with this goddess. Moreover, Cistā's hymn, placed as the sixteenth hymn in the collection of Avestan hymns, has the title Dēn Yašt. The overlapping functions of both goddesses, Cistā and Daēnā, seem to have triggered their identification.[24] This process might have intensified the personification of the Old Avestan *daēnā-*. Anyhow, *daēnā-* designates a personified goddess in the Young Avestan corpus who is responsible for guidance to the transcendent world. Eric Pirart (2012, 127) aptly points to a frequently used metaphorical mapping in this regard in the history of religions: RELIGION IS A WAY. Therefore, the active meaning of *daēnā-* 'leading to vision,' i.e. the function of Daēnā as psychopomp, and its semantical relationship with spatial concepts in Old Avestan could be constitutive for its semantic development to RELIGION.

From Ritual to Moral: *daēnā-* in the Young Avestan texts

According to Lankarany (1985, 112), *daēnā-* occurs some 180 times in the Young Avestan [17] texts. The most frequently attributed adjective to it (1985, 116), *māzdaiiasni-*, is, according to Kellens (1995, 43n57), a patronymic adjective 'daughter of Mazdā.' Cantera's analysis lets us assume the meaning "vision obtained in the sacrifice to Mazdā" (2013, 131) for this phrase and 'vision obtained according to Zarathustra's way of sacrifice' for *daēnā- zaraθuštri-*. Both

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the sacrificial ritual" (translated by author; original quote: *Daēnā bezeichnet in den Gāthās nicht die Religion als objektiven Begriff – ein Bezug zu den terminologischen Begriffen ist nicht vorhanden – sondern als subjektiven Begriff die individuelle vom Menschen gelebte und praktizierte Religion, seine „Religiosität". Diese findet in den Gāthās ihren deutlichen Ausdruck in der Opferpraxis der Kultbegehung,* Lankarany 1985, 65).

23   The lexeme *t̰kaēsa-*, however, occurs with the adjective *ahūiri-* in Y. 57.24, presumably to denote the same entity as *māzdaiiasni- daēnā-*.

24   Gershevitch (1959, 167) admits that *cistā-* and *daēnā-* are two names for the same divinity; also see Nyberg (1938, 82f.) and Boyce (1975a, 1:62). According to Kellens (1995, 50), *cistā-* is a metronymic designation for Daēnā.

phrases clearly point to the ritual semantic of the term.[25] The active and causative meanings, which were dominant semantics of *daēnā-* in the Old Avestan period, are present in the Young Avestan corpus as well. Here, *daēnā-* designates an anthropological component listed along with *ahu-* 'being (?),' *baoδah-* 'consciousness (?),' *uruuan-* 'breath-soul,' and *frauuaṣ̌i-* '(divine) soul.'[26]

In Old Avestan texts, the vision-soul is contextualized in ritual communication with tran- [18]
scendence and is presumably unconnected to both postmortem life and to an ethic value system. The components of Old Avestan ritual communication were transformed in the Young Avestan period into individual eschatology. According to Fritz Stolz (2000, 706f.), the eschatological dimension appears when such representations are linked to ethical values and projected into the future. I previously showed that these conditions seem to have been fulfilled in Zoroastrianism no earlier than the Young Avestan period (Rezania 2017a, 242–49).

A significant example of the eschatological reinterpretation of ritual transcendence can be [19]
read in V. 19, in which the destiny of the breath-soul after death is represented. At dawn following the third night after death, the breath-soul is led to the bridge of mason. This soul and the consciousness of the deceased are asked about their contribution to the world during their material existence. Afterwards, Daēnā appears with her dogs. She throws the breath-soul of the deceitful one into the darkness and lets the breath-souls of the orderly man traverse the bridge of mason. The second Hādōxt Nask, a Young Avestan text that represents the destiny of the breath-soul after death, starts with Zarathustra's question from Ahura Mazdā, where the breath-soul of an orderly man will stay on the first night after his death. Ahura Mazdā answers that the breath-soul sits near his head. It enjoys as much pleasure as in its entire material life. After repeating the question for the second and third night and stating the same answer, the text depicts the events at dawn after the third night: it seems to the breath-soul that it passes through fragrant plants. Furthermore, the vision-soul of the dead person seems to advance (Hintze 2017) in the form of—to quote the Avestan passage HN 2.9—"a maiden, beautiful, bright, with white arms, strong, well-shaped, well grown, tall, with high (standing) breasts, with a body from song, noble, from a brilliant lineage, fifteen years old in look, in form much more beautiful than the most beautiful creatures."[27] Verse 11 of this text develops the relation of the OAv. *daēnā-* with the Zoroastrian ethic triad to their identification. The represented Daēnā[28] to the breath-soul is his/her own thought, word, and deed.

The semantic link of *daēnā-* to memorization (Lankarany 1985, 133, 140f.) attests its re- [20]
lation to ritual as well as (ritual) text. Cantera considers the function of the ritual priest obtaining, after his consultation with Ahura Mazdā, the vision " 'to utter and memorize' (*mar-*) the Vision and to bring it to the sacrificial community in the material world" (Cantera 2013, 127f.), whereas the transmission (*bar-*) and the preservation (*mar-*) of vision are alluded to

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25   For the meanings connect to ritual, also see Lankarany (1985, 156).

26   See Lankarany (1985, 162–64); for a discussion of Zoroastrian anthropology, see Gignoux (2001, 11–16).

27   For an exhaustive study of Zoroastrian *daēnā-* departing from this Avestan text, which considers many Zoroastrian and Manichaean Middle Persian texts as well as Arabic sources, see Widengren (1983).

28   The literary presentations of this notion have given rise to some iconographic representations in the Sasanian period. Gherardo Gnoli (1993) identified a female figure with a flower in her right hand on some Sasanian seals as Dēn. He points out that the flower represents the fragrance and perfume which the breath-soul of a righteous person will smell during his/her journey to the hereafter. Azarpay (1976) identifies an allegory to Dēn and 'house of song (reception) in an artefact.' Daēnā's iconography is known from a Sogdian painting from Dunhuang (Grenet and Guangda 1996) as well; for a reassessment and verification, see Hintze (2016). More recently, Yutaka Yoshida (2009) identified Daēnā in a Manichaean painting preserved in the Museum Yamato Bunkakan, Nara, Japan.

in V. 2.3f.[29] *daēnā-*, moreover, is called *sraotanu-* in HN. 2.9, which can be translated as 'the one whose body is song.' Vyt. 14 attributes *vīspō.afsman-* 'containing all verses' to her. Some verses provide a link between the act of 'hearing' and *daēnā-* (Lankarany 1985, 139, 154f.), which we can consider as her affiliation with (oral) text. In addition, the Young Avestan phrase *darəγaiiå upaiianaiiå daēnå* 'the long tradition/transmission of *daēnā-*' suggests a meaning close to 'tradition' for the lexeme.

Lankarany (1985, 134) moreover shows that *daēnā-* is connected to ritual directions or ritual law. The link to *dāta- zaraθuštri-* 'Zaraθuštrian law' and *dāta- vīdaēuua-* 'anti-demon law' (1985, 149f.) alludes to its semantic intersection with law. In addition to its link to the Zoroastrian ethic triad (1985, 132f., 159), a nexus to personal religiosity has crystallized here (1985, 157f.). Both components suggest an intersection with the conduct of life. Beside this personal dimension, *daēnā-* represents the social dimension as well. V. 4.44 attests *hāmō.daēnā* '(belonging to) the same *daēnā-*.' Its formulation as partitive genitive, denoting 'belonging to *daēnā-*,' is witnessed in the Young Avestan corpus as well (1985, 151f.). From the evidence, we can infer the representation of community with the lexeme *daēnā-*. Yt. 13.94f., moreover, attests the wish of spreading *daēnā-* on all seven continents (1985, 135, 145f.) To some degree, the phrase *anaiβiiāstō daēnąm* 'be ungirded with *daēnā-*' (V.18.1-4; Lankarany 1985, 131, 155) alludes to the social dimension of the term as well. [21]

Summary

To sum up this section, the Avestan lexeme *daēnā-* presents the three semantic fields—active, causative, and passive—of the act of viewing from the very beginning. Whereas in the Old Avestan texts the term occurs more as an anthropological component, the passive meanings of the term prevail in the Young Avestan corpus. In the latter, the semantic field of *daēnā-* intersects with the following fields: ritual, guiding in ritual and postmortem life (psychopomp), ritual or traditional text, tradition, law, conduct of life, as well as community. *daēnā-* cannot be reduced to one of these semantic fields, and that is true for RELIGION as well: It is not only ritual, conduct of life, community, or even transcendence alone. It cannot be reduced to any of these fields, since its semantics intersects with all these fields. In regard to the proposed working definition of RELIGION above, the function of *daēnā-* as guide is of great relevance. On the one hand, it binds the divine and the human world in ritual or in postmortem life, which evidences its reference to the transcendence-immanence distinction. On the other, its guide to the transcendent world attempts to cope with the contingency of failure in ritual or postmortem life. *daēnā-* is responsible for leading the breath-soul and sacrifices to the right gods and leading the breath-soul to the best existence after death. Its intersections with semantic fields such as text and community, as well as the presence of *daēnā-* in the ritual communication with gods, cover the part of the definition that considers religion a societal communication system. Cantera's analysis, moreover, discovers the semantic of *daēnā-* as a vision that the ritual priest obtained from Ahura Mazdā and must share with the community. Therefore, the use of *daēnā-* in the Avestan corpus lets us conclude that whereas the term does not designate RELIGION, and such an abstraction cannot be attested in the Avestan corpus, a potential for the development of this concept already evolved in the Avestan period. The Bahuvrīhi compounds *aγa.daēna-* as attribute of Aži Dahāka (Az. 3) and *duž.daēna-* 'the one with bad *daēnā-*' (Lankarany 1985, 122) evidence an abstract understanding of *daēnā-*, using [22]

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29   On this topic, see also Cantera (2012, 45–47) and Panaino (2015, 102–11).

it for good and bad alike. Moreover, *daēnā-* occurs as the object of the verb *var-* 'to choose.'[30] As represented above, *daēnā-* can simply mean 'vision' in the often occurring Young Avestan phrases *vaŋᵛhī- daēnā- māzdaiiasni-* and *daēnā- ahūiri- zaraθuštri-*. Subsequently, we cannot attest the meaning RELIGION even in these phrases.

The Existence of the Term 'Religion' in Manichaeism

For the purpose of searching the Manichaean Middle Persian and Parthian corpora, I will [23] primarily take advantage of the *Dictionary of Manichaean Middle Persian and Parthian* (Durkin-Meistererernst 2004), which covers the texts published until 2004. For the Manichaean Sogdian corpus, I will use two dictionaries, Gharib (1995) and Sims-Williams/Durkin-Meistererernst (2012), as the search instrument. For more recently published texts, I will consult the publications directly. The glossaries of these text editions list the attestations of the lemma *dēn/δēn* in the texts and more or less provide the meanings 'religion; church; religious community' for it. However, they specify these meanings as the potential meanings of the noun. This does not automatically mean that each of these meanings is attested in the corresponding text edition.[31] Therefore, I will check every text passage based on the provided working definition, whether it roughly features the abstract meaning RELIGION or not. Moreover, it is sometimes the case that the substantive has been used in the text to designate Manichaeism as '*the* religion.' This rendering is reflected in the translation as well; however, this does not mean that the author used the substantive in the generic meaning RELIGION. Therefore, these glossaries are not of great advantage for the study of the semantic field of the substantive *dēn/δēn,* and a more careful reassessment of the passages will be necessary.

Syntactical Evidence

dēn in the Plural

In Manichaean Middle Persian texts, I was able to identify three attestations of the morpho- [24] logical plural of the noun *dēn*.[32] The first passage comes from a famous fragment in which the author enumerates the superiorities of the Manichaean tradition[33] to its predecessors, Buddhism, Zoroastrianism, and Christianity. The text fragment presumably belongs to the *Šābuhragān*, supposedly authored by Mani himself and dedicated to the second Sasanian king, Šābuhr I. The passage reads as follows:[34]

> (5) *panzom, ku wispān nibēgān wihīh ud āzend īg pēšēnagān dēnān ka ō ēn ⁺dēn ī* [25]
> *man …*[35]
> "Fifthly, that wisdom and parable of all books of older *religions* … when to this
> religion of mine"[36]

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30   See Y.13.8, 57.24, Yt. 10.92, Vr. 5.3, V. 19.2 (Lankarany 1985, 149–41).
31   For an exception, see Sundermann (1992a, 147).
32   See Durkin-Meistererernst (2004, 3:151, 2014, 130f.).
33   I use the alternative terms 'religious tradition' and 'religious field' to designate a stage in the formation process of religion prior to the one that the material designates as 'religion.'
34   For more convenience, I render the quoted Middle Iranian texts in transcription. The transcriptions are mine, whereas the editions represent the texts only in transliteration.
35   M 5794 I V 20 (Boyce 1975b). A more recent edition of this text (Lieu 2006, 525), which reproduces the recto side of the text completely for the first time, leaves out the last phrase of the verso side, *dēn ī man.*
36   If not indicated differently, all translations are by the author.

As already highlighted by BeDuhn (2015, 269), Mani speaks of older religion*s* in the plural in [26]
this passage: *pēšēnagān dēnān.* Moreover, he uses the same term *dēn* for the designation of his
religion and of other religions, which was not a matter of course in late Antiquity. The second
Middle Persian passage including the plural form of *dēn* is about the missionary activities of
Manichaean disciples in the Roman Empire:

> (2) *šud hēnd ō hrōm* (3) *dīd was hammōg pahikār* (4) *abāg* dēnān.[37] [27]
> "They went to the Roman Empire (and) observed much doctrinal battle with *reli-*
> *gions.*"

Here again we see a clear example of the use of the substantive *dēn* in the plural. The plural [28]
declination of the word implies the existence of a generic concept RELIGION, which is signified
by the term *dēn* in Manichaean Middle Persian. The last attestation of the plural form of *dēn*
in Manichaean Middle Persian known to me comes from a hymn in praise of god with the
title 'Syriac Melody,' which remains altogether unclear because of its frequent lacunae:

> (2) [… K.R.] *ud az* (3) *fradom ō ǰāydān* (4) [*a*]*z tō paywast h*[*ē*]*nd* (5) *istāyīhēnd* (6) [29]
> *āfurīhēnd ud* (7) *yōǰdahrīhēnd pad* (8) *nām yōǰdahr* (9) *wispān* dēnān (10) *yōǰdahrān*
> *kē-t* (11) *nām* […].
> "And from the first and for ever they were joined to you. / They are being praised
> and they are being blessed and they are being hallowed in/with the sacred name
> of (?) all sacred *religions,* which [honour / deserve?] your name."[38]

This passage represents an interesting example of the generic use of *dēn* in the plural, at- [30]
tributed with an adjective in the plural (*yōǰdahrān*) as well as with the universal quantifier
wisp, again in the plural.

After reviewing the attestations of *dēn* in the plural in Manichaean Middle Persian, I would [31]
like to turn to the Manichaean Parthian corpus. This corpus comprises 12 attestations of *dēn*
in the plural,[39] which I will discuss in the following. In the first example, religions other than
Manichaeism are described as 'deceived.' They are treated as independent entities, however.
To designate them, the author has used the term *dēn* in the plural:[40]

> (157) *ud hawīn kē nē aδ* (158) *haw ham šud ud nē až paš* dēnān *wiδeftagān* (159) [32]
> *āhend.*
> "They who neither went together with him nor after him are deceived *religions.*"[41]

The topic of 'deceiving religions' or of 'the deception of religions' occurs in two other [33]
Manichaean Parthian passages:

> (1) *lōg nāz ud iskēm āwaržōg ud šahr* (2) *īrān* […] *mānhāg āhind ō waxš wxardīg* [34]
> *kū* (3) *žahr āmixt nihenǰēd grīw až hawīn čīnag* […] (4) *sadfān parmūsēnd* […] *kē*
> *wiδef*[*sēn*]*d paδ* dēnān […] (5) *izγām nē windēnd* […] *ud žīrīft nē zānēnd.*[42]

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37   M 2 I R i 2-4 (Andreas and Henning 1933, 10; also see BeDuhn 2015, 269).
38   Durkin-Meisterernst (2014, 130f.); M 275b/B/i/2-11.
39   See Durkin-Meisterernst (2004, 3:150, 2014).
40   For the significance of the formulation in the plural instead of an alternative formulation in the singular,
     see paragraphs 71–74 below.
41   M 44 R7 (Colditz 1987, 301).
42   M 77 R 1-5 (Andreas and Henning 1934, 41).

"The pleasure of the world, the desire of the form and the things of the earth resemble a sweet food with which poison has been mixed. Keep your souls away from these nets! The beings who are deceived by *religions* are terrified. They will not find the way out […] and they will not recognize the wisdom."

ō larz bid až hušk goxan ud dēnān *wiδeftagīft.* [35]
"Trembling, secondly, from dry blood and the deception of the *religions* [my italics]"[43]

Another attestation of *dēn* in the plural comes from a Parthian hymn from the Turfan collection, which does not provide enough context to be able to understand its meaning: [36]

(5) *ud dahēnd jōždahr* […] (6) *dēnān ud harw* […] (7) *kerdagān.* [37]
"and they give life … … the religions and all … … deeds"[44]

Another Parthian fragment with *dēn* in the plural is a text about Manichaean missionaries in the Roman Empire, as in the case of Middle Persian M 2 I R above. According to the text, Mani sent some missionaries, among them Addā, the bishop, one of the earliest disciples of Mani (Sundermann 1983), there from Weh-Ardašīr.[45] According to the text, he instituted many monasteries in the Roman Empire and wrote brilliant treatises. In describing his other activities in the Roman Empire, the author uses the substantive *dēn* in the plural twice to designate active religious traditions in the Empire. He moreover uses a synonym for the designation of 'religion,' *ammōg* 'teaching,' which he sets by using a plural verb in the plural as well.[46] [38]

(9) *passox (č)e* dēnān *pa(δ) was g(ō)[nag zēn]* (10) *kerd ud wirāšt padī(ž h)[arwīn]* [39]
(11) dēnān. *u-š harwīn a(mm)[ōg žad (?)]* (12) *ud šarmžad kerd āhin(d.)*[47]
He answered the *religions* with different weapons and arranged them against all *religions*. He struck (?) and embarrassed all teachings.

Another example of such use of *dēn* can be found in Gabryab's oath; Gabryab was of the twelve most distinguished disciples of Mani: [40]

(2) *w(āxt) kū abestāwagān* (3) *(hem pad) ha(rw)[ī](n)* dēn(ān) *drōγ (a)mm(ōg)* (4) [41]
(u)d (paδ) ēw wāwa(r)īft paδ tō d(ēn) (5) *hamwadām čē tō ay baγ ud* (6) *(a)nǰīwag čē (man) gyān.*[48]
[…] said: 'I swear off the deceitful teaching of all *religions*, and believe in your *religion* as the only faith because thou art lord and savior of my soul'

In this passage, one finds not only the noun *dēn* in the plural for the designation of 'deceitful' religions, but also its similar use for designating the religions of others and also one's own religion. All religions, one's own as well as others', are designated in this passage by the same [42]

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43   Durkin-Meistererernst (2014, 172f.); M5700/I/R/i/22-24.
44   Durkin-Meistererernst (2014, 78f.); M 9072/V?/5-7.
45   These missionary activities are dated between 244 and 262 B.C.E. (Schaeder 1934, 71).
46   This is a sample of the syntactical plural; see paragraph 7 above.
47   M 216c + M 1750 V 9-13 (Sundermann 1981, 26). My translation slightly varies from Sundermann's: „[Und] (er ergriff)(?) [die Weisheit](?) [zur] Antwort auf die Religionen. Auf viele W[eisen] machte und bildete es sie [zur Waffe] gegen a[lle] Religionen. Und alle Le[hren schlug (?)] und beschämte er [wie] jemand, der eine gewal[tige] Waffe [hat] (?)" (1981, 26); also see BeDuhn (2015, 269).
48   M 1608 2. S. 2-6 (Sundermann 1981, 100).

term, *dēn*. The next attestation is a fragment which illustrates Mani's and Šābuhr's relationship. According to the text, Šābuhr has granted Mani permission for mission in a letter. After receiving the letter, Mani is said to have spoken as follows:

[43]

> (21) *[paδ rā](š)tī(f)t kū is[tem haw]* (22) *gyān žīwahr windāh, ask(ādar)* (23) *až harwīn* dēnān *kē paδ wiδeftagīft* (24) *išt(ē)nd, kē paδ baγ drōžēnd* (25) *paδ haw rōšn abestāwēnd.*[49]
>
> (I say to you) righteously that his soul will lastly find the life higher than all *dēnān* who stay on deception, who lie against god, (and) deny his light …

One can question whether *dēn* really refers to 'religion' in this passage. It seems that it offers another meaning of the noun *dēn*: *dēnān* are not compared with a religion here but with the soul (*gyān*) of a—from Mani's point of view—righteous man. Presumably, the meaning of the noun *dēn* in this passage concurs with another meaning of it in Zoroastrian texts, namely 'vision soul,' as presented in paragraphs 11–13 above.

[44]

Another morphological plural form of the lexeme *dēn* in the Manichaean Parthian corpus can be found in M 216b V. The passage is again about the missionary activities of a Manichaean apostle, or Mani himself, in the territory of a king named Waruzān / Waručān.[50]

[45]

> *dēnān ammōg pad wxēbēh bazag andrenǰād.*[51]
>
> He defeated the teaching of the religions through their own sins.

[46]

In this passage, *dēn* in the plural is governed by the singular form of *āmmōg* 'teaching,' which implies that religions, although containing the same single teaching, are perceived as distinct entities. The next example attests the plurality of religions in a higher degree:

[47]

> (2) *āzārēd hō gyān kē* (3) *pad im ābēn* (4) *niguržēd pad čē dēnān* (5) [...] *wiδeftagān niguržēnd.*[52]
>
> He injures the soul which he baptizes by this baptism with water. With this, the religions baptize the deceived ones [...].

[48]

The next passage attests two variations of the formulation of a generic concept of *dēn*: the morphological plural as well as the formulation with a universal identifier:

[49]

> *ud* wisp dēn *až yazdān andarz* [*ud*] dēnān *az im framānništāft* (*āhi*)[*nd*].[53] *Every religion* is from gods' instruction and *religions* have fallen away from this command.

[50]

The climax of the use of the noun *dēn* as the generic term for RELIGION probably occurs in the Manichaean Parthian text *Sermon of the Light-Nous*. In a paragraph of this text, 'the religions' are designated by the plural form of *dēn* without any further attribution:

[51]

> *dārūg tārīg* (4) *[āz](.) (u)-š tan ādur wuzurg.* (5) *[šāx zam](īg) o (a)smān zāwarān* (6) *[wa](rgar) astāragān. bār dēnān* (7) *[u-]š waxšan yahūdān dēn.*[54]
>
> The dark tree is [greed]. Its trunk is the big fire. [The branches] are the forces of the [ea](rth) and (s)ky, the [lea]ves are the stars. The fruits are the *religions*, and its taste is the religion of the Jews.

[52]

49 M 267b-M314 R ii 21-5 (Sundermann 1981, 107).
50 Sundermann (1981, 24) localizes this kingdom in Caucasian Iberia.
51 M216b V 1-2 = MKG 141 (Sundermann 1981, 24).
52 Sundermann (1981, 90); M 5966 A 2-5 = MKG 1433; also see BeDuhn (2015, 269).
53 M 847 R 18 = GW §77 (Sundermann 1997, 80f.).
54 M 312 R 6 = LN §94a (Sundermann 1992a, 56); for the translation, also see Sundermann (1992a, 75).

The significance of this passage is its representation of different entities designated as *dēn* as [53]
comparable to each other without further attribution. Especially the absence of attributes for
such entities formulated in the plural suggests that a generic term *dēn* forms the basis of this
formulation. Not only does the author conceive *dēn* as a generic concept, but he/she compares
it to FRUIT. The metaphorical expression "the fruits are the religions" attests the conceptual
metaphor RELIGION IS A FRUIT.[55] For this conceptual metaphor, the Manichaean author did
not pick FRUIT by chance. This resides at the center of Manichaean redemption theory. As the
concept FRUIT exists alongside the expression 'fruits,' so the author must have had a concept
of RELIGION besides the expression 'religions.' Therefore, it is permissible to conclude that,
from the author's point of view, RELIGION is as generic as FRUIT.

After the Parthian corpus, I will next investigate the Manichaean Sogdian one. In this corpus, [54]
the noun *δyn* is attested four times in the plural (see Sims-Williams and Durkin-Meisterernst
2012, 76; Gharib 1995, 148; Sundermann 1992a, 1997). The fragment M5266 (recto, line
10)[56] contains the phrase *δēnān*[57] *axšēδ* 'the prince of the religions,' which designates one of
the six gods or lords[58] of Manichaean Theogony, namely Jesus. Therefore, the plural form
in this passage does not designate a group of different religions. This leaves us with three
attestations of the 'religions' in Manichaean Sogdian: I will turn to *Āzandnāmē*, §45-50, in
paragraph 95 below. The *Sermon of Light-Nous*, §94b, the Sogdian translation of the Parthian
passage §94a mentioned above, reads as follows:

> [βry] ⁾⁾y-βtʾkw δy-n[y]kth ʾt[xw ʾzβʾβ] cxwδʾnch δy-nh o o[59]   [55]
> (The fruits) are the followers of heretic religions, and the taste is the Jewish reli-
> gion.

The Sogdian term *δēnīk* in this passage means adheres to a (foreign) religion with the plural [56]
form *δēnīkt*. Theoretically, this plural substantive can designate 'the followers of a heretic
religion' as well as 'the followers of heretic religions.' In light of the parallel Parthian passage,
however, we might assume that it expresses the second meaning. Therefore, the passage at-
tests a generic concept of RELIGION as its Parthian origin.

The final evidence comes from the Manichaean *Sermon of the Soul*. The passage represents [57]
the five gods as the fundamental basis of the world, without which the world cannot exist
(GW, §112). This basis consists of only these five gods (*βaγān*), and there is no other god
beside them (GW, §113). Consequently, the text compares the five light elements (*mrδaspand*)
with military officers in a place threatened by an enemy. If the officers leave the place, the
enemy will destroy it. Correspondingly, the world would be demolished without the five light
elements.[60]

> rt(ms ZK) ʿBY ⁾⁾(δβγ)[ZY ZK] /11/ [pn]cw βyʾn prw wyspw z-wrnʾkw ZY prw(h)   [58]

---

55   Cognitive semantics understands metaphor as a cognitive (in contrast to linguistic) process by which one
      semantic domain can be understood in terms of another. Conceptual metaphor theory identifies the map-
      ping of two conceptual fields to each other as a conceptual metaphor (LOVE IS A JOURNEY), which can be
      unfolded in different linguistic metaphors (Look how far we've come; We're at a crossroads; We've got to
      go our separate ways). For a classic work on conceptual metaphor theory, see Lakoff and Johnson (1980,
      examples here are quoted from p. 44).
56   For the text, see Henning (1948, 314).
57   *δēnān* is the older genitive plural form; see Gershevitch (1954, sec. 1230).
58   These are the Third Ambassador, the Living Spirit, the Mother of Life, The First Man, Jesus, and the Maiden
      of Light (Henning 1948, 314).
59   Sundermann (1992a, 61, 75); LN §94b.
60   See GW, §114-7; In §119, the five light elements presumably correspond to five Avestan Gathas (γʾδh)
      (Sundermann 1997, 87 and 141).

/12/ wyspw ʾz-βʾk ZY pr wyspw δynh pr prγnp(w) /13/ ʾnyw ʾnyw nʾm ʾz-γ
ʾyrtδʾrʾnty.[61]

One has skillfully called the father Āδvaγ (and) the five gods in all times, in all
languages, and in all religions again and again with different names.

Interestingly, the passage sets RELIGION in parallel to LANGUAGE: Just as a diversity of lan-   [59]
guages exists in the world, there exists a diversity of religions. Just as a generic concept of
LANGUAGE exists for the author which allows him to write 'in all languages,' there exists a
generic concept of RELIGION which allows the Manichaean Sogdian monk to express 'in all
religions.'

dēn with a Universal Quantifier or Demonstrative Adjective

In many Manichaean passages, the substantive *dēn/δēn* is used with a universal quantifier.   [60]
As I pointed out in paragraph 8 above, such expressions might indicate a generic use of the
term 'religion.' The use of a universal quantifier, however, might express just *one* complete
entity or all entities classified as such. This difference can be seen in these two sentences,
for example: 'She read the whole book' and 'He put all books on the shelves.' What we are
interested in is the second expressional form, in which different entities are classified together
and designated by a generic term which designates a generic concept, in our example BOOK.
The linguistic expression formulated with a universal quantifier differs in these two cases
when the qualified substantive is countable in English as well as in Middle Persian, Parthian,
and Sogdian.[62] As only the second expressional form mentioned above refers to a generic
concept, and the substantive *dēn/δēn* is countable, the reader might think that the search for
the plural forms of *dēn/δēn* might already have uncovered all these occurrences. This would
be true if the plural form in these languages were restricted to the morphological plural. The
existence of the syntactical plural, however, requires us to search for any marks of the plural
form in cases in which we cannot consult a digital corpus.

The syntactical plural form, i.e. the morphological singular noun with a plural verb, can   [61]
occur only in the rectus as the subject of the verb. Therefore, all phrases with a universal
quantifier and substantive *dēn/δēn* in the oblique case in the singular designate just one reli-
gion and are not relevant for our study. Such examples are *eżāfe*-construction (*ī hamāg dēn*),[63]
constructions with prepositions (*abar/az/ō/pad hamāg dēn*),[64] or dative complements.[65] Ex-
cluding these attestations leaves us with formulations in which *dēn* has been further specified
with an attribute, primarily with *yōǰdahr/yōždahr*, to designate Manichaeism.[66] These phrases
designate 'the whole Manichaean religion/community/church.' Therefore, we cannot find any
attestation of a generic concept of RELIGION formulated with universal quantifiers.

In the Manichaean Middle Iranian corpora, we find few constitutes with a demonstrative   [62]

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61   Sundermann (1997, 86f.); So 18248 II (GW §118).
62   Consider the singular form in the former case ('book') versus the plural form in the latter ('books').
63   See e.g. M 291c R7f. (Leurini 2017, 78), Otani6156 + /A/10 (Kudara, Sundermann, and Yoshida 1997),
      BBB 448 (Henning 1937, 31).
64   See e.g. M 26/II/R/8 (Durkin-Meisterernst 2014, 34), M 31/I/R 5 (Leurini 2017, 122), M 190/B/4 (Leurini
      2017, 146), M 5848/R/ii/6-7 (Leurini 2017, 55), M 6665/R/3-4 (Leurini 2017, 153), M 6955/I/V/1-2
      (Leurini 2017, 164), T II D 79/V/37 = MMC III, 17, S 7/V/ii/17-18, M 4a/II/R/10, M 4b/II/V/9, M
      742/II/V/2-3 = MKG, 2030f. (Sundermann 1981, 122), BBB 131-2 (Henning 1937, 21f.) = BBB 253-4
      (Henning 1937, 25), M 315/I/R/8 (Colditz 1992).
65   See e.g. M 797/I R 7-8 (Leurini 2017, 88).
66   See paragraphs 86–88 below.

adjective and *dēn*. The Parthian fragments M 434/B/ii/4 and M6650/V/7, in which the phrase *ʾō im dēn* 'to this religion' occurs, show that in the author's cognitive map of the religious field there is 'this religion' and 'that religion.' The evidence subsequently demonstrates that there are different socio-cultural entities which have been indifferently called 'religion' on the object language level.[67] These cannot be anything else but instances of a generic concept RELIGION.

Semantic Evidence

Besides morphological and syntactical indications for the existence of a generic concept of RE-LIGION in the Manichaean Middle Iranian corpora, discussed in paragraphs 24–30 above, there are also semantic indications for the existence of such a concept. One of them is comparison. When one compares two entities with each other, whether on the object language or metalanguage level, one presupposes the existence of an abstract conceptual class of which the two compared entities are two instances. If we do not consider the existence of such an abstract concept as a necessary presupposition for comparison, then we can inquire whether it emerges as a result of the act of comparison itself. Therefore, when we encounter a Manichaean comparison between 'religions,' we can assume that the Manichaeans used a generic concept of RELIGION. The famous M 5794 I V 20 presents the most significant comparison of this type, with which I started my discussion in paragraph 25 above and to which I will return in paragraph 90 below. Such a comparison is expressed in the fragment M 738/R/6-8 as well: [63]

> *u-šān paywennē pad / wuzurg rāstīh az dēn ī / ērdar ō dēn ī abardar.* [64]
> With the great righteousness You bind them from the lower religion to the higher religion.

This text designates two entities as 'lower religion' and 'higher religion,' respectively. We will leave aside here the question of what the Manichaean representation of these two entities is. The significant point is setting the two entities in relation. By the attribution as 'lower' and 'higher,' the author of the text compares two entities and demonstrates that she possesses an abstract concept of RELIGION, of which one instance can be the lower one and the other the higher.[68] A diachronic comparison of religions can be seen in M539d/A/2, which includes the phrase *dēn ī-t pēš[ēn?]* … 'religion(s?) before you …' (Durkin-Meisterernst 2014, 252f.).[69] Through comparing different religious traditions in history, that is, previous traditions and the current Manichaeism, the author reveals that he considers them, as Manichaeism, instances of the generic concept of RELIGION. [65]

Pragmatic Evidence

Making religions comparable provides the possibility of their selection. Whether this potentiality is realized or not, and under which circumstances this takes place, is not the topic of [66]

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67   Such an interpretation, however, cannot be extended to M20/II/R/3-4, S 7/V/i/3/ or S 9/V/ii/17, in which *dēn* has been specified with the demonstrative adjective *ēn* 'this,' because *dēn* has been particularized in these passages with an attribute, *yōǰdahr* or *ardāyīh*, as the designation of Manichaeism. The fragmentary passage Otani6178/A/3/does not present an attestation either because of the lacuna after the word *dēn* in the phrase, which does not allow us to decide whether *dēn* has been used in this passage with an attribute or not.

68   This argument does not hold if the author considers 'lower' and 'higher' as designating different stages of the same religion.

69   As the verb of the sentence lies in the lacuna, we cannot ascertain whether *dēn* is formulated in the singular or in the plural.

the current discussion. Instead, significance lies in the fact that the possibility of selecting among religions lets us infer the existence of a concept of RELIGION: Without a generic concept no comparison is possible, and without comparison of religions no selection among them. A Parthian hymn expresses this latter possibility:

> *ud wxēbēh dāhwān kirbag* […] *pad wxēbēh dēn wižīdag ispurr karēh.*   [67]
> "and you make your pious gift in your chosen religion full."[70]

In this passage, as well as in the Sogdian fragment SO 14381 B5,[71] *dēn* has been qualified with   [68]
the verbal adjective *wižīdag,* with the meaning 'chosen,' from the infinitive *wižīdan* "to choose, select, prefer, discriminate" (Durkin-Meisterernst 2004, 3:337). This attribution shows that, in the religious field of Sasanian Iran, *dēn* could be 'chosen,' at least from the Manichaean point of view. Another Parthian passage which sets *dēn* in relationship to 'choice' reads as follows:

> *až haw dard kū trixsād bawēh awēšān až istaft lōg čē dušmenīn abar haw awištād*   [69]
> *pawāžēh ud āzād karēh kū wxēbēh dēn až aδar wižīnāh ud wxēbēh handām hawīn*
> *kē-šān čihrag āzād kird amwardāh.*
> "[…] from that pain where you are being oppressed(?) and you purify them and
> make them free from the hard world, on which enemies, stood; so that you choose
> your religion/religious community from below/downwards(?) and you gather
> your members/limbs, those whose form/nature you/they(?) freed"[72]

As it is reflected in the translation, we cannot ascertain in this passage whether *dēn* has been   [70]
used in the meaning 'religion,' 'religious community,' or any other semantic fold of the pre-Sasanian notion of *daēnā-*. I tend to assume that *dēn* means 'religious community' here and the passage expresses the process of putting community together. If we, however, assume the presence of the meaning 'religion' here, we again have an attestation of the 'choice of religion.' Subsequently, we could infer that, according to the Manichaean author, one religion can be preferred to another. This assumption leads to the hypothesis that, according to the same author, one could choose from a religious field which included different religions. The presented evidence strengths BeDuhn's hypothesis, namely the existence of a generic concept of RELIGION in the Sasanian religious field of Iran.

The Term 'Religion' in Sasanian and post-Sasanian Zoroastrianism

To scrutinize the development of a generic concept of RELIGION in Sasanian Iran further, we   [71]
can concentrate on the use of the same term, *dēn*, in Zoroastrian Middle Persian texts. As BeDuhn (2015) hints to the third century C.E. as the departure point for this development, I will start with a Zoroastrian text from this period. Despite the sparse primary sources for Sasanian Zoroastrianism, we are lucky to have an inscription from a high Zoroastrian priest from the third century C.E.: Kerdīr, the Zoroastrian antagonist of Mani and the state priest

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70   Durkin-Meisterernst and Morano (2010, sec. 720b = 228f.); M648a/R/9-10.
71   It reads: [wyc]tch δ[ynh …] 'chosen religion;' see Durkin-Meisterernst and Morano (2010, sec. 628c = 198f.).
72   Durkin-Meisterernst and Morano (2010, sec. 771b = 240f.); M5785/II.

of four Sasanian kings.[73] He applied a categorization of religions, known to us through more or less contemporary Christian sources: true religion (*vera religio*) and false religion(s) (*falsae religiones*).[74] For Kerdīr, there were only two categories of entities in the religious field: Zoroastrianism and the demonic tradition (in the singular). Significantly, Kerdīr reserves in all of his inscriptions—as Jason BeDuhn (2015, 264f.) aptly points out—the noun *dēn* for Zoroastrianism and applies another substantive, *kēš* 'teaching, doctrine,' to designate 'false religion,' the doctrine of Ahreman and the demons.[75] As I mentioned in paragraph 14 above, this latter term was loaded with negative connotations even in Old Avestan texts. However, it should be noted that Kerdīr used the noun *kēš* to designate Zoroastrianism as well: *kēš ī dēwān* 'doctrine of demons' as opposed to *kēš ī yazadān* 'doctrine of gods.'[76] As a result, we can conclude that from Kerdīr's viewpoint *dēn* designated only Zoroastrianism, whereas it was possible to denote true as well as false religions with the noun *kēš*. In accordance with this understanding of the religious field, Kerdīr contrasted 'good' (Zoroastrian) priests with heretics.[77]

Illuminating for the construction of the religious field in third-century Iran is Kerdīr's enumeration of non-Zoroastrian doctrines. He listed seven different groups: Jews (*yhwdy*), Śramaṇas (*šmny*), Brāhmanas (*blmny*), Nazarenes or Nazoreans (*nʾclʾy*), Christians (*klystydʾn*), Baptists (*mktky*) and Manichaeans (*zndyky*).[78] Significantly, he did not designate them as 'false religions' in the plural, but as 'the doctrine of Ahreman and demons' in the singular (*kēš ī Ahreman ud dēwān*). Apparently, from Kerdīr's point of view, non-Zoroastrian religions are only different realizations or exemplifications of one and the same demonic doctrine. It should be mentioned that—as Jason BeDuhn (2015, 265) points out—Kerdīr described the actualizations of the demonic doctrine using non-ethnical categories, and in doing so he introduced a new categorical division to Sasanian society in the third century. He does not refer to, for example, 'Indians,' but to Śramaṇas and Brāhmanas. He reserved the noun *dēn* for Zoroastrianism,[79] however, and even used it without any further attribution for its designation:

[72]

> §17: […] *ud was dēn ōšmurd gōnag gōnag ud anī-z kerdagān ī yazadān was abzūd ud abardar būd* […].
>
> "[…] and the religion was much studied[80] in various ways, and also the rites of the gods were much increased and became more important […]."[81]

[73]

It is worthwhile to compare this Zoroastrian use of the substantive *dēn* with the one in the Manichaean text M 312 R 6, presented in paragraph 52 above. In the Manichaean text, *dēn*

[74]

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73   He was *hērbed* 'teacher priest' under the reign of Šāpūr (240–272) and was promoted to *ohrmazd mowbed* 'high priest of Ohrmazd (the god)' under Ohrmazd I (272–73) and Warahrān I (273–76). Subsequently, he held the office of *bōxt-ruwān-Warahrān ī Ohrmazd mowbed* under Warahrān II (276–93) (Skjaervø 2012).

74   See, for example, Schott (2008, 79–109).

75   See §11 (KSM 14 = KKZ 9 = KNRm 29): *dēn mazdēsn* 'Mazda-worshiping religion' versus *kēš ī Ahreman ud dēwān* 'the heresy of Ahreman and the demons' and §17 (KSM 22 = KKZ 14 = KNRm 45): *dēn* '(Mazda-worshiping) religion' versus *kēš ī dēwān* 'the heresy of the demons.'

76   See §17 (KSM 22 = KKZ 14 = KNRm 45).

77   See §16 (KSM 20, 21 = KKZ 13 = KMRm 43): *mowmard ī xūb* 'good magians' versus *ahlomōγ ud gumarzāg mard* 'heretics and the destructive men.'

78   See §11 (KSM 14 = KKZ 9 = KNRm 29); for the identification of the listed religions, see de Menasce (1945, 206f.), Widengren (1965, 277f.), Bailey (1980), Sundermann (1987, 56n109, 2001, 372), De Blois (2002, 1–6), and Skjaervø (2012).

79   It is worth mentioning that Kerdīr used the lexeme *dēn* in the meaning 'psychopomp' as well; see KSM 29 / KNRm 57.

80   The verb used here is *ōšmurdan* 'to enumerate;' on the term *dēn ōšmurdan*, see Vevaina (2010).

81   MacKenzie (1989, 55, 59).

is used in the plural without any further attribution to denote (all) religions; in this Zoroastrian inscription, *dēn* is used similarly, without any adjective, but in the singular to signify Zoroastrianism.

Similar to the Manichaean Middle Iranian texts explored above, a Zoroastrian Middle Persian text, presumably from the late Sasanian period, could be taken as evidence for a comparison between religions. A passage in the *Memorandum of Wuzurg-mihr* asks the question: [75]

> AWM 185f.: dēn *kadār weh. ān kē yazdīh ī yazdān dēwīh ī dēwān kerbag mizd wināh*   [76]
> *puhl aziš paydāgtar ud rāh ud ristag ī frārōntar kerbag pad-dādtar jast estēd.*
> Which *religion* is better? The one from which the divinity of the gods (*yazdān*) and
> the demonic nature of the demons as well as reward for virtues and punishment
> for sins more immanently emerge, and from which the way and manner of more
> righteous virtue has occurred as more lawful.

The passage indicates how Sasanian Zoroastrianism dealt with the question of superiority of   [77]
one religion over others. This question attests the comparability of religions in late Sasanian
Zoroastrianism and, as a result, the existence of a generic concept of RELIGION, which, as we
will see in the following, is not completely detached from the dualistic division of religions
in true and false.

The Zoroastrian dualistic categorization of religions is not restricted to the beginnings of   [78]
the Sasanian period. The same perspective on religion can be observed in Pahlavi literature
from early Islamic times. The most exhaustive Pahlavi book, the *Dēnkard*, which is entirely
dedicated to inter-religious debates[82] in the context of Abbasid Islam,[83] regards religion in
the same way. It opposes 'good' religion, i.e. Zoroastrianism—which is designated with the
phrases 'the better/good religion' (*dēn ī weh, weh-dēn, hu-dēn*), 'the noble religion' or 'the religion
of nobles' (*ēr-dēn*), 'the right religion' (*rāst-dēn*), and 'the religion of Ohrmazd' (*ohrmazd
dēn*) to 'bad' religion, presented as 'bad/worse religion' (*ag-dēn, wad-dēn, wattar-dēn*), 'evil
religion' (*duš-dēn, duj-dēn*), 'anti-religion' (*jud-dēn*), 'doctrine' (*kēš*), and 'non-religion' (*adēn*).
My search for the morphological plural forms of *dēn* in the *Dēnkard*, as far as possible with
the available tools, yielded only one certain occurrence.[84]

> Dk. IX, 38.7 *ud ēn-iz kū ēd ī tō dēn zardušt pahlom ast az* dēnān. *ēd ī tō dēn zardušt*   [79]
> *gēhān frāxwēnēd ī ahlāyīh ud bowandag-menišnīh.*
> This (applies) as well that this religion of yours, o Zarathustra, is the most excel-
> lent among the *religions*. This religion of yours, which is righteousness and right-
> mindedness, flourishes in the world, o Zarathustra.

This passage is probably the only example in all of late antique Zoroastrian literature in   [80]
which the author explicitly expresses the plurality of religions and does not categorize them

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82   For the inter-religiosity of the *Dēnkard* and the revision of the encyclopedic view on it, see Rezania (2017b).
83   For the interaction of the authors of the *Dēnkard* with Abbasid's caliphate, see Rezania (forthcoming).
84   The noun *dēn* in the plural might appear in Dk. III, 225.16: *u-š dēn ud waxšwar ā druwandān pad dastwar ī
      +dēnān abar-estišn*. This chapter of the *Dēnkard* corresponds to the lacuna in manuscript B (the only older
      manuscript of the text) after page 192. Therefore, the chapter can be read only from younger manuscripts.
      From de Menasce's (1973, 237) translation of the corresponding phrase, it emerges that he reads the word
      as *dēnān*. Zaehner (1939, III/900) reads the phrase "*ē druwandān pat dastaβar ī dēvān apar ēstišn;*" see also
      different alternative suggestions by Fażīlat (1396, 1093n29). As the phrase *dastwar dēw* can be found in
      Dk. III, 288.1 as well, and as it fits better semantically in this phrase, I prefer the reading *dēwān* between
      the two homographs.

in a dualistic scheme. The passage presents semantic evidence for the existence of a generic concept of RELIGION as well: Ādurbād ī Ēmēdān, the author of the ninth book of the *Dēnkard*, compares Zoroastrianism with other religions. We can therefore assert a significant discrimination between Kerdīr's viewpoint in his inscription from the third century and this *Dēnkard* passage from the ninth century. Whereas Zoroastrianism was not comparable with other religious traditions for Kerdīr, who designated them differently, as *dēn* vs. *kēš*, Ādurbād considers Zoroastrianism and religious traditions as instances of a generic concept of RELIGION.[85]

Extending the search for the morphological plural of *dēn* more or less to the whole Zoroastrian Middle Persian corpus results in only one other passage, from *Dādestānīhā ī Dēnīg*,[86] likewise a post-Sasanian Pahlavi book from the ninth century:

[81]

> *ud ēk ān kē-š* ahlomōγ-dēnīhā *kāmist ō dād ī stūd, ēg pad frēftārīh ī wardēnīd abestāg ud zand az xwēš wimand* […].[87]
> One is that person, who wished *the heretic religions* to be the praised law, afterwards turned the *Avesta and Zand* according to his own *limit(ation) (?) through deception.

[82]

Although Manuščihr, the head of the priest of Fars and Kerman, followed the Zoroastrian model of the division between true and false religions, he spoke of 'false' religions in the plural and not in the singular like Kerdīr, for example. Despite subscribing to the distinction between true and false categories, Manuščihr accepts the plurality of religions. At the same time, he does not designate religions as heresies different from his own 'religion,' as Kerdīr did by calling them *ahlamōγ*. Instead, Manuščihr ascribes the term *dēn* to them, *ahlomōγ-dēnīhā*. However and significantly, the same author reduces the meaning of *dēn* to Zoroastrianism in a passage in his *Epistles*:[88]

[83]

> *dēn ī dēn mazdēsn ārāyišn ud wirāyišn ud wābarīgānīh abāz rasād.*[89]
> May the religion, which is the Mazda-worshiping religion, become again prepared, arranged, and believable.

[84]

Manuščihr acknowledges only Zoroastrianism as a religion. Yet, according to the positions I have advanced above, he uses the term *dēn* on two different semantic levels. The first one signifies RELIGION on the conceptual level, whilst the second one, employing the attribute 'Mazda-worshiping,' designates an instance of that concept, namely Zoroastrianism. In order to express that 'Zoroastrianism is the only religion,' Manuščihr was compelled to advance a generic concept of RELIGION. If one reads these two passages together, one could infer that, on one hand, Manuščihr believes in the plurality of heresies and accepts them as special instances of RELIGION (*ahlomōγ-dēn*), and, on the other hand, acknowledges only Zoroastrianism as (true) religion.

[85]

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85   It should be highlighted that Zoroastrianism was in agile contact with other religions in the Sasanian and early Islamic period. These exchanges were certainly formative for the (restricted) development of the abstract notion of RELIGION in Zoroastrianism.

86   On this text, see Shaki (1993).

87   Dd. 71.9 König (2010, 360, 362).

88   For a short review of his biography and his *Epistles*, see Rezania (2020).

89   NM 1, 11.9 (Kanga 1988).

The Departure Point of the Development of the Term Religion in Sasanian Iran

The Manichaean Designation of One's Own Religion and Other Religions

The Manichaeans referred to their religion mainly by the same linguistic means as the Zoroastrians. The latter designated their religion by modifying *dēn* with an adjective, such as 'good,' 'better,' or 'right.' The Manichaeans called their religion 'the pure *dēn*' (*dēn yōǰdahr/yōždahr*) in Middle Persian or Parthian.[90] Another similar emic designation for Manichaeism is 'the chosen/elect[91] religion' (*dēn wizīdag/wiẓīdag*).[92] The linguistic form of these Manichaean terms resembles the Zoroastrian ones and *per se* do not attest a generic concept of Religion. The situation is different, however, if we take the Manichaean designations of other religions into consideration as well. As far as I am aware, there are two Manichaean passages which allude to Eva's cosmogonic attempt to deceive Adam.[93] These Manichaean passages refer Adam's prototypical religion with the same term, *dēn,* which they use to describe Manichaeism. The same principle applies to the Manichaean designation of Zoroastrianism. The Manichaeans call this 'the Mazda-worshiping *religion'* (*dēn māzdēs*) and its believers 'the ones of Good Religion' (*weh-dēnān*).[94] It is worth noticing that both designations are constituted with *dēn*. What is more, they do not differ from the Zoroastrian emic designations for Zoroastrianism. To be more precise, late antique Manichaeans employed the same word, *dēn,* to designate both Zoroastrianism and Manichaeism, and modify both religions with further attributes. The following is one of the most significant passages which names Manichaeism and Zoroastrianism side by side:

[86]

> *nēw bād ud pirār ī pērōz gar(dāg)ān īg dēn māzdēs / frazendān ī wāxš yōǰdahr u-tān mād ī abēzag padiš wifrāyīhād.*
> "… may good … be and the omen of the victor to those returning (from?) the Mazda-worshiping religion! / Children of the holy religion and may your pure mother be helped through him/it!"[95]

[87]

Strikingly, the Manichaeans, in opposite to Zoroastrians, used the same term, *dēn,* for the designation of Zoroastrianism (*dēn māzdēs* and *weh-dēn*) in both text fragments above. In the latter passage, however, the author did not use the term *dēn* for the designation of Manichaeism, *dēn yōǰdahr,* but replaced *dēn* with *wāxš* to make a point of difference between the designation of Zoroastrianism and the label of Manichaeism. The choice of *wāxš* as an alternative to express Religion is highly striking. In Middle Persian, *waxš/wāxš* means 'spirit' (MacKenzie [1971], 88; Durkin-Meisterernst [2004], 3:336). In Sogdian, the same phonetic form, *wāxš,* means 'word, spirit, thing' (Gharib [1995], 400). Taking into consideration substantives like Pa. *wāxšβar* / MP *wāxšwar,* we can assume that *waxš/wāxš* in Middle Persian possessed the

[88]

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90 This term is very common in Manichaean texts; for some examples, see BBB 27, 126, 131f., 170f., 254, 454f., 469 (Henning [1937]), M 276/V 8, M 31/I/R 5, M 6955/I/V/1-2, S 7/V/ii/17-18 (Leurini [2017]), M 221/R/9, M 221/V/9, M 221/V/4 (Sundermann [1973]). Another term with the similar meaning is *dēn pawāg* (M6020/I/V/ii/(65/)16 and M6020/I/V/ii/(67/)18).

91 Although it is of some significance for my discussion on the existence of a generic concept of Religion, we cannot ascertain whether *wizīdag/wiẓīdag* means 'elect,' as chosen by god for the salvation of men and women, here, or 'chosen' by them themselves among different religions.

92 See, for example, M306/V/4, M306/V/6 and M306/V/7 (Durkin-Meisterernst and Morano [2010]).

93 See BBB e18-20 (Henning [1937], 48) and M8280/R/I/3-4 (Sundermann [1973], 76).

94 See M 543/R/3-5.

95 Durkin-Meisterernst ([2014], 233); M 68a/I/R.

meaning of 'word' as well. It seems that the author has chosen the term *waxš/wāxš* in this passage as an alternative for *dēn* because of its semantic parallelism to *dēn*. It is known that Manichaeism absorbed the Zoroastrian function of the goddess Dēn as a psychopomp.[96] This passage evidences the presence of the meaning 'traditional text' of the Zoroastrian *daēnā-*, presented in paragraph 20 above, in Manichaean texts as well. Therefore, *waxš/wāxš* must have served as a good substitute for the substantive *dēn* in this passage. Although this Manichaean phrase uses two different terms for itself and its rival religion, Zoroastrianism, its phrasing reveals a significant difference: Zoroastrianism designates itself as *dēn* and other religions as 'doctrine' (*kēš*) or 'false religion(s).' In doing so, it regards other religions as being inferior. Manichaean writers also labeled their own religion as well as other religions with the term *dēn*. At the same time, they placed Manichaeism above other religions by naming it *wāxš yōǰdahr*. In both cases, these two religions are situated in a certain hierarchy and in a certain relation to other religions. There is a considerable difference between the ways in which Manichaeism and Zoroastrianism envisaged the above, however. Manichaeism accepted the presence of other entities in the religious field as 'religions,' thus acknowledging the plurality of religions in third-century Iran. Third-century Zoroastrianism discredited other entities and presented itself alone as religion, a position that could be accounted for, to some degree, up to the end of the first millennium C.E.

Making It Possible to Say 'Religions'

Let us now return to the Manichaean texts and revisit the Manichaean evidence of the noun *dēn* in the plural. As we saw in paragraphs 24–59 above, this is attested in all three Middle Iranian Manichaean corpora, Middle Persian, Parthian, and Sogdian. However, its frequency differs in these three linguistic fields. The *Dictionary of Manichaean Middle Persian and Parthian* (Durkin-Meisterernst 2004, 3:150f.) lists ten occurrences for *dēnān*, the morphological plural of *dēn*, in Parthian and two occurrences in Middle Persian. Taking the texts published after this dictionary was published into account, these figures increase correspondingly to twelve and three, correspondingly, in Parthian and Middle Persian. The difference between these two linguistic fields becomes even greater if one considers the ratio of appearances of the plural form to all appearances of the noun *dēn*: considering the occurrences collected in the above dictionary, the plural form constitutes less than 2 percent of all attestations of the noun *dēn* in Middle Persian; in Parthian, the ratio is approximately 17 percent.[97] The case of the Manichaean Sogdian corpus is similar to Middle Persian: in this corpus, only three occurrences of the plural form of *δēn* are attested. It accounts for circa 3 percent of all occurrences of the noun *δēn* in Manichaean Sogdian texts (2012, 76).[98] These statistics reveal an imbalance in the occurrences of the term 'religion' in the plural in Parthian, on the one hand, and in Sogdian

[89]

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96 Manichaeism borrowed the eschatological meeting of the righteous man with his deeds, appearing as a beautiful women, from Zoroastrianism (see Henning 1945, 476f.; Ibn al-Nadīm 1871–1872, 69–71, 100f.; Colpe 1981; Shaked 1990, 28f.; Sundermann 1992b, 2008, 160–62, 2009b; Reck 2003).

97 Durkin-Meisterernst (2004, 3:151f.) lists 47 appearances for Parthian <dyn> in addition to two uncertain readings, one for <dynw> and two for <dyyn>, which equals 50 attestations in the singular. In Middle Persian, <dyn> is attested 106 times, <dꜥyn> two times, and <dynʾ>, <dyyn> and <tyn> once each, which yields 111 attestations in the singular. The relation of the plural form to all attestations is therefore 16.67 percent for Parthian and 1.77 percent for Middle Persian.

98 See also Gharib (1995, 149), who lists 19 occurrences for different writings of declination forms of <δyn> in the singular in the Manichaean script, 48 occurrences in Sogdian script (excluding one very doubtful reading), and one occurrence in the plural each in both scripts. The relation of the plural form to all attestations is therefore 2.98 percent.

and Middle Persian, on the other. This imbalance seems greater if we consider the Middle Persian and Sogdian passages in which the plural form occurs more closely. I will begin with the first three passages of M 5794,[99] in which one of the three Middle Persian attestations of the noun *dēn* in the plural appears:

> (0) *u-š* […] *passox dād kū* ēn dēn *īg man wizīd az* abārīgān dēn *ī* pēšēnagān *pad dah xīr frāy ud wehdar ast.*   [90]
> (1) *yek, ku* dēn *ī ahēnagān pad yek šahr ud yek izwān* būd*; ēg dēn ī man ād ku pad harw šahr ud pad wisp izwān paydāg bawād, ud pad šahrān dūrān kēšīhād.*
> (2) *dudīg, ku* dēn *ī* pēšēn *andom dā-š sārārān pākān andar būd hēnd … ud čeʾōn sārānān ahrāft hēnd ēgišan* dēn *wihurīd.* […]
> (4) *tasom ku ēn abhumišn īg dō bun ud nibēgān zindagān wihīh und dānišn ī man az hān ī* pēšēnagān dēn *frāydar ud wahy hēnd.*[100]

> (0) He [*scil.* Mani] replied: "*This religion which I chose* is in ten things greater and better than *the other religion(s)* of the ancients.   [91]
> (1) "Firstly, that *the religion of the ancients was* in one country and in one language; my religion will be, however, manifested in every country and in every language, and it will be taught in the far countries.
> (2) "Secondly, that *the former religion … as long as their pure leaders existed. As soon as their leaders raised* [*scil.* passed away], *their religion was confused.* […]
> (4) "Fourthly, that my revelation of two principles, my living books, my wisdom and knowledge is further and better than *the religion of the ancients.*"

It is striking that in the first passage of this text, a plural adjective qualifies a singular noun: *abārīgān dēn*. This grammatical irregularity already caught Boyce's attention (Boyce 1975b, 2:29n1). The same irregularity is the case for *pēšēnagān dēn* in the fourth passage, if *pēšēnag* is regarded as an adjective, 'earlier, former.'[101] The syntactical irregularity attested in this fragment seems to express a semantic regularity of the Iranian religious field in the third century: at that time, it was unusual to use the noun *dēn* in the plural. Mani—if the fragment stems from the *Šābuhragān*—aimed to formulate 'other religion*s*'; however, he could not easily decline the noun in the plural. Although he used the plural form of *dēn* in the fifth passage of this fragment, he could not apply it constantly. As Mani compared his religion with other religions in this text, one can expect the plural declination of the noun *dēn* in three other phrases: [92]

1. Instead of "the religion of the ancients was in one country and in one language," one would expect 'the religion*s* of the ancients were in one country and in one language;'   [93]
2. In the phrase "greater and better than the other religion(s) of the ancients," one would expect the formulation **pēšēnagān dēnān** instead of *pēšēnagān dēn*.
3. This expectation, moreover, applies to the phrase "the former religion" in the second passage. The substantive *dēn* has been used in the singular[102] here, although it semantically designates former religion*s*.

If we contrast the passages in this fragment in which the noun *dēn* has been declined in the   [94]

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99   See BeDuhn (2015, 271f.), who discusses this passage and compares it with its Coptic version.
100   M 5794 I (Lieu 2006, 524–26).
101   *Pēšēnagān,* however, can be considered a substantive with the meaning 'the ancients.'
102   The singular enclitic pronoun *š* in *andom dā-š* refers to *dēn,* which rules out that *dēn* is a syntactical plural although the verb of the sentence is in lacuna.

singular but semantically necessarily denotes a group of religions with the only passage in which the noun is attested in the plural, the fragment seems to indicate Mani's difficulty to formulate the word *dēn* in the plural in third-century Iran more than its plural use in one case. Nevertheless, the passage lets us conclude that, in his theory of religion, Mani acknowledged not only religious plurality but also a hierarchy of religions.

One segment of the Sogdian text *Āzandnāmē*, in which the noun *δēn* appears in the plural, resembles the discussed Middle Persian text M 5794 (Sundermann 1985, 23n39). The Sogdian passage with the plural form of *δēn* corresponds to the first passage of the Middle Persian text:

[95]

Middle Persian fragment M 5794	Sogdian fragment Āzandnāmē 45-50
dēn īg man wizīd az abārīgān dēn ī pēšēnagān pad dah xīr frāy ud wehdar ast. yek, ku dēn ī ahēnagān pad yek šahr ud yek izwān būd; ēg dēn ī man ād ku pad harw šahr ud pad wisp izwān paydāg bawād, ud pad šahrān dūrān kēšīhād.	(45) rty xw pyrnm-cykt δynt (ky) (46) [ZY ZKw]yh ryncykt ''pt (mʾnʾ)[k](w) (x)nt (prw)[ʾyw] (47) [ʾyw ʾwtʾkw] ʾnxštʾnt (ZY) wyn(ʾn)cykw ʾk(rty p)[yšt] (48) xw βrʾyšty δynh ky ZY ZKn RBkw smʾwtr [y mynt] (49) prw ʾnγtch ʾβcʾnpδ ZY prw wyspw ʾwtʾkw (w)[yt] (50) βwt skwnw
The religion which I chose is in ten things greater and better than the other religions of the ancients. Firstly that the religion of the ancients was in one country and in one language; my religion will be, however, manifested in every country and in every language, and it will be taught in the far countries.	"And the previous religions [my italics], which are similar to small waters, arose and became visible in [one country(?)]. But the Religion of the Apostle, which [resembles] the great Ocean, /50/ can be seen in the entire world and in every country."[103]

The corresponding Sogdian passage clearly expresses, without any irregularity, exactly what we expected and what was absent in the Middle Persian passage from the third century, that is, the declination of *dēn* in the plural. Acknowledging that the Middle Persian passage belonged to the *Šābuhragān*, we have to consider the large stretch of time that lay between the authorship of the two texts. It seems that these centuries gave Manichaeism enough possibilities to unfold a generic term of RELIGION. The author of the Sogdian text, moreover, uses a metaphor to compare Manichaeism with other religions: He equated Manichaeism with a world ocean (*samudr*) and former religions with lakes or rivers (*āp*). Doing so, he indicates the existence of a generic concept of RELIGION in his understanding of the religious field, comparable to the generic concept BODY OF WATER. Using the conceptual metaphor RELIGION IS A BODY OF WATER, the author uses his freedom to speak of religions in the plural.

[96]

Conclusion

As demonstrated in section 2, through the Zoroastrian term *dēn*, pre-Sasanian Zoroastrianism provided Manichaeism with the semantics necessary for a concept akin to RELIGION, as determined by our working definition. Otherwise, it would not have been possible for Mani

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103   Benkato (2017, 56f.); a former edition can be found in Sundermann (1985, 22f.).

to choose this term in his Iranian texts for the designation of his concept of RELIGION. Nevertheless, it seems that Zoroastrianism presented a dualistic scheme of religions in the third century, whereas Mani developed this further into a hierarchy of religions. For Mani, there are no 'bad' or 'good' religions, but 'good' and 'better' ones. This is a significant change of perspective, about which BeDuhn (2015, 273) aptly says: "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." However, third-century Zoroastrianism does not seem to have adapted his concept. From the presented Zoroastrian material, we can infer that Zoroastrianism constantly projected its dualistic worldview on the categorization of religions. Whereas this perspective on religion seems to have dominated in Zoroastrianism all throughout late Antiquity, later Zoroastrianism increasingly acknowledged the plurality of 'evil' religions. We can thus assert a historical development in Zoroastrianism: In the third century C.E., Kerdīr applied *dēn* only to Zoroastrianism, whereas in ninth-century Zoroastrianism, the term *dēn* was applied to heresies or, liberally, to all religions.

From the presented evidence, the infrequent occurrence of the noun *dēn* in the plural in Middle Persian and the formulation of *dēn* in the singular where one can expect the plural form, I conclude that it was unusual, especially in the third century, to formulate the noun *dēn* in the plural in Middle Persian. The infrequent occurrence of *δēn* in the plural in Sogdian attests the same circumstances for this language. In contrast, the relatively high frequency of the plural form of *dēn* in Parthian shows the more frequent occurrence of the generic concept of RELIGION in Parthian Manichaeism. At the moment, I cannot answer the question whether this linguistic contrast includes a geographical significance, indicating that Parthia in the north of the empire was the hot spot of this formative process in Sasanian Iran, or whether the development of the abstract notion of RELIGION did not affect Persis strongly because Zoroastrianism ruled there much more than Manichaeism. I do not mean by this that the alteration of pre-Sasanian Zoroastrianism to Sasanian Zoroastrianism was independent of various Manichaean developments. Kerdīr's inscription demonstrates the acceptance of a sort of religious plurality in the Sasanian empire of the third century from the Zoroastrian point of view. Nevertheless, the reception of the Manichaean development of the term RELIGION does not seem to have been enough strong to initiate a similar way of thinking about RELIGION in a sustainable way in Zoroastrianism, as suggested by the infrequent occurrence of the noun *dēn* in the plural in the Pahlavi corpus. Despite this formative process, the semantics of the substantive *dēn* did not achieve a high degree of abstraction in the religious field of Iran, so that the noun would designate only the abstract concept of RELIGION. The lexeme widely designates Manichaeism or Zoroastrianism even without any further attribute.

[98]

Manichaeism claimed universality, and as a universal religion, it was highly missionary. Moreover, it was a religion of the book, with a strong emphasis on written texts (Puech 1949, 61–68). These components led to Manichaean programmatic multilingualism, declared in Mani's agenda for his future religion, as we read, for example, in M 5794, quoted in paragraph 90 above. Manichaean multilingualism gave rise to Manichaean literature in a variety of languages. Of Middle Iranian languages alone, the Manichaeans utilized three different languages: Middle Persian, Parthian, and Sogdian, translating their texts between them.[104] As highlighted earlier (see n. 3 above), Knut Stünkel's study concludes that contact situations present a stimulating factor for the development of the generic concept of RELIGION. It is

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104   For a review of Manichaean literature in Iranian languages, see Sundermann (2009a).

not far-fetched if we consider the translation of a contact situation as intra-religious contact. Translation, the transfer of a text from one language to another, constitutes a contact of two linguistic fields. Religions other than the one that the translated text belongs to influence these linguistic fields differently. This could have happened, for example, because of different geographical distributions of adherents, a synchronic feature, or because of the different periods of presence of these religions in these linguistic fields, a diachronic feature. I can refer to the hypothetically supposed difference between the abstraction of *dēn* in Middle Persian and Parthian because of the stronger influence of Zoroastrianism in the south of the empire as an example. Therefore, if the source and target linguistic fields of the translation involve a difference in the influence of other religions, the act of translation is not a mere linguistic undertaking but presents an example of religious contact between two different religious fields. The strong attempts of Manichaeism in the translation of their sources from and into Iranian and non-Iranian languages might have provided more such contact situations, which in their turn strengthened the process of forming a generic concept of ʀᴇʟɪɢɪᴏɴ.

Regarding the formative exchanges between Zoroastrianism and Manichaeism, an unbalanced reciprocity seems to have existed: Zoroastrianism provided Manichaeism with the necessary semantics in a term for ʀᴇʟɪɢɪᴏɴ in the third century. Having received this abstraction, Manichaeism developed the Zoroastrian dualistic concept of ʀᴇʟɪɢɪᴏɴ further into a hierarchical one and the Zoroastrian noun *dēn* into a generic term for ʀᴇʟɪɢɪᴏɴ. Zoroastrianism seems to have absorbed the result of this Manichaean development: The meaning 'religion,' which was absent in the Avestan corpus for *daēnā-*, emerges in Middle Persian Zoroastrian texts. Zoroastrianism, however, stayed with its dualistic categorization of religions and was inclined to use the noun *dēn* in a generic way similar to Manichaeism. The dynamics of the processes in these two religious traditions apparently differ: The Manichaean tradition more easily integrated the Zoroastrian concept of religion and developed it further; the Zoroastrian one, by comparison, shows rather conservative behavior and did not abandon its dualistic scheme of religion. In conclusion, one might say that regarding the production of an abstract concept of ʀᴇʟɪɢɪᴏɴ, Zoroastrianism was more formative to Manichaeism than vice versa.

[100]

Acknowledgement

Abbreviations

Av. Avestan
AWM *Ayādgār ī Wuzurg-mihr* (see Jamasp-Asana 1897)
Az *Āfrīn ī Zartušt* after (Westergaard 1852–1854)
GW *Gyān wifrās* (see Sundermann 1997)
HN Hādōxt Nask (quoted after Piras 2000)
KKZ Kerdīr's inscription in Kaʿbe-ye Zardosht (see Gignoux 1991; Herrmann and MacKenzie 1989)
KNRb Kerdīr's inscription in Naqš-e Rajab (see Gignoux 1991; Herrmann and MacKenzie 1989)

KNRm Kerdīr's inscription in Naqš-e Rostam (see Gignoux 1991; Herrmann and MacKenzie 1989)

KSM Kerdīr's inscription in Sar Mashhad (see Gignoux 1991; Herrmann and MacKenzie 1989)

LN *Sermon of Light-Nous* (Sundermann 1992a)

MP Middle Persian

OAv. Old Avestan

Pa Parthian

V. *Wīdēwdād* (after Geldner 1896)

Vr. *Vīsprad* (after Geldner 1896)

Y. *Yasna* (after Geldner 1896)

Yt. *Yašt* (after Geldner 1896)

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From Manichaeism to Zoroastrianism

On the History of the Teaching of the 'Two Principles'

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ABSTRACT   The essential feature in the religious history of Pre-Islamic Iran is its dualistic worldview. It marks all stages of Zoroastrianism and also Manichaeism, in which dualism can be regarded as the most important Zoroastrian piece of inheritance. The following essay concentrates on two aspects of this 'inheritance' that have been overlooked until today: 1) The Manichaean dualism is consistently built on elements and tendencies that already existed, albeit covertly, in the Younger Avesta; and 2) The Manichaean dualism has thereby confronted Zoroastrian theologians with the task of giving an alternative and consistent formulation of dualism. Thus, the continuous attention both Dēnkard III and the Škand Gumānīg ī Wizār, two of the most philosophically inclined works in Pahlavi, give the concept of dualism seeks to articulate a relation between the notion of evil and the idea of the "finite," and also to formulate the notion of "principle," seen as a demarcation from the Manichaean solution.

KEYWORDS   Zoroastrianism, Manichaeism, dialectical development of dualism

Preliminary Remarks

In ancient times the Persians worshipped Zeus and Cronos and all the other divinities of the Hellenic pantheon, except that they called them by different names.[1] […] But nowadays their views conform for the most part to those of the so-called Manichaeans, to the extent of their holding that there are two first principles one of which is good and has given rise to all that is fine in reality and the other of which is the complete antithesis in both its properties and its function. They assign barbarous names drawn from their own language to these entities. The good divinity or creator they call Ahuramazda, whereas the name of the evil and malevolent one is Ahriman. (Agathias, *Hist.*, 2.24.8–9; translation by Frendo in Agathias 1975)

[1]

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1   Agathias' information is based on "the testimony of Berosus of Babylon, Athenocles and Simacus who recorded the ancient history of the Assyrians and Medes" (Agathias, *Hist.*, 2.24.8).

The most characteristic religious feature of pre-Islamic Iran is the embedding of its the- [2]
ology in an ontological, cosmological and also ethical dualism. This holds true for Maz-
daism/Zoroastrianism (second millennium BCE until today) (in the following: 'Zoroastrian-
ism'), but also for Manichaeism (third century CE until the early second millennium). Both
religions, Zoroastrianism and Manichaeism, seem to regard themselves as religions of the "two
principles" (MP *dō bun(ištag)*). While in Manichaeism, *dō bun* is an emic term from the times
of Mani, which the religious founder applied to the kernel of his religion during the days of
his stay at the court of Šābuhr, it remains to be examined when a comparable conceptual re-
flection of the philosophical fundamentals took place in Zoroastrianism, and how it is related
to the Manichaean solution. The two 'philosophical' books of the Zoroastrian Middle Persian
literature, *Dēnkard* 3 (early ninth century) and *Škand Gumānīg Wizār* (probably middle of the
ninth century), show that reflection about the dualistic conception of being was the key topic
of Zoroastrian intellectuals.

Because of the significantly higher age of Zoroastrianism, it is (and was already in the early [3]
Islamic period) *communis opinio* that the Manichaean dualism is a reformulation of the Zoroas-
trian one. Although this opinion certainly includes a kernel of truth, it needs at least some
complements. First, one needs to inquire about the relation between the Manichaean dualism
and the dualism of the Avesta. It seems to me that the Manichaean dualism draws the radical
conclusion from a Younger Avestan structural tendency. Secondly, one cannot help thinking
that late antique and early Islamic Zoroastrianism came to a new shaping of its dualism un-
der the influence of the Manichaean conception, i.e., that the Zoroastrian concept/term *dō
bun(ištag)* is a reaction to the Manichaean concept/term *dō bun*. In addition to the assumption
of such an external demarcating process, one should inquire both about the internal consider-
ations and the theological-philosophical models late antique or early Islamic Zoroastrianism
adopted to solve the problems generated by its own critique of the Manichaean dualistic
model.

Thus, my paper tries to explain the genesis of the Iranian religion(s) in the late antique and [4]
early Islamic period on the basis of three dynamic elements: 1) religious competition and de-
marcation; 2) theoretical considerations within one religion; 3) the adoption of philosophical
models.

On MP *bun(išt)(ag)* "principle"

The MP word *bun* (bwn) goes back to OIr **buna-/būna-* (OAv *būna-*; YAv *buna-*) < **budna-*, [5]
cf. Ved *budhná-* m.[2] This **bu(d)na-* has the same meaning as its cognates Gr πυθμήν m., Lat
fundus or Germ *Boden*, "ground" and – cf. MIndic *bundha-* n. – "root." The word designates
low-lying things/places. In the Younger Avesta the meaning "ground (of the waters)" dom-
inates.[3] It seems that the Avesta only paves the way for the later meanings of "beginning,"
"principle." In Y 53.7, the *būna-* (Loc *būnōi.*) "vagina" or "uterus" is probably the place of the
mainiiuš. drəguuatō. (cf. Y 30.5 *aii*ā̊*. mainiuuā̊. … yā. drəguuā̊.*).[4] V 19.47 uses an expression
bunəm. aŋhōuš. təmaŋhe. "(to the) ground of the dark existence,"[5] i.e., the place of the demons.

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2   For -dn- > -(n)n- cf. OAv/YAv *xʸaēna-* < **hvaidna-* (see Hoffmann and Forssman 1996, 97).
3   See the quotations in AiW 968–969.
4   On this passage, see König (2010, 23–33).
5   PahlTr *ō bun ī axwān ī tom kē ērang dūzax [abāz ham-ō-ham dūd]* "to the basis of the dark places of being,
     the horrible hell [back to the clumping smoke]." For darkness as a characteristic of hell, see especially and
     already the accumulation of the word "dark" (*təma-*) in V 5.62, 18.76: *təmaŋhaēnə. təmasciϑrəm. təmaŋhəm.*

Especially this *bunəm. aŋhə̄uš. təmaŋhe.* is instructive because it points to a connection of "the deep place" and the place where the evil beings live.[6] The deep place is also understood as the place without light (see PahlTr V 19.47). So *buna-* appears as the kernel of a semantic cluster designating deepness/evil/lightlessness. Even though the semantic inversion of this cluster already exists in the Avesta, the word *buna-* is not applied to these two clusters as a general term. From the evidence of the Avestan sources, we must conclude that a more abstract meaning of *bun(a-)* as "fundament; source[7]; principle" was not developed before the post-Avestan period.

The Zoroastrian sources from the period between the end of the Avestan text production[8] and the Pahlavi texts of the ninth century are not numerous.[9] The best and oldest information on the religious development in the post-Achaemenid period comes from the Greek *Nebenüber-lieferung* and points to a usage of **bun(a)* as "principle" in the fourth century BCE. Eudoxos[10], Theopompos[11] and Hermippus[12] spoke of "two principles"[13] (δύο ... ἀρχάς) (cf. Gnoli 1974, 141) that were called Oromazdes and Areimanios by the Magi (Diog. Laert., *Vit.Philos.*, *Prooem.* 6,8). Aristotle (384–322) uses δαίμων (≈ Av *mainiiu-*) as the generic term for two opposing transcendent beings of the Iranian religion.[14] He designates both the ἀγαθὸν δαίμονα as well as the κακὸν δαίμονα as the ἀρχάς:[15]

[6]

    → PahlTr *tom-arzānīgān ... tom-tōhmagān ... tom.* In later sources, hell is described as a place where darkness is nearly material; see MX 7.30f., AWN 18, PahlV 5.62 (see König 2010, 338–39).

6   The term for hiding the *daēuua*s in the earth is YAv *zəmarə-guz-* (Y 9.15, Yt 19.81; FrW 4.3; s. AiW 1665–1666).

7   See Dd 0.23.

8   For a reconstruction of the process of the Avestan text production, see Kellens (1998, 488–516).

9   The most important sources are the Pahlavi translations of the Avesta and their (late Sasanian/early Islamic?) commentaries. Indirect sources are the Manichaean texts.

10   Lived around 390 and 340 BCE in Knidos.

11   Born 378/377 BCE in Chios; died between 323 and 300 BCE, probably in Alexandria.

12   Lived in the third century BCE (*289/277 BCE, †208/204 BCE).

13   Or "two realms"?

14   In Plutarch's (around 45–125 AD) *de Iside* 46 θεός, "god" is used as a general term for two highest divinities (θεοὺς), which are seen as "rivals" (ἀντιτέχνους); referring to the Persian terminology, Plutarch makes the distinction between θεός = Ahura Mazdā (Ὠρομάζης) and δαίμων Aŋra Mainiiu (Ἀρειμάνιος). This distinction θεός / δαίμων is probably an allusion to Av *ahura / daēuua*.

15   See, 900 years later, the conceptualisation of Ὀρμισδάτης (< **Ohrmizd-dād* [?]) and Ἀριμάνης as δύο τὰς πρώτας ἀρχάς in Agathias (536–582 AD), *Hist.* 2-24ff. For δύο τὰς πρώτας, see the expression "the two spirits in the earliness (of being)" (see Y 30.3 *tā. mainiiū. pauruiiē.*; Y 45.2 *aŋhəuš. mainiiū. pauruiiē.*), which the PahlTr glosses with *Ohrmazd ud Gannāg.* It seems that the Avestan expression was later simplified to "the two first spirits"; see PahlY 30.3 *har 2 mēnōg [...] ā-šān fradom*; Y 45.2 *andar axwān mēnōgīgīh fradom [dahišnīgīh]*).

Diog. Laert., *Prooem.* 6,8

Ἀριστοτέλης δ' ἐν πρώτῳ Περὶ φιλοσοφίας καὶ πρεσβυτέρους εἶναι τῶν Αἰγυπτίων· καὶ δύο κατ' αὐτοὺς εἶναι ἀρχάς, ἀγαθὸν δαίμονα καὶ κακὸν δαίμονα· καὶ τῷ μὲν ὄνομα εἶναι Ζεὺς καὶ Ὡρομάσδης, τῷ δὲ Ἅιδης καὶ Ἀρειμάνιος. φησὶ δὲ τοῦτο καὶ Ἕρμιππος ἐν τῷ πρώτῳ Περὶ μάγων καὶ Εὔδοξος ἐν τῇ Περιόδῳ καὶ Θεόπομπος ἐν τῇ ὀγδόῃ τῶν Φιλιππικῶν	Aristotle in the first book of his dialogue *On Philosophy* declares that the Magi are more ancient than the Egyptians; and further, that they believe in two principles, the good spirit and the evil spirit, the one called Zeus or Oromasdes, the other Hades or Arimanius. This is confirmed by Hermippus in his first book about the Magi, Eudoxus in his *Voyage round the World*, and Theopompus in the eighth book of his *Philippica*.[16]

It is likely that the Middle Persian *dō bun(ištag)* corresponds to Gr δύο … ἀρχάς. These "two principles" are identified as Ohrmazd and Ahreman by the Greek authors. A philosophical usage of ἀρχή ("principle") in Greek can be traced back to Anaximander (first half of the sixth century BCE), who called his highest concept, the ἄπειρον "the infinite", an ἀρχή. Simplicius (in *Phys.* 150.23; cf. Aristoteles, *Metaph.* 983b11), says that it was indeed Anaximander who introduced the term ἀρχή (πρῶτος τοῦτο τοὔνομα κομίσας τῆς ἀρχῆς). This is remarkable because a) there is evidence that Anaximander's ἄπειρον and cosmology is the philosophical reformulation of an Iranian cosmological model (Burkert 1963),[17] and b) the topic of the "infinity of the principle(s)" is also known from the *Bundahišn,* a late antique text that probably has its roots in the Avesta (see below).   [7]

The next occurrence of the term "two principles" is (and probably not by chance) the title of Mani's *Šābuhragān,* dw bwn ꜥy š²bwhrg²n.[18] Parthian texts testify an expression dw bwn wrzg "the two great principles," which is a designation of the fundamental dualism of the cosmos (see GW 111 (§22,3) and the expression Parth. dw bwngꜥhyg/*dō bunγāhīg*). Parthian *bun (*bwn) and *bunγāh (*bwngꜥh, bwnγꜥh) "base, foundation" corresponds to MMP bwnyšt "origin, principle, foundation."   [8]

In ZMP texts, the word *bun* has more or less the same meaning as Avestan *buna-/būna-,* "beginning;[19] base, root, source" (in the simplex and in the first member of a compound). Only Dk 3 and ŠGW uses rarely the expression *dō bun* for "the two principles" (see Dk 3.383; 3.414; ŠGW 10.39 [cf. 11.383] *bun. i. du.*, 10.42, 11.327 *du. bun.*[20]).[21] The 'abstract' meaning "principle" is the common meaning of the enlarged form *bun-išt(-ag)(-īh)* (Pāz. *buniiaštaa.*).   [9]

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16   Translation Hicks ([1925] 1972).

17   The similarity of Anaximander's and the Iranian model of the light-sphere is still unrecognized in Solmsen (1962), an article on "traces and influences" of and on Anaximander's Infinite. For a Mesopotamian background of this model, see Panaino (1995) and Lanfranchi (2001, 161–62).

18   See the fragments M475, M477, M482, M472; on the title dw bwn in the Parthian translation, see Sundermann (1986, 84, n. 182); see also the Old Turkic *Iki Yiltiz Nom,* chin. *Erh-tsung ching* "book of the two principles" (MIK III 198 [T II D 171]), and the Chinese phrase (see Hutter 1992, 146 and Reck "Šābuhragān" in Encyclopædia Iranica: http://www.iranicaonline.org/articles/sabuhragan).

19   See, e.g., ŠGW 11.342 *ǝž. bun. aṇdā. faržąm.* "from the beginning to the end"; ŠGW 12.51 *u. bun. u. miiąn. u. faržąm.* "beginning, middle, end."

20   ŠGW sometimes uses *bun* in the sense of "principle" (more common *buniištaa.*), see ŠGW 11.85 (?), 11.95; see also ŠGW 11.254 bun. Buniiašt.

21   An adjective with the meaning "fundamental" can be found in GrBd 1.52b *u-š nazdist Amahrspand dād 6 bun* "he created first the Amahraspand, the six fundamental one"; GrBd 26.129 *Ohrmazd ud ān 6 Amahrspand ī bun* "Ohrmazd and the six fundamental Amahraspands."

This enlarged word-formation and its 'abstract' meaning is unknown in the *Pahlavi Vīdēvdād*,[22] a Zoroastrian work from the Sasanid period (Cantera 1999, 2004), probably because of the translator's intention to avoid anachronistic interpretations of Avestan words.[23]

Mani, the perverter of the *Abestāg* and *Zand* …

From the information given by the classical authors, we can deduce that, at least beginning with the second half of the first millennium BCE, a term "principle" and a concept "the <teaching of the> two principles" existed in Iran. The prominent position, however, that Mani granted to the above term and the concept in the third century CE certainly influenced their further development and contextualization in the Zoroastrian theology.

[10]

Mani appeared, to his Zoroastrian counterparts, as a perverter of the holy Zoroastrian texts. According to a passage in *Dādestān ī dēnīg,* one of the seven Zoroastrian arch-sinners is the *ahlomōγ* (= *frēftār* "deceiver"). This "confuser of Aša" (this is the literal meaning of *ahlomōγ,* a loan from Av. *arta-maoγa-*) is, according to the paraphrase of the term in Dd 71, the one who wardēnīd abestāg ud zand "perverted abestāg ud zand" (the holy texts which Dd 71 also calls weh-ahlāyīh "<the acts of> the Good Truth"). He is accused of a kind of 'forgery' of the religious writings (*ayāddān*):

[11]

Dd 71.9

ēk ān kē-š ahlomōγ-dēnīhā kāmist ō dād ī stōd ēg pad frēftārīh wardēnīd abestāg ud zand az xwēš wimand	One is he by whom the heretical religious teachings (*dēnīhā*) were preferred as the *dād ī stōd; he perverted then (on that basis) through deceitfulness the Abestāg* and *Zand* according to his own definitions.[24]

The text does not provide the identity of the *ahlomōγ,* most likely because the intention of the Zoroastrian author was to establish a "mythical model of a heretic." This model fits the great 'heretics' of the Sasanian period, Mani and Mazdak, very well, however. The lexicon of Manichaean Middle Persian, Parthian, and Sogdian includes a good number of loan words from the Zoroastrian context (see Colditz 2005). It seems that Mani had access to the (still unwritten?) Avesta (see Cantera 2004, 106–53),[25] probably in its Pahlavi translation(s). To give just one example: the Parthian *Gyān wifrās* (GW §21), edited a few years ago by Werner Sundermann, mentions a "Nask" with the name "the Living Nask" ((n)s(g) jywʾng). This *Nask* – jywʾng[26] is perhaps a folk-etymological interpretation of *Zand* (cf. Herders and Kleukers

[12]

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22 Beyond the passage PahlV 19.47, the word *bun* is used only in the glosses of this work, where *bun* (and also *bunīh*) appears in idiomatic phrases (*ō bun* [in the context of sin/merit]; *bun ud bar* [see here also PahlV 3.25]). The philosophical meaning "principle" seems to be absent in all instances (and is perhaps only indirectly reflected in *a-bun* "not principally" [adjective to *sag, gurg* in PahlV 13.42, 43]).

23 Because we have seen that Gr ἀρχή probably translates as OIr *buna-* "principle," we cannot assume that the canonized translation/commentary of the *Pahlavi Vīdēvdād* was fixed in a period before a 'philosophical' meaning of *bun* entered the ZMP literature.

24 All translations by the author unless noted otherwise.

25 The term *dād ī stōd* might be connected with the *Nask Stōt/Stōd,* the *Nask* which is the first or last of the 21 *Nask*s of the Sasanian Avesta, and which incorporated the OAv texts (on the *Staotas Yesniias* see Kellens 1998, 496–500).

26 The name Parthian *nsg jywʾng* (MP *nsk zy(w)ndk') remains an enigma, since such a *Nask* is not part of the *Nask-Avesta* (the Sasanian/Great Avesta). Firstly, the name evokes the expression *nibegān zīndagān* "Living Books," used by Mani (in M 5494 [a fragment probably belonging to the *Šabuhragān*]) with regard to his

"Lebendiges Wort"[27]) and points to the five "god"s (yzd) which represent the five elements and bear the names of the *Gāϑās*:

GW §32	GW §46		GW §65	
ʾrdʾ(w) [frw](r)dyn	wʾd yzd	rw(š)n [y](zd)	ʾb (yz)[d]	ʾdwr yzd
ʾwhnwyt gʾ<u>h</u> (M838 R 9 = M419+M3824 R 3)	ʾwyštwyt gʾ<u>h</u> (M248+ R 14 = M890 R 2)		whwxštr gʾ<u>h</u> (M295 R 8 = M6090 R 4)	

Gyān wifrās illustrates a typical aspect of Manichaean textual technique, namely the refer- [13]
ence to the Avestan texts (probably in their *Zand*-form) and the combination of their names with new elements, in the case of the *Gyān wifrās* Aristotelian-Manichaean elements. This combination, suggested and enabled by the occurrence of the number 5 (five *Gāϑā*s/five Manichaean elements), could possibly make a Zoroastrian critic believe that it led the Manichaeans to an esoteric interpretation of the most 'holy' Zoroastrian texts, and, as such, that it 'perverted' the 'true' Zoroastrian understanding of the *Gāϑās*.

… And its Executor

If we leave aside this contingent reinterpretation (an insider would have seen it as 'perverting') [14]
of more peripheral Zoroastrian terms and concepts, and take into consideration the conceptual kernel of Manichaeism, that is, the teaching of the '*dō bun,*' we could describe Mani's teaching as the fulfilment of metaphorical-conceptual tendencies that can be found only in the Avesta. The key difference between Manichaeism and Zoroastrianism is the Manichean identification of *hyle* ("matter") with Evil, which leads to a simplification of the Zoroastrian double dualism of good/evil and material/immaterial.

Manichaeism			**Zoroastrianism**		
material =	-	non-material =	material (*gētīg*)	-	non-material (*mēnōg*)
dark =	-	light =	dark =	-	light =
evil	-	good	evil	-	good

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own works (see the designation of the εὐαγγέλιον also as "Living Gospel" or "Gospel of the Living"; see also the designation of the text "Opening of the doors," one of the Manichaean canonical scripture, as "the Treasure of the living"; the Greek and Latin name of Mani, Μανιχαιος/Manichaeus, is from Syriac Mânîḥayyâ "the living Mani"). Secondly, there is a similarity to a term used in the eighteenth and nineteenth century, "Zend-Avesta," which was understood as "Living Avesta" by the first European Iranologists; see already the introduction of Herder's *Erläuterungen zum Neuen Testament aus einer neueröffneten morgenländischen Quelle*, published 1775 (Herder 1775), and J. Fr. Kleuker *Zend-Avesta. Zoroasters Lebendiges Wort* (Kleuker 1777–1786). Herder/Kleuker probably picked up an old folk etymology of *zend* as *zende* (*zindeh* < *zīndag*) (the source of which is still unknown, but it seems that it was not Anquetil who established such an understanding of "Zand"). This is indicated by the well-known passage Dk 5.24.13, according to which *zīndag-gōwišnīg saxwan* "the living speech" is held in higher esteem than *ān ī pad nibišt* "what is written" (see Dk 5.24.13), probably because of the fact that the *zīndag-gōwišnīg saxwan* was composed in the Avestan language, but the written text is in Pahlavi.

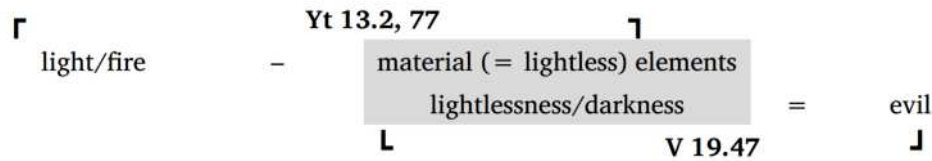27   The source of this translation is Anquetil (1771, II:423–424).

Figure 1   Scheme of superimposition of two (explicit or implicit) Avestan equations.

In the Younger Avesta and in late antique Zoroastrianism, we can observe that the formula   [15]
dark = evil presents connections to matter (although it has essentially only a *mēnōg*-existence,[28]
it nests parasitically only in the material world), whereas the formula *light = good* carries al-
lusions to the non-material (*aṣa* "truth" is light, see Y 37.1). Nevertheless, the relationship
between *dark = evil/light = good* and *gētīg/mēnōg* is more complex in Zoroastrianism than in
Manichaeism. Historically, it indicates two different ways to situate these terms in different
constellations.

As we have seen in V 19.47, the Younger Avesta is already acquainted with the seman-   [16]
tic cluster of "deep = lightless / evil." In Manichaeism, this cluster seems to be enlarged
by the element of "matter." The *tertium* of both, matter and Evil, is very probably lightless-
ness/darkness. In Avestan Zoroastrianism, in particular in the cosmology of Yt 13 and (then)
Bundahišn, lightlessness is, at least implicitly, the logical consequence of the theological deci-
sion to separate light from the other (six) 'elements' and to oppose it to them.

Thus, Manichaeism creates, one might say, its theory by a superimposition of two (explicit   [17]
or implicit) Avestan equations:

1. V 19.47 lightlessness/darkness = Evil   [18]
2. Yt 13 light/fire is separated from / opposed and superior to the other material elements
   (> light contra material elements)

The scheme of the superimposition is depicted in figure 1. The combination of Yt 13 and   [19]
V 19 has a further implication. If "evil" is "lightless", and if "lightless" is "material" ("tactile"
according to the later Zoroastrian epistemology[29]), then the inversion of the argument leads
to the conclusion that the immaterial is the light which is goodness.[30] Mani's worldview is
consonant with notions preformed in the Younger Avesta: the identification of light with
goodness and its opposition to matter. It was, as we shall see, the task of the late antique
Zoroastrian theology to find arguments against Mani's conclusion, but also to explore ways
not to radically separate light from matter.

The Zoroastrian Critique of the Manichaean *dō a-bun* Conception…

It is remarkable that Mani's radical theological-philosophical conclusion was not adopted by   [20]

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28 It is still a matter of debate whether this asymmetrical ontological conception of Ohrmazd and Ahreman has its origin in the Avesta (see Gnoli 1995; Schmidt 1996; Panaino 2001).
29 For the two epistemological-ontological categories in the Pahlavi writings ("what can be seen" and "what can be touched"), see already Herakcitus (in Hippolytos, *Haer.* IX 9,6 (DK 22 B 56)).
30 In the sense of the German nominalized adjective '*das Gute*.'

late antique Zoroastrianism. Yet it is a conclusion that tends to be drawn in Zoroastrian cult practices, for instance, in establishing an eternal/unpolluted fire. In the more trivial forms of Zoroastrian cosmology (see, e.g., MX 1.31-32), one could also identify a correlation between *gētīg (material) and world with demons,* and, on the other hand, *mēnōg (spiritual) and world without demons.* My explanation for this Zoroastrian non-fulfilment of what can probably be described as an overarching historical tendency—the cultural increase of abhorrence of the *materia*—is that a) a radical abhorrence of the *materia* can produce economic problems,[31] and b) the dualistic competitor already drew a radical conclusion, that is, the damnation of the material world. According to the latter hypothesis, the Zoroastrian priests of both the pre-Islamic and the Islamic period had to find arguments against the Manichaean dualism (or against any dualism of 'Manichaean' expression), and to formulate a dualism in which light, darkness, and matter could be set as an alternative and convincing constellation.

[21] The Zoroastrian key argument against the Manichaean identification of *materia* and darkness/evil is that by such an identification, the *materia* necessarily appears as something infinite, as one could see from *Ādurbād's argument in Dk 3.199.7 against Mani's teaching in Dk 3.200*:[32]

<div align="center">B 169.5f.</div>

gytyk pt̲' bwnyštk' AL YHSNNyt MḤ +dgl[33] LA YHWWNt'	*gētīg pad buništag ma dārēd cē dagr nē būd*	Do not claim that the *gētīg* is a *buništag* because it was/is not 'long/eternal'![34]

[22] Ādurfarrbay discusses the teachings of the Jews, the Manichaeans, and the Sōfistās in Dk 3.150 (a chapter dated to the early ninth century). The text claims that the Sophists teach a general *a-bun*, i.e., non-creation of the whole being.[35] In the following, the term *a-bun* is also

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31 Later Zoroastrianism develops or strengthens the principle of *xwēškārīh* and *kunišn*, the active fulfilment of one's own duty (according to one's own ability). This principle is a bastion against thoughts of world-negation and against fatalism. Šahrastānī says about the *Zarāduštīya* that this Mazdaean school not only knows a *Mīnū-Gītī*-dualism, but "was in der Welt ist, in zwei Theile getheilt, Bachschisch (*baxšiš*) (Gnade) und Kunisch (*kuniš*) (Thätigkeit) worunter er (Zardušt [GK]) die Anordnung (Gottes) und das Thun (des Menschen) versteht, und ein Jeder sei in Beziehung auf das Zweite vorherbestimmt" (Haarbrücker 1850–1851, I:283: "What is in the world is divided into two parts, Bachschisch (*baxšiš*) (grace) and Kunisch (*kuniš*) (deeds), which he (Zardušt [GK]) understands as the order (of God) and the actions (of man), and everyone is predestined for the latter"). See the opposition mentioned in Dd 70.3 *pad brēhēnišn … pad kunišn*, cf. B 325.7 (Dk 4.34) *baxt-išān abar ān ī brēhēnīdārīh pad kunišn* ("their fate <is fulfilled> with regard to creation by action"). On the dialectic of fate and action see König (2010, 79, 82).

32 Ādurbād's use of a past tense form *būd*—see Mānī's counter-position in Dk 3.200.7 with the hint to a creation demon—seems to point to a created infinity (see the position in Plato's *Timaios and* the position of Philon and Augustin; Aristotle, however, argues against the assumption of a created infinity, see fn. 33).

33 Text in B dgy; DkS 5.241 dgl (Menasce 1945, 231, 1973, 208 reads *dīg* "hier").

34 According to the opposition of the two epithets of *zruuan-* in the Younger Avesta, *darǝγō.xᵛaδāta-* and *akarana-* (see Ny 1.8; Y 72.10; V 19.13), the "long" time—according to AiW 696 the meaning of *darǝγō.xᵛaδāta-* is also "ewig"—differs from the "infinite" (*akarana-*) time (see Menasce 1945, 231–32).

35 Sundermann (1982, 32–33), where a transcription and translation of the chapter is given, points to Aristotle's "Sophistische Widerlegungen" (περὶ σοφιστικῶν ἐλέγχων), chapter 5, which discusses the assumption of a world without a beginning. The σοφιστικῶν ἐλέγχων were of great importance for the knowledge of Greek philosophical teachings in the Middle East: "Kein anderes Werk der griechischen Literatur, das vornehmlich den Sophisten und ihrem Wirken gewidmet ist, scheint im nahöstlichen Schrifttum der frühislamischen Zeit ähnliche Verbreitung gefunden zu haben wie die Sophistici Elenchi" (Sundermann 1982, 23: "No other work of Greek literature dedicated principally to the Sophists and their deeds seems to have been disseminated as widely in Middle Eastern writing of early Islamic time as the Sophistici Elenchi").

applied to the Jewish and even to the Manichaean position[36] (where we would rather expect the use of *bun, buništag, see B 169.5f., and in particular the self-designation of Manichaeism as the religion of the* dō bun* [see above]).[37] The following text presents the Jews as declaring the necessity and possibility of one and only one *a-bun* (a monotheistic position). The Manichaean teaching of *dō a-bun* is presented and criticized as follows:

Dk 3.150 (B 116.5-7)[38]

W TLYNʻ ʾbwn y KRA ʾywkʻ pt̲ʻ tnʻ ʾsʾmʾnʻ cʾštkʻ mʾnʾyk ʾndlg Z̲NH̲c AYK AMT ʾywkʾc y pt̲ʻ tnʻ ʾsʾmʾnʻ YHWWNtʻ LA šʾstnʾ MNc AYTʾyh y ywdtʻ ʾcš tnʾʾnc pytʾk TLYN y KRA ʾywk pt̲ʻ tnʻ ʾsʾmʾnʻ YHWWNtʻ cygwn šʾytʻ	ud dō a-bun ī har ēk pad tan- āsāmān cāštag <ī> mānāī andarag ēn-iz kū ka ēk-iz ī pad tan-āsāmān būd nē šāyistan az-iz astīh jud aziš tanān-iz paydāg dō ī har ēk pad tan-āsāmān būd ciyōn šāyēd	And <concerning> the teaching of Mānāī ʻ<There are> two *a-bun*s, each exists in/through the body-sky[39]ʼ. The objection is the following: If it is impossible that only one <*a-bun*> exists in/through the body-sky—and <the existence of such an *a-bun* is> evident from a being apart from the bodies (?[40])—, how should it be possible that each of the two <*a-bun*s> exists in/through the body-sky?

[23]

It seems that the Manichaeans are not criticized for their definition of *dō bun* as *dō a-bun*, in the sense of "what has no beginning."[41] For Ādurfarrbay, a true *bun* (see above B 169.5f.) is infinite (i.e., an *a-bun* "what has no beginning" is the definition of *bun* "principle"). Ādurfarrbay's general argument seems to be that an *a-bun* (= *bun*) cannot be part of a "body-sky" because it cannot be material, finite.[42] In the case of the Manichaeans, he observes that they claim an "infinite *materia*," a logical incoherent concept; the report of Šahrastānī (eleventh/twelfth century)[43] says that in difference to the "Majūs," the Thanawīya, and within this school the Manichaeans, claims the infinity of light *and* of darkness (Haarbrücker 1850–1851, I:285). Šahrastānī's report on the "Majūs" ("Majūs" is a general term for the three Zoroastrian schools known to Šahrastānī) starts with a comparison of the schools of the "orig-

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36 De Menasce (1945, 234) explains: "les *abūn* sont les ἀγεννητοι, αὐτοφυεῖς des écrits grecs sur le manichéisme et sur le dualism in general" ("the *abūn* are the ἀγεννητοι, αὐτοφυεῖς of the Greek writings on Manichaeism and on dualism in general").

37 For *a-bun,* see also Dk 3.126, Dk 3.127, Dk 3.109 (*a-bunīh*). In Dk 3.109 *a-bunīh* seems to have the opposite meaning of *bunīh*; see ŠGW 11.247, 250 *abuniiašt.* "the one (spirit) who is not a principle."

38 For this chapter, see de Menasce (1945, 233–34).

39 An alternative reading would be *a-sāmān* "unlimited" (*pad tan a-sāmān* "material-infinite"), a word used in the ŠGW. For a reading *tan-āsamān*, see the passage ŠGW 16.8-20, where the sky appears as Āharman's first creation, made from the "skin" (pōst) of the *Kunī. dāβ.*, the (probably male) "general of Āharman" (*spāhsalār. i. Āharman.*).

40 Translation uncertain.

41 See the notice in the polemical chapter 16 of the ŠGW: *bun. gaβəšni. i. Mānāe. aβar. akanārai. i. buniiaštagą.* "the original writings of Mānāe are on the infinity of the <two> principles" (ŠGW 16.4).

42 According to ŠGW 5.40, the notion "substance" (*gōhr*) implies the notion "origin" (*bun*) (*gōhr ciš ī nē bun* "substance without origin <is a meaningless notion>"). This definition leads to the conclusion that something *a-bun* is a thing without substance.

43 See Appendix II.

inal Majūs" and the Thanawīya (Haarbrücker 1850–1851, I:275–276) shows that their key differences pertain to:

a) the question of an (in)finity of light (= God/goodness) and darkness (= Evil/evil) (all Majūs groups seem to claim a non-infinity of the darkness); and
b) the reconstruction of the mixture of light and darkness.[44]

[24]

… And Its Consequences

Ādurbād's refutation of Manichaean teachings[45] is grounded in its critique of Mānī's giving the status of "principle" to the material element—which is, in the Manichaean perspective, identical with the evil/darkness. Ādurbād's logical argument is, as I have indicated above, that one can define as principles only those 'things' that take a predicate 'long/eternal.' The argument leads to two conclusions. First, the *materia* cannot be evil, which is, in the Zoroastrian point of view, at least 'partly eternal';[46] secondly, only goodness and (partly) evil can claim to be 'principles.' Ādurbād's answer to Mānī preserved (or, at least, ascribed to Ādurbād) in Dk 3 is nothing less than the Zoroastrian deconstruction of the fundament of Manichaean theology, a fundament that was also build on Avestan motifs (see above). This deconstruction, however, opens a theoretical gap. Zoroastrian theology must answer the following question: How, then, is the *materia* related to the *dō buništag*?

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The really sensitive point in the argumentation is the status of light. In Dk 3.150, the Manichaeans are seemingly criticized, as said above, for their perspective on light and darkness as two infinite beings, as *dō a-bun*. Although Zoroastrian schools (according to Šahrastānī's report) take different positions with regard to the status of light, they all try to define an ontological difference between the status of light and that of darkness. The general question behind the different Zoroastrian consideration is: Does 'light' belong to the material/finite or to the spiritual/infinite world? If we were to rephrase the same question in modern terms, we would ask: is 'light' a phenomenon or a concept?[47]

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The dualistic conception in the *Bun-dahišn*[48]

The Zoroastrian catechism in Pahlavi CHP/*Pand Nāmag* replies very concisely to the question asked in **CHP 1** *buništag ēw ayāb dō* "there are one or two principles?":

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44   Within the Thanawīya, there are different opinions about 1) the nature of light and darkness and 2) the separation of light from darkness.

45   Dk 3 presents the discussions between Mānī (Dk 3.200) and Ādurbād (Dk 3.199), Mazdag ("Gurgīh") (Dk 3.202) and Xosrō I (Dk 3.201) inversely, historically.

46   The case of the spiritual (*mēnōg*) is therefore a problem, because Ohrmazd and Ahreman (goodness and Evil) have a *mēnōg*-existence.

47   According to Hegel (see the chapters or notes on the Persian religion in Hegel 1986a, 1986b, 1986c, 1970), the characteristic of the "Persian" (= Zoroastrian) religion is the coincidence of a natural phenomenon ("light") with a concept ("goodness").

48   The word *bun-dahišn(īh)* is translated by West (1880, xxii), as "'creation of the beginning', or 'original creation'". As we can see from GrBd 1.0 (*pas abar ciyōnīh ī gēhān dām az bundahišnīh tā frazām*) or GrBd 24e22 (*pad bundahišn … pad fraškerd*), *bundahišn(īh)* refers to the first period of being. However, Dk 3.284 indicates a slightly different meaning of the word, see B 224.1-2: *zamān dahišnān bun Ohrmazd hamēyīgīh* "time is the fundament of creation, is the eternity of Ohrmazd." According to this interpretation, *bun-dahišn* refers to time in the sense of an ontological fundament.

CHP 12 (B 116.5-7)[49]

buništag dō ēk dādār ud ēk murnjēnīdār	*"the principles are two:*[50] *one is the creator, one is the destroyer*[51]*" (cf. WZ 1.21, 28; 22.5)*[52]

The most prominent chapters presenting the Zoroastrian teaching of the *dō buništag* are the cosmogonical introductions of the *Wizīdagīhā ī Zādsparam* and the *Bundahišn*. The beginning of the WZ indeed frequently uses the word *buništ(ag)(īh)*, often in problematic spellings (see WZ 1.12 bwšnnstʾ (+ bwnyštʾ) *ī tārīgīh* "basis of darkness"; WZ 1.15 bwnsyšytʾ/bwšyšyt-*ē* "one (of two) principles"; WZ 1.21 *dō* bwndhštyh/bwnyštkyh "dualism"; WZ 1.28 bwnyštʾnʾ/bnyštʾnʾ "<both> principles"; WZ 22.5 *dōīh ī* bwnyštʾnʾ/wwnyštʾnʾ "the duality of the principles"). The beginning of the *Bundahišn* (Bd 1.1-12)[53] is a great cosmogonical tableau that presents the "two principles". The text[54] has at least three interesting aspects:

1) After a quotation from the text of the *weh-dēn* (probably the translation of an Avestan text) in Bd 1.1, Bd 1.2 starts with a philosophical definition of the essence of Ohrmazd (we find the same textual structure in Bd 1.3+4 with reference to Ahreman).
2) This definition is interesting from the perspective of content since it points to a concept of emanations.
3) The notions of finitude/infinity (*kanāragōmandīh/akanāragōmandīh*) are the most important subjects of debate in Bd 1.1-12.[55]

Regarding the first point, general definitions are uncommon in the Avesta, especially definitions that serve as a starting point for further explications (as it is the case with *the Bundahišn*, a book that takes the reader from the most general categories to particular, accidental events of history). Because it is likely that IndBd and GrBd have a common ancestor[56] (most likely in the Sasanian period)—a **Bundahišn*—, we can assume that the defining phrases as well as the

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49   For this chapter, see de Menasce (1945, 233–34).
50   As the *Gāθās* claim that Ahura Mazdā is the father of the evil spirit, the Kayūmarthīya teaches that Ahriman came into being from a thought of Yazdān, and the Zarwānīya say that Ahriman emerged from doubt or a nihilistic thought of Zarwān, the question of a monistic origin of the Zoroastrian dualism returns even in the Pahlavi literature that seems to belong to the Zarāduštīya, the Zoroastrian school which taught two sharply separated principles. In WD 8, the question is asked: *Gannāg Mēnōy druwand […] pad bundahišn dām Ohrmazd ast* "Is the deceitful Gannāg Mēnōy […] in the bundahišn-period a creature of Ohrmazd?", a question that is positively answered. It is further stated that this creation of evil from goodness was necessary for a punishment of the *ruwānān druwandān* "deceitful souls" in "hell".
51   As is shown by the metonymical usage in CHP 12, the verbal roots *dā-* "to set; to give" / *murnj-ēn-* (Av *marək-, marənca-*) "to destroy" signify the most typical actions of Ohrmazd and Ahreman. In ŠGW the principles are referred to as "(origin of) truth" and "lie"; see ŠGW 11.383 *bun. du. yak. kə. rāstī. ažaš. yak. kə. drōžanī.* "there are two principles: one from which is truth, one which is the lie."
52   According to* Šahrastānī, the Majuš consider only the creator as an *(a-)bun.*
53   See Appendix I.
54   The GrBd seems to pick up elements from the Kayūmarthīya (Gayōmard is the light-being [see GrBd 7], not Zardušt (as in the Zarāduštīya, see Haarbrücker 1850–1851, I:281); Zardušt's legend is—in contrast to the WZ—missing in the *Bundahišn*), but also from the Zarāduštīya (accentuation of the mixing of the elements [only the GrBd refers to the Aristotelian theory of elements]).
55   A long discussion on the problem of infinity can be found (as a critique of Manichaeism) in ŠGW 16.66-111 (text incomplete). Mardānfarrox says that God is unlimited because he cannot be encompassed by understanding (*dānašni.*) (ŠGW 16.66). There is a strange resemblance of Bd 1.1-12 and the structure of ŠGW 16, a Zoroastrian description and critique of Manichaean teachings. ŠGW starts with an account on the Manichaean cosmogony. After a brief note on the border of the two principles, the discussion on finitude/infinity starts (see Bd 1.3-4 on Ahreman, 1.5 on the border, 1.6-12 on finitude/infinity).
56   This is quite likely, since it is hardly possible that IndBd descended from GrBd, or that GrBd descended from IndBd.

philosophical features of Bd 1.1-12 are an innovation made in a period between an Avestan pre-text of the *Bundahišn* and this *Bundahišn.

Regarding the third point, GrBd 1.1, a passage that does not belong to the 'philosophical stratum' of Bd 1.1-12, already uses the word "infinite." According to this text, Ohrmazd exists *zamān ī akanārag* "for (as?) the infinite time." The expression *zamān ī akanārag* is a calque for *zurwān ī akanārag* "infinite time(-god)." The appearance of that Z/*zurwān* in the cosmogonical context (cf. WZ 1.27-28) is motivated by the idea of a "pact" between both principles which lasts for 9000 years (see Bd 1.10 and then Bd 1.24 sqq.).[57] As we can deduce from MX 8 (cf. WZ 34.35), the *Z/zurwān ī akanārag* enables the creation of a finite, limited time, the time of the "pact" (*paymān, pašt*), which is supervised by Mihr (see MX 8.15; cf. Mihr's role in *de Iside* 46 as a "mediator" [μεσίτης]). It is, however, remarkable that only GrBd 1.1, but not IndBd 1.1 connects Ohrmazd with the *zurwān ī akanārag*. Thus, a textual interpolation (from the probably non-original philosophical passages Bd 1.2 etc.) in GrBd seems likely (cf. GrBd 1.7, 1.8). The parallel to Bd 1.1, Bd 1.3 (referring to Ahreman), shows that IndBd 1.3 has a similar textual addition. A gloss says that the existence of evil is ultimately finite (while Ohrmazd is infinite).[58]

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However, the complex philosophical discussion on "finitude"/"infinity" of the two principles in Bd 1.1-12 cannot be explained only in the frame of the figures "*zurwān ī akanārag*" and "time of the pact". Since, according to Ādurbād, the notion "*bun*" implies "infinity" (Dk 3), we must suppose that the whole discussion in Bd 1.1–12 is an attempt both to solve the philosophical problem of two infinite beings[59] and to find a way to connect an infinite being with a finite world.

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Regarding the second point, it seems that in adopting and discussing the terms "finitude"/"infinity," the Zoroastrian theologians arrive at the integration of categories that not only belong to a mythological-religious but also to a scientific-philosophical discourse: the categories of time and space.[60] While the passage Bd 1.1 still says that Ohrmazd was *andar rōšnīh* "in the light", Bd 1.2 explains: a) *ān rōšnīh gāh ud gyāg ī Ohrmazd ud ān harwisp-āgāhīh ud wehīh zamān ī akanārag* "that light is the time-space of Ohrmazd, and that omniscience and goodness are <for> the Infinite Time"; and b) *Ohrmazd ud gāh ud dēn ud zamān ī Ohrmazd būd hēnd* "Ohrmazd and the space and the Religion and the time of Ohrmazd exist <always>". An attribute (Bd 1.1 "in the light") appears now (namely as *gāh, gyāg, harwisp-āgāhīh, wehīh*) as part of the substance (Ohrmazd) which is characterized by its eternal existence (*zamān ī akanārag*). There are three of these 'substantial attributes': time, space, "religion" (*dēn*). Together with Ohrmazd/the light they constitute "the whole" (*ān hāmag*, IndBd 1.2) of infinite

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57   According to ŠGW 5.41 the notion of "struggle" implies the notion of "finitude" (*u. kōxšišn ī nē kanāragō-mandīh* "struggle that has no end <is an impossible thing>"). It is therefore clear that the discussion in Bd 1.1-12 on finitude/infinity is deeply connected with the idea of a 'pact' of the two principles.

58   The interpolation in GrBd and the gloss in IndBd correspond with each other. Both additions change a symmetrical picture of Ohrmazd and Ahreman into an asymmetrical one (Ohrmazd is infinite, Ahreman is ultimately finite).

59   Most interesting in this regard is the proposition in Bd 1.6 that both principles are *kanāragōmandīh ī/ud akanāragōmandīh* "finitude of/and infinity," the idea behind which could be that 'two infinities' produce a "border" (*wimand*, see Bd 1.7; cf. ŠGW 16.51), from which again finitude is produced.

60   See PahlTr Yt 1.1 *u-š ohrmazdīh radīh ud xwadāyīh u-š dādārīh dām-dahišnīh u-š abzōnīgīh ēd kū-š az čiš-ē was čiš tuwān abzūd ohrmazd gāh ud dēn ud zamān hamē būd ud hamē ast az ān gyāg paydāg* misuuānahe. gātuuō. xᵛaδātahe. *mēšag sūd gāh ī ohrmazddād* "and his 'Ohrmazd-being' <means> Ratu-being and reign; and his 'creatorship' <means> creation of the creature; and his 'prosperity' <means>: he is able to produce many things from one <thing>. Ohrmazd existed always as (?) the space and the Religion and the time, and he will always exist; this is meant by the words *misuuānahe. gātuuō. xᵛaδātahe.* → *mēšag sūd gāh ī ohrmazddād*".
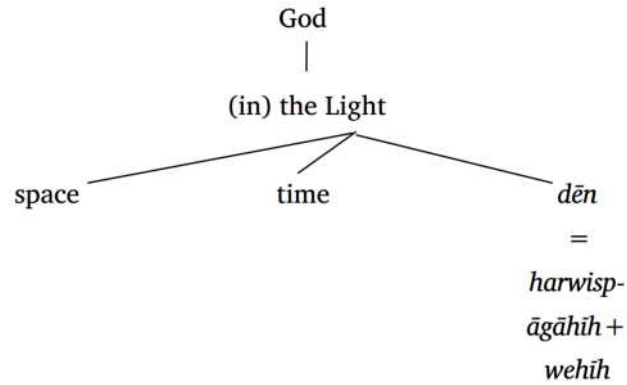
Figure 2   Concept of God according to Bd 1.1-2

time. It seems that these attributes are conceived neither as names (as Ohrmazd's names in Yt 1) nor as logical attributes (predicates), but as emanations (of the light, see figure 2).

This more philosophical approach to the concept of "god" in the beginning of the *Bundahišn*   [34] is not an isolated phenomenon. Also the defining beginning of Bd 1 (compare Aristotle's structuring of a philosophical text), the whole textual structure of the *Bundahišn* (from the general to the particular), and, last but not least, the critical discussion of terms/concepts (especially in Bd 1.6ff.) record the impact of philosophy on a text that has its deepest roots probably in the Avestan literature. This philosophical impact leads to a risky reformulation of the concept of "god." As we have seen, the difference of *substantia* (*ousia*) and *accidens* (of subject and predicate) becomes blurred in the beginning of the *Bundahišn*. The proposition "God is light ("licht")" changes into "God is Light ("Licht")" = "Light is God", and with this change the ontological status of "light" becomes questionable. Avestan theology already knew a particular form of light, the "endless light(s)" (*asar rōšnīh ← anaγrå raocå* [always in the plural]). The term *an-aγra-* "endless" indicates that these lights were not seen as part of the material world. This can be concluded from the remarkable phrase Yt 8.48 *akarana. anaγra. ašaonō. stiš.* "the infinite, endless being of the *ašauuan* (= God)."[61] It seems that already in the Avesta, and then again in the *Bundahišn*, "light" has a twofold being. It is seen as part of both the divine and the material world.

A possible philosophical-theological answer to claiming a twofold existence of "light" was   [35] the adoption of an Aristotelian-Neoplatonic world-model.[62] In fact, this is what we see at least vaguely in the beginning of GrBd 1 (god / light > space/time etc.).[63] More obvious than in the (especially *Greater*) *Bundahišn* is the Aristotelian-Neoplatonic impact on Dk 3, a book that, in terms of its whole structure and concepts—far more than it is known in Iranian Studies—is based on a peculiar fusion of Neoplatonic philosophy and the *dō buništag* conception.[64] Neoplatonism was attractive to the Zoroastrian authors because it offered a so-

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61   While *an-aǧra-* (AiW 114f.) is always combined with "lights," *a-karana-* (AiW 46) is nearly always a predicate of time (*zruun-*) or space (cf. *karana-* AiW 451). According to two predicates used in Yt 8.48, the *sti* of God seems qualified by the infinity/endlessness of lights, time, and space.

62   On the adoption of Neoplatonic elements, see Shaki (1970, 1973).

63   Gonda (1963, 267) spoke of "the four hypostases of the one God" (namely: "Ohrmazd himself and his Space, Religion and Time").

64   Dk 3.483 is entitled *abar dō buništ* (Dk 3.483) "On the two principles" (the text uses *dō buništ* besides *dō bun*). These two principles for the *kār ī mardōm* (which could be *kerbag ayāb wināh*) are *xrad/Wahman* and *waran/Akōman*. Dk 3.119 deals with the *dō-buništagīh/dō-bun* and its relation to the transformation

lution for the conflicts between a) philosophy and theology, and b) god and the world, both of which became prominent in late Antiquity. The emanation model enabled the construction of a coherent world. "Light" is seen as a metaphor of this coherence, but also as a kind of 'connector of the transcendent/infinite with the immanent/finite.' The metaphorical value of light is prominent in the last chapter of Dk 3. The transmission of the text of the *Dēnkard* (Dk 3.420) is compared with a chain of light:

Chain of light	edition/distortion of the Dēnkard by	
(hangōšīdag <ī>) rōšnīh ī az bun rōšn	*Pōryōtkēšān*	time of Zardušt
	Alexander	
(hangōšīdag <ī> az) brāh az bun rōšn[65]	Tansar	early Sasanian
	Arabs	
(hangōšīdag <ī>) payrōg ī az ān brāh	*Ādurfarrbay ī Farroxzādān*	early ninth century
bām-ē ī az +payrōg ī ān brāh az rōšnīh <ī> bun rōšn	*Ādurbād Ēmēdān* („*Dēnkard of the 1000 chapters*[66])	tenth century

More interesting is, however, the chain of light[67] in text B 93.15-21,[68] a passage that belongs to the important cosmological chapter Dk 3.123. This chapter deals with an ontology that was based on a reformulation of Greek element theory (see Shaki 1970, 279–81). Passage B 93.15-21 is the attempt to bridge the gap between the "endless lights" and the inner-worldly area, the elements and their forces:

[36]

bun-stī ī gēhān baxtag ī **anagr-rōšn** *dādār nazdtom* wyzwn'[69] *() cand paywand* **payr<ō>g** *ī az ān rōšn* **brāh** *ī az ān payrōg bām ī az ān brāh tā-iz ō ras ud az ras pad dādār āfurrišn rasīdag ō bawišn garm-xwēd gētīy-dahišnān fradom bun*	The fundamental being (*bun-stī*) of the world is a division in which (?) the Endless Light is next to the creator *wyzwn'* are some connected: *payrōg* is from that light, *brāh* is from that *payrōg*, *bām* is from that *brāh*, until it also <comes> to the *ras*[70], and from *ras* it comes by the creating of the creator to the being, the hot-moist, the first fundament (*bun*) of the material creature.

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of things, i.e., with the relation to element theory. In Dk 3.414 "generosity" (*rādīh*), which is "warm" (*garm*), and "avarice" (*penīh*), which is "cold" (*sard*), are called the *dō bun ast pad mardōm axw* "the two fundamental principles of human being". In Dk 3.40, the term *dō buništag* (the *dō buništag ī hamēyīg*) is (polemically) applied to the Christian concept of the Father and the Son. Nearly every chapter of Dk 3 follows a dualistic structure. The author presents first a concept according to its true (= Zoroastrian), then according to its wrong meaning. The book of Ādurfarrbay's pupil Mardānfarrox is then an apologia of dualism and a refutation of Manichaeism and of non-dualistic positions. ŠGW has many instances of expressions such as *du. buniiaštaa.* and the like.

65   See GrBd 3.7 *ātaš kē brāh az asar rōšn gāh ī Ohrmazd.*

66   See, for the "1000 chapters," Dk 8.20-21 (B 528.8-13; DkM 679.15-20) *Zarduxšt cāšišn andar Ērān-šahr hazār būd* "from the teaching (*cāšišn*) of Zarduxšt 1000 <parts> existed in Ērān-šahr".

67   For further "chains of light," see Dk 4.40 (B 326.7-8); Dk 3.267 (B 215.15-18).

68   For a reading of the text, see Shaki (1970, 280–81).

az bawišn garm-xwēd	From the being ‚hot-moist' is the process of being, the
bawišn-rawišnīh zahāgān cahār ī	four elements[71], wind, fire, water, earth ("clay").
ast wād ātaxš āb gil	
az bawišn-rawišnīh bawišn-ēstišnīh	From the process of being are the mixtures (*ēwēnagān*
ēwēnagān ī āmēxtag	*ī āmēxtag*) of the state of being (*bawišn-ēstišnīh*)
az zahāgān ēwēnagān baxtag ō	From the mixtures of the elements there is a
kerbān kerbān <ī> wizārdag	distribution to the distinct bodies until < the time > of
pad-iz ōy abdom gētīy-dahišnān kē	the last material creatures who make the material
padiš hangirdīgīhēd gētīy-dahišnān	creatures complete.

Other models that could bridge the gap between the two worlds and save the 'unity of light' also came into play.   [37]

Firstly, in the *Bundahišn*, the six Zoroastrian 'elements' appear in a fixed order: heaven, water, earth, plant, animal, man.[72] Moreover, the *Bundahišn* (at least the *Greater Bundahišn*) transmits passages in which not only the seventh material element, fire, is mentioned, but in which fire both appears in an outstanding position[73] and it is connected to the endless lights[74] or the heavenly sphere (see GrBd 6a-j).[75] This order indicates a mediating cosmological position of fire. It has neither the same status as the other material elements heaven, water, earth, plant, animal and man, nor does it belong to the same 'transcendent' level as the "endless" lights.[76]   [38]

Secondly, in GrBd 7, a system of correspondences is invented. The sublunar elements (see König 2020) correspond to the sequence of heavenly lights[77] (Iranian order):   [39]

water	earth	plant	animal	man	fire	*sublunar (= subastral)*
	stars		moon	sun	endless lights	*heavenly*

The different models are both attempts to posit a distinction of the spiritual (the divine; the transcendent) from the material sphere and to posit a connection of both spheres. The *materia* is not light (or darkness), but it is connected with light (and darkness).   [40]

It seems that the different models (the emanation model; the model of a last and intermediating element fire; the correspondence model) are answers of Zoroastrian theology brought to the key question of how *materia* is related to the *dō buništag*: through light which itself exists as fire and endless lights, as material and immaterial light.[78]   [41]

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69   Menasce (1973) reads *bērōn*.

70   Menasce (1973) reads *rās*. The word occurs frequently in the cosmological chapters Dk 3.73, 123, 192, 263, 365, 371, 380, 382.

71   On *zahāg* and related terms, see especially Shaki (1975, 1998).

72   GrBd 1.54; 1a6-13, 1a16-21. For the IndBd cf. IndBd 6-10 (= GrBd 6, but only the sequence until the ox).

73   GrBd1a4; GrBd 3.7-9; GrBd 6/WZ 3; WZ 1.25.

74   Cf. GrBd 7.9 (TD2 73.3-11; TD1 59.15ff.; DH 38.5ff.). Cf. V 11.

75   The extraordinary position of fire is alluded to already in Yt 13. However, the construction gives the impression that Aristotle's division of the world into a sublunary and lunar part, i.e., into the four elements and the *Quinta Essentia*, has had an impact on the *Bundahišn*.

76   According to GrBd 18 (IndBd 17), the transcendent (*mēnōg*) aspect of fire is the *xwarrah* (Av *xᵛarənah*).

77   The system of correspondences is, I guess, an extension of the old correspondence of cow/ox and moon (Yt 7).

78   Light and dark seem to enter a position in the theory of the four elements which (Western) Iran seemingly adopted from Greece; it is a tricky problem to decide whether a) the pre-Aristotelian Greek elements theory

elements	fire	endless light

A Brief Note on the Age of the Zoroastrian Opposition between Light and Darkness

The considerations which late antique/early Islamic Zoroastrianism provided on the relation   [42]
of a concept "*dō bun*" to the *materia* and to the concepts/phenomena "light" and "darkness"
were both stimulated by a demarcating critique of Manichaean teaching, and directed there-
upon by reflections on the nature of light. This led to the adoption and development of differ-
ent models that could solve the ontological dilemmas which arose from this critique.

    A religiously meaningful dualism between light and darkness has its roots in the Avesta.   [43]
Since Anquetil/Kleuker's analysis, Plutarch's (first/second century AD) text *de Iside* 47, which
elucidates the dark Parthian ages, constituted an object of discussion in Iranian Studies. Pre-
vious scholarship, however, never clearly made the observation that the *Bundahišn* and *de
Iside* 47 share the same sequence of events and describe a process from cosmogony to escha-
tology. It would therefore not be implausible to assume that Plutarch's account is based on a
pre-*Bundahišn*.[79] Compare the beginning of both texts:

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always had a dualistic aspect, b) this dualistic aspect is related to the Iranian dualism, and c) Iran [Western
Iran] was familiar with the four elements in and before the fifth century BCE already [see Her. 1.131]). In
some texts of the Pahlavi literature, we recognize that the mythical Ahremanic pollution of the *materia* (see
GrBd 6), the "mixture" (*gumēzišn*), is reformulated with the help of the (so-called) 'Greek' elements theory.
The *materia* appears in two extreme basic formations (*garm-xwēd*; *sard-hušk*). The 'history of nature' is the
mixing (*āmēzišn*) of the basic elements and their qualities. Only the extreme and pure basic formations can
be identified with light and darkness, see, e.g., Dk 3.105 (with reference to the *mēnōg*-field), B 73.2f. *ud
rōšn mēnōg pad garm-xwēd nērōg zindag-cihrīh* …, B 73.4f. *ud tār mēnōg marg-gōhr sard-hušk* …. Thus, the
scheme is: rōšn „light" : tār „darkness" = garm-xwēd „warm-moist" : sard-hušk "cold-dry."

79   de Jong (1997, 170–71), however, has noted the similarity of *de Iside* 46 and the beginning of the *Bundahišn*,
and he speculates that this is "due to a use Plutarch could make of a source which transmitted a version of
the Zoroastrian cosmogony very much like the one preserved in the *Bundahišn*."" Concerning *de Iside* 47,
de Jong (1997, 184–204, see especially pp. 199-204 for eschatological parallels), gives some hints to the
Bundahišn and the *Wizīdagīhā ī Zādsparam*, but, according to him, "Chapter 47 of De Iside is not a structured
chronological story" (1997, 190, cf. p. 184).

De Iside 47	*Bundahišn*	
οὐ μὴν ἀλλὰ κἀκεῖνοι πολλὰ μυθώδη περὶ τῶν θεῶν λέγουσιν, οἷα καὶ ταῦτ' ἐστίν. ὁ μὲν Ὠρομάζης ἐκ τοῦ καθαρωτάτου φάος, ὁ δ' Ἀρειμάνιος ἐκ τοῦ ζόφου γεγονώς, πολεμοῦσιν ἀλλήλοις: καὶ ὁ μὲν ἓξ θεοὺς ἐποίησε τὸν μὲν πρῶτον εὐνοίας, τὸν δὲ δεύτερον ἀληθείας, τὸν δὲ τρίτον εὐνομίας: τῶν δὲ λοιπῶν τὸν μὲν σοφίας, τὸν δὲ πλούτου, τὸν δὲ τῶν ἐπὶ τοῖς καλοῖς: ἡδέων δημιουργόν: ὁ δὲ τούτοις ὥσπερ ἀντιτέχνους ἴσους τὸν ἀριθμόν.[80]	However, they also tell many fabulous stories about their gods, such, for example, as the following: *Oromazes, born from the purest light, and Areimanius, born from the darkness,* are constantly at war with each other; and Oromazes created six gods, the first of Good Thought, the second of Truth, the third of Order, and, of the rest, one of Wisdom, one of Wealth, and one the Artificer of Pleasure in what is Honourable. But Areimanius created rivals, as it were, equal to these in number.[81]	Cf. GrBd 1.1ff. , GrBd 1.44; WZ 1.1-3 Cf. GrBd 1.53, 3.7, 3.14ff.; 1.55; 5.1

It is very likely the YAv literature is responsible for the first systematic delineation of the metaphysics of light and darkness in Zoroastrianism. Already in their YAv 'edition' (see Kellens 2015) the OAv texts were set into this light-dark-perspective (see Vr 14-24).[82] In the *Gāϑ*ic verse-line Y 44.5 *kə̄. huuāpå. raocåscā. dāṯ. təmåscā.* "Which artist made light and darkness?", Mazdā still appears as an installer of light *and* darkness.[83] Nevertheless, darkness is already the sphere of those who are deceitful (see Y 31.20); they will have *darəgə̄m. āiiū. təmaŋhō.* "a long (eternal?) lifetime[84] of the dark." In the Younger Avesta, the words *raocah-* and *təmah-*[85] (ai. *támas-*) are assigned to the two transcendent spirits which are, in the *Bundahišn,* identified with the *asar rōšnīh* (← *anaγrå raocå̊*[86]) and the *asar tārīgīh*. While we could observe that Av. *buna-* belongs to the semantic field of the deep and dark, a semantic field that was mirrored (with the result of an emergence of the concept of a high-light[87]), we now see an inverted process. The "endless lights" in H 2.15 (*anaγraēšuua. raocōhuua.*) receive a complement, namely the "endless darknesses" (*anaγraēšuua. təmōhuua.*) in H 2.33, a term that is obviously based on a secondary plural.[88]

[44]

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80   Plutarch in Bernardakis (1889, 520–21).

81   Plutarch in Cole Babbitt (1936, 5:113–17).

82   A few Old Avestan phrases used for light entities are decontextualized and recontextualized in the Younger Avesta, see, e.g., (Ahura Mazdā's) "lights" (*raocå.*) in the formula *raocābīš. rōiϑβən. xᵛāϑrā.* (Y 12.1 < Y 31.7) ("Let the comforts (displayed) intersperse with light"; Humbach 1991, I:137).

83   See Šahrastānī (Haarbrücker 1850–1851, I:282): "Gott aber sei der Schöpfer des Lichtes und der Finsternis" ("God be the creator of light and darkness").

84   See Gr αἰών. With *darəga- āiiu-* cf. OI *dīrghā́yu-*.

85   For the designation of the evil darkness, the *təmah*-words are more frequent used than the *taϑra*-words (*taϑra-* n. [used in plural] in V 7.79, N 68; *taϑrō.cinah-* "who searches for the dark" V 13.47 (perhaps as opposite of *aša.cinah-* "who searches for aša"); *taϑriia-* "dark" in Yt 14.13, 14.31, 16.10, 11.4; *Taϑriiăuuaṇt-* EN Yt 5.109, Yt 9.31.*

86   Man.Sogd. ʾ(n)xrwzn, Buddh.Sogd. ʾnγrwzn serve as the names of the zodiac (see Gharib 1995, 40, 47, 82; Henning 1948, 315).

87   This mirroring was certainly stimulated by the OAv conception of *aša* as light.

88   de Jong (1997, 169), states that "the symbolism of light and darkness denoting positive and negative worlds or realms of existence can only be partially found in the Avesta," while (pointing to "the Pahlavi books") "the symbolic representation of good and evil in terms of light and darkness grew more and more important in the development of the tradition." The author does not explain the cause for the (asserted) growth of

Concluding Remarks

Historiography of Iranian religion has always emphasized that Zoroastrianism and Manichaeism represent two variants of a dualistic worldview. This dualism was seen as a characteristic feature of Iran (within a Near and Middle Eastern field of non-dualistic religions), and Manichaeism was taken as an heir of Zoroastrianism. These perspectives are by no means wrong. However, the article has tried to shift these traditional perspectives slightly. It has pointed out that the Manichaean dualism with its identification of Evil and matter, goodness and light, draws conclusions from tendencies of the theology of the Younger Avesta. In return, the Zoroastrian dualism as it is known from the writings in Pahlavi seems to be the result of a criticism of these Manichaean conclusions. In any case, the Manichaean doctrine forced Zoroastrianism to a self-reflecting discourse by which he could stabilize (if not completely and finally gain) its particular dualistic worldview.

[45]

Abbreviations

Av Avestan
Buddh.Sogd Buddhist Sogdian
Gr Greek
Loc Locativ
Man.Sogd Manichaean Sogdian
MIndic Middle Indic
MMP Manichaean Middle Persian
MParth Manichaean Parthian
OAv Old Avestan
OI Old Indic
OIr Old Iranian
Pahl Pahlavi
PahlTr Pahlavi Translation
PahlV Pahlavi Vīdēvdād
PahlY Pahlavi Yasna
Pāz. Pāzand
Ved Vedic
YAv Young Avestan
ZMP Zoroastrian Middle Persian
AiW Altiranisches Wörterbuch
AWN Ardā Wirāz Nāmag
Bd Bundahišn
CHP Cīdag Handarz ī Pōryōtkēšān
Dd Dādestān ī dēnīg
Dk Dēnkard
FrW Fragments Westergaard
GrBd Greater Bundahišn
GW Gyān wifrās

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the symbolism of light and darkness. It seems to me that (probably under Neo-Platonic influence) only a part of the Pahlavi literature strengthens the relationship of goodness and light, evil and darkness.

IndBd Indian Bundahišn

MX Mēnōg ī Xrad

PahlV Pahlavi Vīdēvdād

PāzBd Pāzand Bundahišn

PT Pahlavi Texts

ŠGW *Škand Gumānīg Wizār*

WZ Wizīdagīhā ī Zādsparam

V Vīdēvdād

Vr Visparad

Y Yasna

Yt Yašt

Appendix I: Bd 1.1-12[89]

	GrBd	IndBd
1.1	pt̲ʾ ŠPYLdyn' ʾwgwn pyt̲ʾk'[90] <AYK> ʾwhrmzd bʾlystyk pt̲ʾ hlwsp ʾk̲ʾsyh W wyhyh **zmʾn' y ʾkn̲ʾlk'** BYN lwšnyh hmʾy YHWWNt	cygwn MN dyn y mʾzdsnʾn ʾwg<w>n pyt̲ʾk AYK ʾwhrmzd bʾlystn' pt̲ʾ hlwsp[91] ʾk̲ʾsyh W ŠPYLyh BYN lwšnyh ˣhmʾy[92] bwt
	*pad weh-dēn ōwōn paydāg <kū> ohrmazd bālistīg pad harwisp-āgāhīh ud wehīh **zamān ī akanārag** andar rōšnīh hamē būd*	*ciyōn az dēn ī māzdēsnān ōwōn paydāg kū ohrmazd bālistan pad harwisp-āgāhīh ud wehīh andar rōšnīh ˣhamē būd*[93]
	In the Good Religion it is manifest: Ohrmazd was/is always on high, in omniscience and goodness <**for**> **the Infinite Time** in the light.	As it is manifest from the Mazdaean Religion: Ohrmazd was/is always on high, in omniscience and goodness in the light.[94]
1.2	ZK lwšnyh <W> gʾs W gyʾk y[95] ʾwhrmzd [AYT' MNW ʾsl lwšnyh YMLLWNytʾ] W[96] **ZK** hlwsp' ʾk̲ʾsyh W wyhyh[97] zmʾn y ʾkn̲ʾlk' cygwn ʾwhrmzd W gʾs[98] W[99] dyn W zmʾn' y ʾwhrmzd YHWWNtʾ **HWʾnd**[100]	ZK lwšnyh gʾs W gyʾk y ʾwhrmzd [AYT' MNW ʾsl lwšn' YMRRWNd] W hlwsp' ʾk̲ʾsyh ŠPYLyh ˣ**nydʾmk**[101] y ʾwhrmzd [AYT MNW YMRRWNd[102] dyn] [hm KRA 2 wcʾlšn' ʾywk] ZK y ˣ**nydʾmk**[103] y zmʾn y ʾknʾlkʾwmnd cygwn ʾwhrmzd W gʾs W dyn W zmʾn' y ʾwhrmzd YHWWNt **W AYT W hmʾy YHWWNyt**[104]
	ān rōšnīh gāh ud gyāg ī Ohrmazd [ast kē asar rōšnīh gōwēd] ud ān harwisp-āgāhīh ud wehīh zamān ī akanārag ciyōn Ohrmazd ud gāh ud dēn ud zamān ī Ohrmazd būd hēnd	*ān rōšnīh gāh ud gyāg ī Ohrmazd [ast kē asar rōšn gōwē(n)d] ud ān harwisp-āgāhīh ud wehīh ˣ**niyāmag ī Ohrmazd** [ast kē gōwēd dēn] [ham harw dō wizārišn ēk] ān ī ˣ**niyāmag ī** zamān ī akanārag**ōmand** ciyōn Ohrmazd ud gāh ud dēn ud zamān <ī> Ohrmazd būd **ud hast ud hamē bawēd***

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89   Differences of GrBd and IndBd are given in bold face.

	GrBd	**IndBd**
	That light is the time-space[105] of Ohrmazd [there is one who says "Endless Light"], and that omniscience and goodness are <for> the Infinite Time, as Ohrmazd and the space and the Religion and the time of Ohrmazd are <always>.	That light is the time-space of Ohrmazd [there is one who says "Endless Light"], and that omniscience and goodness **are the covering**[106] **of Ohrmazd [there is one who says "the Religion" also] ; [both interpretations are one (*harwisp-āgāhīh ud wehīh = dēn*)] ; it is that covering which** is for the Infinite Time, as Ohrmazd and the space and the Religion and the time of Ohrmazd were **and are and will always be**.
1.3	ʾhlymnʾ BYN tʾlykyh pt̠ʾ AHL dʾnšnyh W xztʾlkʾmkyh[107] zwplpʾdk YHWWNtʾ Ahreman andar tārīgīh pad pas-dānišnīh ud zadār-kāmagīh zofr-pāyag būd Ahreman was deep in the darkness, in after-knowledge and with the wish to kill.	ʾhlmnʾ BYN tʾlykyh pt̠ʾ AHL dʾnš W ztʾlkʾmkyh W zwpʾy YHWWNt [W AYT MNW LA YHWWNyt] Ahreman andar tārīgīh pad pas-dāniš ud zadār-kāmagīh zofāy būd [ast kē nē bawēd][108] Ahreman was deep in the darkness, in after-knowledge and with the wish to kill [there is one <who says>: he will not be <at the end>[109]].
1.4	APš ztʾl kʾmkyh xnydʾm[110] W ZK tʾlykyh gywʾkʾ [AYTʾ xMNW[111] ʾsl tʾlykyh YMRRWNyt[112]] u-š zadār-kāmagīh xniyām ud ān tārīgīh gyāg [ast kē asar tārīgīh gōwēd] And the wish to kill is his covering[114] and the darkness his space [there is one who say 'the Endless Darkness']	ZK ztʾlyh W hm ZK tʾlykyh gywʾk [AYTʾ MNW ʾsl tʾlyk<yh> YMRRWNd] ud ān zadārīh ud ham ān tārīgīh gyāg [ast kē asar tārīg<īh> gōwēd][113] That killing and also that darkness are <his> space [there is one who says 'the Endless Darkness'].
1.5	APšʾn mydʾnʾ twhykyh YHWWN(y)t [AYTʾ MNW wʾd] MNWš gwmycšnʾ ptš u-šān mayān tuhīgīh xbūd [ast kē Way] kē-š gumēzišn padiš And between them ("in their middle") there was the void [there is one <who says> 'Way]', in which there is <then> the mixture.[116]	APšʾn mydʾn twhykyh bwt [AYTʾ MNW wʾd YMRRWNd] MNW KWN gwmycšn y ptš[115] u-šān mayān tuhīgīh būd [ast kē Way gōwē(n)d] kē-š gumēzišn padiš And between them ("in their middle") there was the void [there is one who says 'Way]', in which there is <then> the mixture.[117]
1.6	KRA 2 HWH̱nd knʾlkʾwmndyh y ʾknʾlkʾwmndyh har dō hēnd kanāragōmandīh ī akanāragōmandīh	KRA 2 mynwd knʾlkʾwmnd W ʾknʾlkʾwmnd harw dō mēnōy kanāragōmand ud akanāragōmand[118]

	GrBd	IndBd
	Both <spirits> exist as the finity of infinity.	Both <spirits> are finite and infinite.
1.7	MḢ bᵓlystyh ZK y[119] ᵓsl lwšnyh[120] YMLLWNyt' [[121]AYK LA slᵓwmnd]W zwpl pᵓdk' ZK y ᵓsl tᵓlykyh [W ZK AYT' ᵓknᵓlyh[122]]	bᵓlyst ZK y ᵓsl lwšnyh YMRRWNd W zwpᵓy ZK <y> ᵓsl tᵓlyk<yh>
	cē bālistīh ān ī asar rōšnīh gōwēd [kū nē sarōmand] ud zofr-pāyag ān ī asar tārīgīh [ud ān ast akanārīh]	bālist ān ī asar rōšnīh gōwēnd ud zofāy-pāyag ān <ī> asar tārīg<īh>[123]
	Because one calls the high ‚the Endless light' [i.e., it is not bound], and the deep 'the Endless Darkness' [and that means 'infinity'].	The high one calls ‚the Endless light', and the deep 'the Endless Dark<ness>'.
1.8	pṯ' wymnd KRA 2 +knᵓlkᵓwmnd[124] [AYK šᵓn' mydᵓn' twhykyh W[125] ᵓywk' ᶜL[126] TWD LA ptwst' HWḢnd]	AYK šᵓn mydᵓn twhyk W ᵓywk' LWTḢ TWD LA ptwst YKᶜYMWNyt
	ud pad wimand harw dō kanāragōmand [kū-šān mayān tuhīgīh ēk ō did nē paywast hēnd]	kū-šān mayān tuhīg ud ēk ō did nē paywast ēstēd[127]
	And with regard to the boundary /at the boundary both <spirits> are finite [i.e., their middle is empty, and they are not connected one with the other]	i.e., their middle is empty, and they are not connected with each other.
1.9	TWD KRA[128] ˣdwᵓn[129] mynwd pṯ' NPŠḢ[130] tn' knᵓlkᵓᵓwmnd *did harw ˣdōān mēnōy pad xwēš tan kanāragōmand* Then again, both spirits <are> finite in themselves.	W TWD KRA 2 mynwd pṯ' NPŠḢ tn' knᵓlkᵓwmnd **HWḢnd** *ud did harw dō mēnōy pad xwēš tan kanāragōmand **hēnd***[131] And then again, both spirits are finite in themselves.
1.10	W[132] TWD hlwsp ᵓkᵓsyh y ᵓwhrmazd lᵓd[133]KRA **MḢš** BYN dᵓnšn' y ᵓwhrmazd (.[134]) knᵓlkᵓwmnd MḢ ZK y KRA 2 HWHᵓnd ptmᵓn YDᶜYTW<N>(t)nd *ud did harwisp-āgāhīh ī Ohrmazd rāy harw **cē-š** andar dānišn ī Ohrmazd kanāragōmand cē ān ī harw paymān dānēnd*	W TWD hlwsp ᵓkᵓsyh <y> ᵓwhrmazd lᵓd KRA **2 MNDᶜM** BYN YHBWNšn' (!) y ᵓwhrmazd knᵓlkᵓwmnd **W ᵓknᵓlkᵓwmnd** (!) MḢ ZNḢ ZK y BYN KRA 2ᵓn mynwd[135] ptmᵓn YDᶜYTWNnd *ud did harwisp-āgāhīh <ī> Ohrmazd rāy harw **dō ciš** andar dāhišn (!) ī Ohrmazd kanāragōmand **ud akanāragōmand** cē ān ī **andar** harw **dōān mēnōy** paymān dānēnd*[136]

	GrBd	IndBd
	And then again, on account of the omniscience of Ohrmazd, **all what** is in the knowledge of Ohrmazd is finite, for he knows the whole <timely limited> treaty.	And then again, on account of the omniscience of Ohrmazd, the **both two things** (*gētīy* and *mēnōy*?) in the creation of Ohrmazd are finite and **infinite**, for he knows the <timely limited> treaty **between the two spirits**.
1.11	W TWD bwndk pʾthšʾyh[137] y dʾm y[138] ʾwhrmzd pṯ' tn' y psyn' ʿD[139] hmʾy hmʾy lwbšnyh W ZK AYT' ʾknʾlkyh	W TWD bwndk W (!) pʾtšʾhyh ˣy[140] dʾm y ʾwhrmzd pṯ' tn' <y> psyn' YHWWNyt (!) **W ZKp**[141] **AYT** y ʿD hmʾk hmʾk lwbšnyh ʾknʾlkʾwmnd
	*ud did bowandag-pādaxšāyīh ī dām ī Ohrmazd pad tan ī pasēn tā hamē ud hamē-rawišnīh [**ud ān ast akanāragīh**]*	*ud did bowandag-pādaxšāyīh ī dām ī Ohrmazd pad tan <ī> pasēn **bawēd ud ān-iz ast** tā hamē ud hamē-rawišnīh* [*akanāragōmand*[142]]
	And then again, the perfect sovereignty[143] of the creatures of Ohrmazd at <the time of> the Final Body <will be> for eternity [**and that means 'infinity'**]	And then again, the perfect sovereignty of the creatures of Ohrmazd at <the time of> the Final Body will be that that is for [**infinite**] eternity
1.12	dʾm y[144] ʾhlymn pṯ' ZK zmʾn' BRA ʾpsyhynnd ʿD[145] **y AMT** tn' y psyn' YHWWNyt'[146] ZKc AYT' knʾlkʾwmndyh	W dʾm y ʾhlmn pṯ' ZK zmʾn BRA ʾpsynyt **MNW** tn' psyn' YHWWNyt ZKp AYT ʾknʾlkyh (!)
	*ud dām ī Ahreman pad ān zamān be abesīhēnēd **tā ī ka** tan ī pasēn bawēd [ān-iz ast **kanāragōmandīh**]*	*ud dām ī Ahreman pad ān zamān be abesī<hē>nēd **kē** tan ī pasēn bawēd [ān-iz ast **akanāragīh**[147]]*
	And the creatures of Ahreman will be destroyed at that time, so that the Final Body can be [also that means 'finity' (sic!)].	And the creatures of Ahreman will be destroyed at that time, so that the Final Body can be [also that means 'infinity' (sic!)].

90   TD1 pytʾky
91   K20 hlsp
92   K20, M51b hʾmky
93   PāzBd *cūn. az dīn. māzdaiiasnąn. avąr. pidā. ku. hōrməzda. pa. bālistan. pa. harvisp. āgāiš. u. vhiš. u. aṇdar. rōšnaš. hami. būṯ.*
94   Cf. CHP/*Pand-nāmag ī Zardušt* (**PT 41.13**+**43.18-44.2**): *buništag ēk ayāb dō … buništag dō ēk dādār ud ēk murnjēnīdār ōy ī dādār ohrmazd kē harwisp nēkīh <ud> harwisp rōšnīh u-š ān ī murnjēnīdār druwand gannāg mēnōg ī harwisp wattarīh ud purr-margīh ī druz ī frēftār* "<There are> one or two principles? … <There are> two principles. *One is the creator, one is the destroyer*. He, the creator <is> Ohrmazd, he is the All-Good and the All-Light; and *the destroyer* is the lying Gannāg Mēnōg, he is the All-Evil and full of death, he is the deceitful *druz*."
95   TD1 ∅
96   TD1,2 ∅
97   TD1 W gʾs

98   TD1,2 wyhyh

99   TD 1 ∅

100   TD1,2 HWḪd

101   Text hᵓmk. Cf. hᵓmky in IndBd 1.1.

102   K20 YMLLWNyt

103   Text hᵓmk

104   PāzBd ą̇. rušan. gāh. jāi. hōrmāzda.. [hast. ki. aϑri. rušnš. gōiaṇṭ.] u. harvisp. āgāhiš. vahuš. hami. hōrmāzda. [hast. ki. dīn. gōiṭ. dīn. ham. hardō. vazāršni. īak] ą̇. hami. zamąni. aknār hōmąṇṭ. cūn. hōrmәzd. ngāh. dīn. u. zamąn. hōrmәzd. u. hamā. <uhast> bąṭ.

105   On *gyāg, gāh, zamān* in Dk 3 (see Gignoux 2003, 117–18).

106   The emendation and translation of the word follows Cereti and MacKenzie (2003).

107   Correction after IndBd; GrBd ztᵓlkᵓmyh.

108   PāzBd āhārәman. aṇdar. tārīkaš. pa. pas. dāniš. zadār. ham. kā. kaš. W zwpᵓh būṭ. [u. hast. kā. na. bąṭ.]

109   Cereti and MacKenzie (2003) read *nē b<ūd gōw>ēd* "was-not". However, in the Pahlavi text we find YHWWNyt, the PāzBd gives *bąṭ.* Even if we should add the missing *gōwēd* (*gōwēd* can be omitted, see GrBd 1.5 *ast kē Way*), the past tense form is only one of the possible conjectures. A past participle would allude to the idea of a (material) non-existence of Ahreman. In any case, the Indian text tradition (K20 and M51/PāzBd) shows that, from a certain time onwards, the priests saw in the gloss a reference to the subject "finitude"/"infinity".

110   Text hᵓm

111   All MN

112   DH YMLLWNyt

113   PāzBd u. ą̇. zadārī. u. ham. ṇi. tārīkaš. jāi. [hast. kā. aϑr. tārīk. gōiṇṭ]

114   For the emendation, see Cereti and MacKenzie (2003), cf. IndBd 1.2 hᵓmk. Indeed, the sequence of qualities is not perfectly symmetrical: Ohrmazd: high; in the light; omniscience + goodness = Religion, the hᵓmk; Ahreman: deep; in the darkness; after-knowledge + wish to kill = ?, the hᵓm (IndBd hm). The words hᵓm/hᵓmk are general terms for the qualities of the spirits. While this term could be substituted by *dēn* in the case of Ohrmazd, no equivalent is given in the case of Ahreman.

115   PāzBd kišąn. miṇu. twwhykyh būṭ. [hast. kā. u. havāi. gōiṇṭ] kā. kun. gumәžšni. padaš.

116   For the Manichaean conception, see ŠGW 16.51-52: *dit. īṇ. ku ą̇. du. buniiaštaa. hamāīhā.әstәšñi. ham.vīmaṇdihā. aβą. būṭ. cuṇ. aftāβ. u. āsāeaa. vašą. nā. būṭ. hāci. nišāmī. u. vašādaī. miiąn.* "Again, <they say> this, that those two principles are endlessly with a common border that is like <the border of> the sunshine and the shadow, and there is no *nišāmī.* or opening between them." Taillieu (2003, 244) proposes an emandation of *nišāmī* to **wišāmī(h)* which word forms a hendys with the following *vašādaī* (pahl. *wišādagīh*). Cf. WZ 1.1 for the Zoroastrian conception: *pad dēn ōwōn paydāg kū rōšnīh azabar ud tārīkīh azēr u-šān mayānag ī harw dō wišādagīh būd* "in the *dēn* it is said that the light was above, the darkness below, and between those two <principles> there was an opening".

117   Cf. in Vyt 24 the triplet Ahura Mazdā, *zruuānahe akaranahe.* and Vaiiu, praised by Zaraϑuštra.

118   PāzBd har. dō. mainiiō. knār. ōmәaṇṭ. u. kanār. (DJN aknār.) ōmәaṇṭ.

119   TD1 ∅

120   TD1 repeats ZK y ᵓsl lwšnyh.

121   DH adds W.

122   TD1 ᵓkᵓlyh

123   PāzBd ci. bālist. ṇ. aϑr.rōšn. gōiṇṭ. zōpā. ą̇n. aᵓr. tārīk.

124   TD2, DH KRA LK HWᵓnd; TD1 knᵓlkᵓwmn

125   TD2, DH ∅

126   TD 2 adds y.

127   PāzBd ku. šąn. miąn. tanhā. u. īak. avā. duṭ. na. padvist. āstәṭ.

128   TD1 repeats KRA.

129   Text: ᵓhw

130 TD2 npšt'

131 PāzBd *u. duṭ. har. dō. mainiiō. pa. xᵛə̄š. tan. kanār. ōmə̄aṇṭ.*

132 DH ∅

133 Until ptmʾn in TD2 on the margin.

134 Punctuation in TD1, 2

135 Cf. the headline in GrBd 5 *abar hamēstārīh dō mēnōyān.*

136 PāzBd *u. diṭ. harvisp. āgāhiš. hōrməzda. rā. har. dō. ciš. aṇdar. dahišni. hōrməzd. kanārōmaṇṭ. u aknārōmaṇṭ. ci. īn. ą̇i. aṇdar. har. dō. ą̇. mnwwy padmą̇n. dānəṇṭ.*

137 DH, TD2 pʾthšʾy

138 TD1, DH ∅

139 TD1 *destroyed.*

140 K20, M51b W

141 For *ān-iz*

142 PāzBd *duṭ.* (DJM, EKA *buṇṭ.*) *pādašhā. u. dą̇mi. hōrməzd. pa. tan. pasīn. tā. hamā. hamā. ravašniš. aknārōmaṇṭ.*

143 The compound *bowandag-pādaxšāyīh* sounds like a word from the PahlTr. It occurs a second time in Dk 3.122 in connection with *āsn-xrad.*

144 TD1

145 TD1 ∅

146 TD2 **byt'**

147 PāzBd *u. dāmi. āhārəman. pa. ą̇. zamą̇. bi. avasīnə̄ṭ. kə̄. tani. pasīn. bə̄ṭ. ą̇ci. hast. akanāriš.*

Appendix II: The dualistic schools in Iran according to Šahrastānī

Majūs

Schools that teach the existence of two principles:	light (infinite)	darkness (finite)	further teachings
Kayūmarthīya	= infinite Yazdān	= finite Ahriman	Ahriman is from a thought of Yazdān
Zarwānīya	= Hurmuz; light	Ahriman, who is in the darkness (= underworld, „ohne Grenze und Ende"[148])	Ahriman is from a doubt / a nihilistic thought of Zarwān (Zarwān < light)
Zarāduštīya	existence of Yazdān + light	existence of Ahriman + darkness	all existing: a) is created from light + darkness (as a mixture of light and darkness); b) light + darkness (Yazdān + Ahriman) are "der Anfang der geschaffenen Dinge der Welt"[149])
	Yazdān creates light and darkness	= Ahriman?	

Thanawīya

Schools that teach the existence of two eternal principles:	light (infinite)	darkness (infinite)	further teachings
Mānawīya	is with perception	is with perception	two kinds of mixture: I) intentional; II) accidental
Mazdakīya	is with intention and free choice	is without intention and by chance	
Daifzānīya	cf. Mazdakīya	cf. Mazdakīya	
Markūnīya	light	darkness	existence of a connector (cause of mixing)

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148   Haarbrücker (1850–1851, I:280).
149   Haarbrücker (1850–1851, I:282).

Schools that teach the existence of two eternal principles:	light (infinite)	darkness (infinite)	further teachings
Kainawīya; Sziyāmīya; Tanāsuchīya	fire	water	earth is in the middle

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