

# FROM NARMOUTHIS (MEDINET MADI) TO KELLIS (ISMANT EL-KHARAB): MANICHAEAN DOCUMENTS FROM ROMAN EGYPT\*

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In 1968, Peter Brown read at the Society's Annual General Meeting a paper entitled 'The Diffusion of Manichaeism in the Roman Empire'.<sup>1</sup> Delivered at a time when little research was being carried out by British scholars either on Manichaeism or on the cultural and religious relationship between the Roman and the Sassanian Empires, it was for many a complete revelation. With consummate skill and vast erudition Brown placed the history of the diffusion of the sect against a background of vigorous and dynamic interchange between the Roman and the Persian Empires. He also mounted a successful challenge on a number of popularly held views on the history of the religion in the Roman Empire. Manichaeism was not to be seen as part of the *mirage orientale* which fascinated the intellectuals of the High Empire. It was not an Iranian religion which appealed through its foreignness or quaintness. Rather, it was a highly organized and aggressively missionary religion founded by a prophet from South Babylonia who styled himself an 'Apostle of Jesus Christ'.<sup>2</sup> Brown reminded the audience that 'the history of Manichaeism is to a large extent a history of the Syriac-speaking belt, that stretched along the Fertile Crescent without interruption from Antioch to Ctesiphon'.<sup>3</sup> Its manner of diffusion bore little or no resemblance to that of Mithraism. It did not rely on a particular profession, as Mithraism did on the army, for its spread throughout the Empire. Instead it developed in the common Syriac culture astride the Romano-Persian frontier which was becoming increasingly Christianized consequent to the regular deportation of whole communities from cities of the Roman East like Antioch to Mesopotamia and adjacent Iran. Manichaeism which originally flourished in this Semitic milieu was not in the strict sense an Iranian religion in the way that Zoroastrianism was at the root of the culture and religion of pre-Islamic Iran. The Judaeo-Christian roots of the religion enabled it to be proclaimed as a new and decisive Christian revelation.

Brown's paper was a major landmark in the study of the subject in the English-speaking academic world, even though it was probably not recognized as such by an audience not wholly familiar with the topic. Brown was the first major British scholar to tackle the diffusion of Manichaeism from the angle of cultural history and his approach was also markedly different from that of the German scholars who had hitherto dominated the subject. The reason for the German domination of the subject is not difficult to find. The first genuine Manichaean texts were found by German archaeologists like Grünwedel and von Le Coq in Chinese Central Asia between 1902 and 1914 and it was in the *Sitzungsberichte* and the *Abhandlungen* of the Preussische Akademie der Wissenschaften zu Berlin that the Manichaean texts from Central Asia were first published. In 1929 it was again a German scholar, Carl Schmidt, who first identified and later acquired many, but not all, of the Coptic Manichaean codices from Medinet Madi in Egypt (*v. infra*).

\* Professor Lieu is grateful to Professor E. Bammel, FBA (Cambridge), Professor A. Böhlig (Tübingen), Dr J. Procopé (Cambridge), and Professor A. van Tongerloo (Leuven) for much helpful information. The following abbreviations have been used: APAW = *Abhandlungen der königlichen preussischen Akademie der Wissenschaften* (1815-1907; philosoph.-hist. Kl., 1908-49); CMC = *Codex Manichaicus Coloniensis*; Hom. = *Manichäische Homilien*, ed. and trans. H. J. Polotsky (1934); Keph. = *Kephalaia*, ed. and trans. H. J. Polotsky and A. Böhlig (1940 ff.); Mani-Fund = C. Schmidt and H. J. Polotsky, 'Ein Mani-Fund in Ägypten', SPAW (1933), I, 4-90; Lieu, *Manichaeism* = S. N. C. Lieu, *Manichaeism in*

*the Later Roman Empire and Medieval China* (2nd edn, 1992);

MCPCBL = *The Manichaean Coptic Papyri in the Chester Beatty Library*, ed. S. Giversen, Facsimile Edition, 4 vols, Cahiers d'Orientalisme XIV-XVII, (1986-88);

Ps.-Bk. I = MCPCBL III;

Ps.-Bk. II = *A Manichaean Psalm-Book I*, Pt. 2, ed. and trans. C. R. C. Allberry (1938);

SPAW = *Sitzungsberichte der preussischen Akademie der Wissenschaften zu Berlin* (1882-1921; philos.-hist. Kl., 1922-49).

<sup>1</sup> JRS 59 (1969), 92-103 (reprinted in idem, *Religion and Society in the Age of Augustine* (1972), 94-118).

<sup>2</sup> See esp. *ibid.*, 93-7 (95-105).

<sup>3</sup> *ibid.*, 93 (97).

The Manichaean texts from Central Asia had a major impact in Germany on Iranology and Turkology as well as the study of the History of Religions in general. As many of the fragments were in dialects of Iranian and abounded in Zoroastrian or Zurvanite terminology, the religion inevitably came to be seen by some of the scholars of the pioneer generation as a reform movement within Zoroastrianism by a prophet who had a good knowledge of Christianity, especially of the writings of the Christian gnostics. The texts from Turfan were put to immediate use by Reitzenstein, then a leading figure in Religionsgeschichte in Germany, to support his theory of the Iranian — and more specifically, Zoroastrian — origin of the motif of the 'Redeemed Redeemer' which he believed to be typical of gnostic soteriology. Subsequent research has since shown that Reitzenstein used Manichaean texts which showed a shallow acquaintance with Zoroastrianism.<sup>4</sup>

In Britain, however, the study of the subject underwent a quiet revolution in the 1920s which was little noticed by scholars on the Continent. In his Donellan Lectures of 1925, Burkitt, then Professor of Divinity at Cambridge, against the tide of Continental research, drew attention to the surprisingly large number of Iranian and Turkish text fragments from Turfan which bear the unmistakable imprint of Christianity, especially of Syriac Christianity. Despite the fact that the Turfan texts were recovered from a region which was a major centre of Buddhism and later of Islam, Jesus (Mid. Pers. and Parth. *yyšw*<sup>c</sup>, *yyšw*) was more frequently invoked in Manichaean hymns and homiletical texts than any other Manichaean deity.<sup>5</sup> Manichaean literature, both poetry and prose, also contains many easily identifiable Biblical (i.e. Judaeo-Christian) names, themes, and scriptural citations, especially Gospel-citations. Some are reminiscent of Tatian's Gospel-harmony, i.e. the *Diatesseron*, in the manner in which material from the different Gospels is combined, and in the frequent occurrence of words transliterated from the Syriac. Mani's teaching on the Last Judgement, for instance, as expounded by Mani in the *Sābuhragān* (a semi-canonical work which Mani composed in Middle Persian in order to summarize his teaching for his great patron, the Sassanian King of Kings Shapur I) is closely based on the words of Jesus as given in Matt. 25:31–46.<sup>6</sup> One of the most eminent Semitic philologists of his time, Burkitt proved beyond all reasonable doubt that the first Manichaean missionaries in the Roman Empire, especially in Roman Egypt, were Syrians and not Iranians. He also collected together in an appendix all known fragments in Syriac found on papyri in Egypt (mainly from Oxyrhynchus) written in a distinctive Estrangela script which was widely used by Manichaean scribes in Central Asia for texts in Middle Iranian and Turkish.<sup>7</sup> On the Syrian aspect of the subject, Burkitt rightly paid tribute to the then little known but essential contribution to the subject of the origins of Mani's teaching made by the late Revd C. W. Mitchell. Prior to his tragic death in the First World War, Mitchell with endless patience and exceptional philological skill had succeeded in deciphering the under-writing of a palimpsest in the British (Museum) Library containing the prose-refutations of Mani, Marcion, and Bardaisan by the Syrian theologian Ephraim of Edessa. Ephraim, who was himself a native Syriac speaker, could read the original writings of the Manichaeans and he saw innumerable parallels and similarities between their teaching and those of two Christian heretics Marcion and Bardaisan.<sup>8</sup>

Burkitt's views on the Western and Christian origin of Mani's original teaching found surprising support from Schaefer, a pupil of Reitzenstein. The latter was then a highly influential historian of religion famous for his advocacy for the existence of a pan-Iranian theologumenon which he saw as the origin of many of the mystery religions of the Roman Empire and of Gnosticism. Schaefer reacted against this, and the new material from Ephraim was precisely what he needed to help formulate his argument that Manichaeism should be seen as a product of Hellenism in the widest sense of the

<sup>4</sup> On the impact of the newly discovered Central Asian material on German scholarship of the inter-war years see esp. G. Widengren, 'Der Manichäismus — Kurzgefaßte Geschichte der Problemforschung', in B. Aland (ed.), *Gnosis. Festschrift für Hans Jonas* (1978), 286–99.

<sup>5</sup> Published as *The Religion of the Manichees* (1925). See esp. 37–43 and 92–3.

<sup>6</sup> *ibid.*, 88–9. Cf. Lieu, *Manichaeism*<sup>2</sup>, 78–80.

<sup>7</sup> Burkitt, *op. cit.* (n. 5), 111–19.

<sup>8</sup> Burkitt, *op. cit.* (n. 5), 71–86.

term: a Hellenism which embraces both the teaching of the great Graeco-Roman philosophers and of Judaeo-Christianity. In this he made extensive use of the anti-Manichaean writings of the Neoplatonist Alexander of Lycopolis (modern Assiut) who saw Mani's teaching essentially as a form of Christian revelation masquerading as a respectable philosophical system.<sup>9</sup> Schaefer's work marks a clear turning-point in Manichaean studies in Germany where the subject had hitherto been monopolized by Orientalists, especially Iranologists and Turkologists, working at the Orientalische Kommission established in Berlin in 1925 specially for the conservation and publication of the Buddhist, Christian, and Manichaean texts from Chinese Turkestan. This westward reorientation would soon prove highly necessary as sensational news reached Germany of the discovery of a small library of seven genuine Manichaean codices in Egypt.

#### I. THE MANICHAEAN LIBRARY FROM MEDINET MADI (NARMOUTHIS)

The cache is said to have come from a wooden chest in the ruins of an old house in Medinet Madi, to the south-west of the Fayyum in central Egypt. The chest had been found by workmen digging for fertilizer who offered the codices, all bound in wooden boards, to an antique dealer for a trifle. The latter then broke up the collection into three parts. The codices which reached the Cairo market were first seen by the Danish Egyptologist Lange in November 1929. However, it was Carl Schmidt in 1930, while on his way to Palestine to collect manuscripts for the Berlin Academy, who was shown a codex entitled the *Kephalaia* and who made the connection with Manichaeism. By sheer coincidence Schmidt had been checking the proofs of the late K. Holl's edition of Epiphanius' *Panarion*, and he remembered that among the books that Mani was alleged to have received from his master Scythianus was one with the same title. Further examination revealed the characteristic clause: 'Once more the Enlightener (ΦΩΣΤΗΡ) speaks to his disciples . . .' The text clearly contained didactic material which originated from the innermost circle of the sect.

News of the discovery was immediately communicated to Harnack the doyen of early Christian Studies in Germany. But, before adequate funds could arrive in Egypt for the purchase, part of the find was acquired by the Irish-American philanthropist and collector Chester Beatty. His famous collection of Classical and Biblical manuscripts was housed first in London, but after the Second World War was transferred to Dublin, where it remains. The rest of the codices were then purchased by Schmidt with financial aid from the Stuttgart publishing company Kohlhammer, and shipped to Berlin where the initial conservation work was carried out by H. Ibscher, one of the most experienced book conservators and respected codicologists in the world.

The ruins of Medinet Madi, the site of the original discovery of the texts, lie in a large depression in the south-west of the Fayyum and to the north-west of modern Gharak (Ptolemaic Kerkeosiris). It was formerly a Ptolemaic settlement known in papyri as Narmouthis in the circuit of Polemon. The settlement was Coptic-speaking, but the texts were clearly not local products as they were not in the Fayyumic dialect but in one spoken in Upper Egypt, especially in the region of Lycopolis (Assiut), which is generally known as Lycopolitan (specifically dialect L4) or Sub-Achmimic B. The chest was found in a cellar and because of the high humidity of the soil the papyrus pages had acted as a kind of filter for the highly saline flood-water, with the result that they were encrusted in salt. The encrustation was particularly dense at the edges of the

<sup>9</sup> H. H. Schaefer, 'Urform und Fortbildungen des Manichäischen Systems', *Vorträge der Bibliothek Warburg* 1924-5 (1927), 65-157, esp. 106-27. For a

useful summary of the controversy on the 'Ursprung' of Mani's teaching see Widengren, *op. cit.* (n. 4), 290-302.

pages; this, together with the fine quality of the papyrus material, made separation into individual pages extremely difficult.<sup>10</sup>

The find was estimated to have totalled two thousand leaves (i.e. 4,000 pages) and, as the cache was broken up by the first dealer, reassigning the separated quires into their original codices was far from easy. By 1933, the date of the epoch-making publication of Schmidt and Polotsky, seven codices were identified as follows:

(in the Berlin collection) (1) the *Letters of Mani*, (2) the *Kephalaia of the Teacher* (i.e. Mani), (3) the *Synaxeis* codex which appears to contain a commentary (?) on the *Living Gospel* (a canonical work of Mani's) and a yet unidentified text, (4) a historical work which gave a life of Mani and the early history of the sect (the so-called *Acta* codex);

(in the Chester Beatty Collection in London) (5) the *Homilies*, (6) the *Psalm-Book*, (7) the *Kephalaia of the Wisdom of my Lord Mani*.

The texts are usually stated to date from about A.D. 400, and are translations of either Greek or Syriac originals that reach back to Mani himself (as with the canonical *Epistles*), or to the first generations of the Church. It has been suggested that the library once belonged to the *Auditores* rather than the *Electi* of the sect as it contained only one out of seven canonical works, viz. the *Letters of Mani*.<sup>11</sup> They were probably hidden by a Manichaean cell which came under persecution, rather than by monks who indulged in Manichaean texts for their ascetical contents, as all the texts in the same cache were Manichaean without any other Gnostic or Christian literature. The fact that they were in a dialect different from the one known to have been spoken in the region of their discovery also suggests that the codices were imported by missionaries or religious refugees.

The work of publication which gathered momentum in the next decade was rightly entrusted to a team of younger scholars. Amongst them was Polotsky, formerly assistant to Schmidt, who was already showing signs of his extraordinary linguistic genius which would later grow into mythological proportions.<sup>12</sup> In 1934 he published an edition with German translation of ninety six pages of the *Homilies* in the Chester Beatty Collection.<sup>13</sup> The work contains vital new information on the last days of Mani's life and the persecution of the sect in Mesopotamia after his death.<sup>14</sup> Another promising young scholar to join in this 'Berliner Arbeitskreise' was the British Classical scholar and Coptologist Allberry, who would attain posthumous fame as the model in the novels of C. P. Snow for Roy Calvert, the brilliant Orientalist who flirted with Nazism.<sup>15</sup> Allberry's edition and translation of the second (and better preserved) part of the *Psalm-Book* also in the Chester Beatty Collection was rightly hailed as a literary as well as a philological triumph.<sup>16</sup> As the translation is in English, the work became by far the best known of the Manichaean texts from Medinet Madi among English-speaking scholars

<sup>10</sup> cf. *Mani-Fund*, 8–9 and H. Ibscher, ap. *Ps.-Bk.* II pp. vii–ix. The most detailed statement on the fate of the codices is J. M. Robinson, 'The Fate of the Manichaean Codices 1929–1980', in G. Wießner and H.-J. Klimkeit (eds), *Studia Manichaica, II. Internationaler Kongreß zum Manichäismus*, *Studies in Oriental Religions* 23 (1992), 19–62. The same author has written a full-length monograph on the subject entitled *The Manichaean Codices of Medinet Madi* (updated version, May–June 1991), which is in limited circulation.

<sup>11</sup> However the possibility exists that the still unseparated book-block which is part of the *Synaxeis* codex may contain the text of the *Living Gospel* as well as the commentary to it.

<sup>12</sup> Polotsky's linguistic contributions ranged from Byzantine Greek to Aramaic and Arabic and included all periods of the Egyptian language. He also contributed a fine summary of Mani's system based on the newly discovered texts as well as the better known patristic sources to Pauly (Suppl. VI (1935), 241–72).

See the fine appreciation of Polotsky's achievements by E. Ullendorf, 'H. J. Polotsky (1905–1991): linguistic genius', *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* (1994), 3–13.

<sup>13</sup> *Manichäische Homilien*, ed. and trans. H. J. Polotsky (1934).

<sup>14</sup> See esp. pp. 1–19 and 42–70.

<sup>15</sup> cf. S. Gorley Putt, 'Charles Allberry and Roy Calvert', *Encounter* 69 (1987), 70–6. In the novels Snow substituted Manichaean Coptic with Manichaean Sogdian — the least well known of the three Middle Iranian dialects used by Manichaeans in Central Asia. Though once the predominant language of the Silk Road with a flourishing literature of Manichaean, Buddhist, and Christian writings, the manner of the rediscovery and decipherment of Sogdian has made it a much cited example of academic eccentricity and irrelevance.

<sup>16</sup> See esp. the appreciation by a fellow Coptologist: T. Säve-Söderbergh, *Studies in the Coptic Manichaean Psalm-Book* (1949).

and also came to be much cited by scholars of Augustine.<sup>17</sup> Work by Polotsky on the version of the *Kephalaia* in Berlin, the didactic text which first caught the attention of Schmidt in the antique-dealer's shop in Cairo, was well under way when it was abruptly halted by the rise of National Socialism in Germany. Polotsky left for a teaching position in Jerusalem and the work on the *Kephalaia* was continued after an interval by Böhlig.<sup>18</sup>

The Manichaean texts from Medinet Madi predate those from Turfan and Tunhuang by more than three centuries and belong to the earliest phase of the history of the sect. Although they abound in Mesopotamian place-names and symbols and motifs, oriental divinities like Buddha and Zoroaster are very distant figures. Mani's knowledge of Zoroastrianism was very much that of an outsider. This explains why the *Sābuhragān*, the semi-canonical work in which Mani summarized in Middle Persian his system for his patron Shapur I, was written in an awkward style; and also why the names of Manichaean deities were forcibly assimilated to those of the Zoroastrian pantheon, as the work was probably written for him by an early disciple who was a convert from Zoroastrianism. The Medinet Madi texts were translated mainly from Syriac, either directly or via Greek intermediaries. They demonstrate clearly that the religion flourished in a Judaeo-Christian milieu. Take, for instance, the manner in which the Manichaean psalmist deals with the problem of the origin of evil. Instead of using Zoroastrian or Zurvanite dualism to solve this age-old issue, s/he follows a well established line of gnostic exegesis based on contemplation of a much cited passage from the writings of Paul (cf. 2 Cor. 4:4):

- The God of this Aeon has shut the heart of the unbelieving and has sunk  
 them in his Error and the deceit of drunkenness. He has  
 made them blaspheme  
 against the God of Truth and his. . . . .  
 . . . his power and his wisdom. .  
 If it was God who created the evil and the good  
 and Christ and Satan. . . . .  
 5 . . . . , then who sent Jesus, that he might. . .  
 and work among the Jews until they slew (?) him?  
 When Adam and Eve were created and put in  
 Paradise, who was it that ordered them: 'Eat not  
 of the Tree', that they might not distinguish the evil from the  
 10 good? Another fought against him and made them eat of the Tree.  
 He] cries out in the Law saying: 'I am God. . .  
 . . . no cluster (?) falls from a tree without the Lord God;  
 . . . to fall into a snare nor to. . . in a city; who then led  
 Adam astray and crucified the Saviour ?  
 15 The Saviour and his apostles and they that belong to the race of life  
 revealed the Darkness and the essence of the Enemy; they  
 wept for the body of death, the son of the great. . .  
 this lion-faced dragon, and his mother also, Matter.  
 The Light has shone forth for you, o you that sleep in Hell, the knowledge  
 20 of the Paraclete, the ray of Light; drink of the water of memory,  
 cast away oblivion. He that is wounded and desires healing, let him come to  
 the physician.  
 I have forsaken the world and its Error, I have [loved my  
 Saviour, prayed, fasted, given alms. . . [from  
 25 my youth up, because of the hour of need. Come now, my  
 Lord Jesus, and help me.  
 All hail, o busy soul that has finished her fight and  
 subdued the ruling-power, the body and its affections. Receive  
 the garland from the hand of the Judge and the gifts of Light, and  
 30 ascend to thy kingdom and have thy rest.

<sup>17</sup> Most notably in Brown's acclaimed *Augustine of Hippo — A Biography* (1967), 49, 51, 58. See also G. Bonner, *St Augustine of Hippo — Life and Controversies* (1963), 59.

<sup>18</sup> *Kephalaia*, ed. and trans. H. J. Polotsky and A. Böhlig (1940 ff.). Polotsky was responsible for the first two fascicles (pp. 1–102) and Böhlig the rest (pp. 103–244).

Glory and honour to our Father, the God of Truth. Victory and blessing to his beloved son, Jesus, and his Holy Spirit, our Lord the Paraclete, and all his holy Elect.<sup>19</sup>

The death of Allberry in action over Europe with the Bomber Command in 1941 was not the only tragedy which befell the study of the Manichaean texts from Medinet Madi. Although Polotsky would later make signal contribution to the study of the Coptic language in his newly adopted native land, he never returned to the serious study and publication of the Coptic Manichaean texts from Medinet Madi. The texts which remained in Berlin survived Allied bombings but the train carrying the manuscripts to the then USSR was believed to have been looted in Poland. Among the texts which were unaccounted for when the collection was finally returned to Berlin were Mani's *Letters* (P15998) (save for twenty eight leaves, including three which emerged in Warsaw) and the *Acts* codex (P15997) (save for a few conserved leaves now in Berlin and one which was taken by Ibscher and sent to Dublin in error after the war, *v. infra*).<sup>20</sup> The hiatus in the work on the Coptic texts sadly continued long after the post-War recovery. From 1951 to 1956, R. Ibscher, the son of H. Ibscher, worked periodically in London and Dublin on the conservation of the Chester Beatty manuscripts but no major publication came out of his work.<sup>21</sup> A single fascicle containing an additional forty seven pages of the *Kephalaia* was published by Böhlig in 1966, but the work was essentially completed in 1943.<sup>22</sup> A further additional single page was published by Böhlig in 1985, bringing the total of published pages of the 'Berlin' *Kephalaia* to 291.<sup>23</sup> Vestiges of a few leaves (pp. 311-30 still unpublished) were acquired by a certain Professor Grohmann (Prague). These were conserved by Ibscher in Berlin and are now housed in the Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, Vienna (K11010a-h).<sup>24</sup>

The current outlook is much more positive. A European committee has been established to publish the texts in the Chester Beatty collection. With the financial support of the Carlsberg foundation Giversen (University of Aarhus, Denmark) has published a facsimile edition of all the Dublin texts in four volumes: *Kephalaia; Homilies and Varia; Psalm Book Part I; and II*, Cahiers d'Orientalisme XIV-XVII (1986, 1988). New critical editions of the *Homilies* and the *Psalm Book* (by a team under the direction of Krause) are in process; and various studies based on the facsimiles have begun to appear. Meanwhile a separate team under the direction of Robinson (Institute for Antiquity and Christianity, Claremont, California) is working on the remaining material from Berlin, the *Kephalaia*, the *Synaxeis* codices, and what remains of the *Epistles*.<sup>25</sup> Also, the new texts from Kellis (*v. infra*) are in the process of being edited, while archaeological work continues at the site, and this too has added to the general renewal of academic activity.

The Medinet Madi corpus has provided an extensive body of material, but how much it actually tells about the historical circumstance of the Manichaeans in Egypt is more problematic. No reliable detail about the context of the find can be discovered. Again, the texts in their essential state are of alien origin; their geographical and temporal worlds belong to the Syrian Orient in the third century. The best approach is

<sup>19</sup> *Ps.-Bk.* II, 56, 31-57, 13, trans. Allberry.

<sup>20</sup> cf. Robinson, op. cit. (n. 10), 51-7. The leaves of the *Acts* codex now in Dublin are published in facsimile in *MCPCBL* II, pls 99-100.

<sup>21</sup> All that emerged in print of his work on the Chester Beatty texts is the brief abstract of his paper 'Wiederaufnahme und neuester Stand der Konservierung der Manichäischen Papyruscodices', in *Proceedings of the Twenty-Third International Congress of Orientalists, Cambridge 21st-28th August, 1954* (1956), 359-60, and a discussion of the method of conservation he employed: 'Wandlungen in der Methodik und Praxis der Papyruskonservierung', in *Actes du X<sup>e</sup> Congrès International de Papyrologues, Varsovie-Cracovie, 3-9 septembre 1961* (1964), 253. Some of his unpublished reports are cited in Robinson, op. cit. (n. 10), 26-31.

<sup>22</sup> *Kephalaia, Zweite Hälfte*, ed. A. Böhlig (1966).

<sup>23</sup> 'Ja und Amen in manichäischer Deutung', *ZPE* 58 (1985), 59-70. Reproduced in idem, *Gnosis und Synkretismus. Gesammelte Aufsätze zur spätantiken Religionsgeschichte*, Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament XLVIII (1989), II, 638-53.

<sup>24</sup> cf. I. M. F. Gardner, *Coptic Theological Papyri II, Edition, Commentary, Translation, with an Appendix: The Docetic Jesus*, (2 vols) Mitteilungen aus der Papyrus-sammlung der Österreichischen Nationalbibliothek XXI (1988), Textband 53-5.

<sup>25</sup> The (Berlin) *Kephalaia* is being completed by W.-P. Funk, the *Synaxeis*-codex by P. Mirecki, and the twenty-five or so remaining leaves of the *Letters* by Funk and Gardner.

to attempt to discover an Egyptian phase in their textual histories. For instance, McBride<sup>26</sup> has recently argued that Kephalaion 65 'Concerning the Sun' evidences heliolatry native to Egyptian religious culture; this with reference to texts originating from the imperial period. However, the 'parallels' provided are too generalized; the argument fails to sense the possibilities inherent in the Manichaean attitude to the sun, or the structure of the *Kephalaia* as a text.

Nevertheless, a prominent Iranologist, Sundermann, has shown the fluid nature of kephalaic material;<sup>27</sup> and it is certainly true that the translation process provides some Egyptian history to the Medinet Madi codex. In his major comparative study of Manichaean historical texts, the same author has demonstrated that many links and similarities exist between those in Coptic and Parthian, which suggests a common Syriac origin.<sup>28</sup> Since the texts which exhibit some of the closest parallels were those concerning the death of Mani, the sect manifestly continued to produce literary works in Mesopotamia after the death of Mani and the texts were then taken to the 'Upper Country' (i.e. Parthia) and the Roman Empire by those Manichaeans fleeing from the persecution against their numbers in the 'Low Country' (i.e. Mesopotamia). Another important observation has been made in a recent study by van Lindt who noted the differences in the translation of certain Manichaean *technici termini* between the *Psalm-Book* and the *Kephalaia*. This suggests that the original Manichaeans might have used more than one route to penetrate Egypt, one via Palmyra and Alexandria and the other via Eilat and the Red Sea port of Berenice.

Local adaptation and addition is particularly noticeable with the *Psalm-Book*, which is more directly linked to the continuing liturgical life of the community. It seems likely that some psalms were composed or thoroughly reworked in a Coptic milieu. The obvious examples are the doxologies, which are frequently appended without context, and include Egyptian names such as Jmnoute and Pshai. Allberry (p.xx) concludes that they are Manichaean martyrs, which indeed seems to be stated at *PsBk II*, 157:13 and 173:12 (and see *I*, pl. 294 final line). The current work on the structure of the psalms, the re-editing of Part II by a research team based at Münster under the direction of Krause's team, and the eventual edition of Part I, all this will provide new impetus to research on the transmission of the Manichaean texts from Greek and Syriac *Vorlage*. Even a cursory reading of the facsimile edition of Part I of the *Psalm-Book* already provides valuable material. For instance the doxology of Psalm 126 (pl. 175:26–29):

[Ο]ΥΕΔΥ ΜἸ ΟΥΤΑΙΟ ΜΠΑΡΑΚΛΗΤΟΣ ΟΥΕΡΟ ΜἸ ΟΥΣΜΑ  
 ΜΕ ΜΠἸΖΑΪΣ ΠΜΑΝΙΧΑΙΟΣ ΠΠἸΑ ΠΤΕ ΤΜΗΕ ΠΙΑ  
 ΒΔΑ ΜΠἸΩΤ ΜἸ ΠἸΖΑΪΣ ΤΗΡΟΥΣΙΟΣ ΠἸΖΑΪΣ ΤΩΜΑΣ  
 ΠἸΖΑΪΣ ΔΔΑΜ ΜἸ ΤΨΟΥΧΗ ΠΘΕΟΝΑ ΜἸ ΜΑΡΙΑ

Glory and honour to the Paraclete! Victory and blessing  
 to our lord Manichaios, the Spirit of truth, this one  
 from the Father. And our lord Terousios, our lord Tomas,  
 our lord Adam; and the soul of Theona, and Maria.

Perhaps Terousios, Tomas, and Adam were leaders of the Church in Egypt; here appearing with the names of Theona and Maria which are already familiar to us through the doxologies of many of the psalms published by Allberry.<sup>29</sup>

An aspect of the early history of the sect which should be of great interest and relevance to Roman historians is the role which the Manichaeans alleged the desert kingdom of Palmyra played in the diffusion of the religion. Situated on the border between Rome and Sassanian Iran, Palmyra rose to political eminence during the chaos

<sup>26</sup> 'Egyptian Manichaeism', *Journal for the Scientific Study of Egyptian Antiquities* 18 (1988), 80–98. See also the perceptive remarks in R. Lim, 'Unity and diversity among the western Manichaeans: a reconsideration of Mani's *sancta ecclesia*', *Revue des Études Augustiniennes* 35 (1989), 231–50, esp. 246ff.

<sup>27</sup> 'Iranische Kephalaia-texte?', in Wießner and Klimkeit (eds), *op. cit.* (n. 10), 305–18.

<sup>28</sup> 'Studien zur kirchengeschichtlichen Literatur der iranischen Manichäer II', *Altorientalische Forschungen* 13/2 (1986), 253–62.

<sup>29</sup> cf. *Ps.-Bk. II* Index of Persons, 45\*.

created by the third and most successful campaign of Shapur I in 260.<sup>30</sup> The mention of the Semitic name of Palmyra: Tadmōr in Coptic: ⲑⲁⲗⲁⲙⲱⲣ in the historical text from Medinet Madi was noted (but without comment) by Schmidt and Polotsky in their preliminary publication on the find.<sup>31</sup> The historical significance of this was not fully realized until Sundermann, a leading authority on Manichaean texts in Middle Iranian, found among the fragments of Manichaean historical texts in Sogdian in the Turfan-sammlung in Berlin an account of the missionary exploits by Mār Addā, one of the earliest and best known of the Manichaean missionaries to the Roman Empire.<sup>32</sup> He was said to have cured a girl by the name of Nafsha (Sogd. Nfš) whose sister was a Caesar (Sogd. *kysr*) and whose kingdom possessed a major pagan temple. Since the loan-word *kysr* in Middle Iranian Manichaean texts is used invariably to denote a Roman ruler in contra-distinction to *š'h* which is used of the king(s) of the Eranshar, Sundermann has argued that the only ruler with such a title in a frontier region was Septimius Odaenathus whose devastating raids into Persian-held Mesopotamia forced Shapur I to withdraw his victorious armies from Roman territory. Odaenathus received from Gallienus the title of *restitutor totius Orientis* (= Aramaic *MTQNN' DY MD'H' KLH*). Before 271 he had also adopted the more grandiose title of 'King of Kings' (*MLK MLK'*) as epigraphical evidence indicates.<sup>33</sup> The sister of Nafsha must then have been none other than the redoubtable Zenobia who took over the reins of government of the oasis-kingdom after the murder of her husband *c.* 266/67.

The leaf of the Coptic historical text containing the reference to ⲑⲁⲗⲁⲙⲱⲣ (i.e. *P. Berol.* 15997) was long believed to have been among the texts which had been lost at the end of the Second World War. However, a leaf containing material remarkably similar to that reported by Schmidt and Polotsky was found by Giversen among the Coptic manuscripts in Dublin and it has since then been proved beyond reasonable doubt that it belonged to the same P15997, and was sent by mistake to Dublin when the Medinet Madi codices belonging to Chester Beatty were returned by H. Ibscher.<sup>34</sup> The inclusion of this leaf in the facsimile edition of the texts in Chester Beatty has enabled scholars to realize again its importance to the history of the early diffusion of the sect. Part of the text on pl. 99 has now been successfully transcribed by Tardieu and this reveals a hitherto unknown episode in the diffusion of the sect from Palmyra to the Lakhmid kingdom of Hira:

[He (Abiesou)] again went in before queen Thamador, and she looked favourably on him. Abiesou the teacher had confidence [in her and settled] there with other brothers. She became a [great protectress] of the church in that place; [after which Abiesou] the teacher sent Sethel the deacon of Ta[ . . . with] Abizakhias to the fort of Abiran [so that they might build up] the church in that place. [They healed numerous people]. The matter came before Amaroà the king, [who was the son of] Lahim, so as to enable the brothers to go [to his house] for a cause of healing. They befriended him by doing him good. He helped us greatly [and took care] of us. He became a great protector of the [brothers], openly granting us his help and his [protection among the] communities [and all the localities in the regions of his kingdom].<sup>35</sup>

Tardieu is almost certainly correct in interpreting the personal name ⲑⲁⲗⲁⲙⲱⲣ as the queen of Tadmōr, i.e. Zenobia. This new information clearly illustrates the importance of Palmyra as a stopping place for mission; not just for the access it gave to Roman Syria, but also to the area between the two empires dominated at this moment by the Arab allies which was not easy to reach because of the manner in which the frontier

<sup>30</sup> cf. F. G. B. Millar, *The Roman Near East 31 BC-AD 337* (1992), 160-73; see also sources in M. H. Dodgeon and S. N. C. Lieu, *The Roman Eastern Frontier and the Persian Wars (226-363)* (1991), 71-83.

<sup>31</sup> *Mani-Fund*, 28.

<sup>32</sup> So, 18223 (= T.M. 389c) + 18222 (= T.M. 389c) *MMTKGI* (441-515) 3.3, pp. 41-5. Eng. trans. S. N. C. Lieu, *Manichaeism in Mesopotamia and the Roman East* (1994), 28-9. On Addā see also Lieu, *op. cit.*, 108 and 263-4 and *idem*, *Manichaeism*<sup>2</sup>, 102-3.

<sup>33</sup> cf. J. Cantineau, *Inventaire des inscriptions de Palmyre*, fasc. 3, *La Grand Colonnade* (1930), No. 19, p. 25, 4-5. Cf. Millar, *op. cit.* (n. 30), 170.

<sup>34</sup> *MCPCBL* II, viii-ix.

<sup>35</sup> *MCPCBL* II, pl. 99, ll. 21-34, ed. and trans. M. Tardieu, 'L'arrivée des manichéens à al-Hīra', in P. Canivet and J.-P. Rey-Coquais (eds), *La Syrie de Byzance à l'Islam VIIe - VIIIe siècles, Actes du Colloque international Lyon-Maison de l'Orient Méditerranéen, Paris - Institut du Monde Arabe 11-15 Sept. 1990* (1992, pub. 1994), 16-17.

defences between the two states were aligned. It is also interesting to note that the early spread of Manichaeism had more to do with the success of the missionaries as peripatetic healers than as proclaimers of a unique (but recent) revelation.<sup>36</sup>

The verso of the same leaf contains material on the history of the sect after the death of Mani.<sup>37</sup> A preliminary translation of some legible lines by Giversen reads:

.. He told us that the king had arrived into the neighbourhood of our shepherd Innaïos, together with the noble Persians who were his assistants. He spoke to him . . . He asked him to go to the king. He achieved mercy for us from him and stopped the destruction. The king together with the noblemen, who were many . . . Innaïos, shall I raise . . . Innaïos went into . . . of the king Sapores . . .<sup>38</sup>

It appears that the cessation of persecution against the sect was brought about by a meeting between Innaïos, the *archegos* of the sect after the martyred Sisinnios, and the reigning Sassanian monarch (Vahrām II ?) at Huzistan (?). The few surviving leaves of this *Acta Apostolorum Manichaeorum* clearly hold the key to our reconstruction of a largely unknown period of the sect's history and the completion of its decipherment is eagerly awaited.

## II. THE GREEK COLOGNE MANI CODEX (*Codex Manichaicus Coloniensis*)

If the story of the identification of the Medinet Madi codices resembled one from the *One Thousand and One Nights*, as Schmidt remarked,<sup>39</sup> then the account of the decipherment of the now famous *Cologne Mani-Codex* has many of the ingredients of a detective thriller with many mysteries remaining unresolved even after a quarter of a century. The learned world first came to know of the remarkable discovery by two German scholars, Henrichs and Koenen, in their preliminary study published in 1970.<sup>40</sup> The manuscript in question was the smallest parchment codex from the Graeco-Roman world discovered up to that date. Measuring only 38 by 45 mm, with a single column of an average of twenty three lines per page, in size it approximates to Christian amulets like *P. Ant.* ii.54 (26 by 40 mm, Pater Noster) or *P. Oxy.* xvii.2065 (Ps. 90); but with nearly 200 pages it had the largest number of quires (eight as against one). However, the wearing of (complete?) gospels as amulets is mentioned by Chrysostom; the *Cologne Mani-Codex* might therefore not have been unique in its day. The tiny pages are ruled both for the lines and for the margins and the ruling is still visible in places. The height of the individual letters never exceeded 1 mm and the text is hardly readable with the naked eye.<sup>41</sup> A glass-bottle filled with water was the most likely enlarging tool used by the ancient scribes to execute such delicate calligraphy. When enlarged by modern methods, the writing is very clear and possesses distinctive proportional spacing and wide and thick strokes. Most of the text was copied by one scribe but another hand supplied the first quire and parts of the eighth, and several others corrected the text throughout. Although the format of the codex gives the appearance of a prophylact, the text was clearly intended to be read. The scribes made few errors and they even observed very strict syllabic rules in breaking up long words at the end of lines.<sup>42</sup>

Information as to how and when this remarkable manuscript came into the possession of the Kölner Papyrus-Sammlung is left conspicuously unaccounted for in

<sup>36</sup> Mani and Jesus were each depicted in Manichaean texts as a healer. On this see esp. the material from both Manichaean historical and hymnological sources collected in W. Oerter, 'Mani als Arzt? Zur Bedeutung eines manichäischen Bildes', in V. Vavřínek (ed.), *From Late Antiquity to Early Byzantium. Proceedings of the Byzantinological Symposium in the 16th Eirene Conference* (1985), 219–23.

<sup>37</sup> cf. *Mani-Fund*, 49–50.

<sup>38</sup> *MCPCL* II, pl. 100, ll. 1–12, trans. Giversen in idem, 'The Manichaean texts from the Chester Beatty

Collection', in P. Bryder (ed.), *Manichaean Studies, Proceedings of the First International Conference on Manichaeism*, Lund Studies in African and Asian Religions 1 (1988), 269.

<sup>39</sup> cf. *Mani-Fund*, 3.

<sup>40</sup> 'Ein griechischer Mani-Codex (P. Colon. inv. nr. 4780)', *ZPE* 5/2 (1970), 97–216.

<sup>41</sup> *In Mt. hom.* 83, PG 58.669.

<sup>42</sup> cf. L. Koenen and C. Römer, *Mani. Auf der Spur einer verschollenen Religion* (1993), 39–42.

any of the subsequent major publications of the text, and the true story may never be known outside a small circle of scholars. Its place of origin was first said to be Oxyrhynchus but later corrected to Lycopolis (modern Assiut), long known to be a major centre of Manichaeism.<sup>43</sup> A more detailed and circumspect account of the preliminary conservation work and identification was provided by Henrichs almost a decade later.<sup>44</sup> According to this, Henrichs met Dr Anton Fackelmann, a renowned conservator, in Fackelmann's residence in June 1969. He had in his possession four small dessicated and fragile lumps of parchment. Preliminary reading of individually identified words gave the impression that the document was probably a religious text of an esoteric or apocalyptic nature. Two recurrent phrases were  $\pi\epsilon\rho\iota$   $\tau\eta\varsigma$   $\gamma\epsilon\nu\nu\eta\varsigma$  and  $\tau\omicron\upsilon$   $\sigma\omega\mu\alpha\tau\omicron\varsigma$   $\alpha\upsilon\tau\omicron\upsilon$ . There seemed little hope of separating the pages and thereby revealing the contents more fully. However, a special chemical was applied to the lumps by Fackelmann and the result appeared nothing short of a miracle.

The pages of vellum came off more easily than was expected, the first ones to be detached contained a series of what appeared to be Judaeo-Christian apocalypses as they were addressed to descendants of Adam. By the next day (15 June 1969) however, the Manichaean nature of the work was discovered when the unmistakable exordium: 'I, Mani, the apostle of Jesus Christ through the will of God, the Father of Truth, from whom I was born', was encountered on one of the pages. The recurrent phrases mentioned combine to form the running title which heads every other double spread 'Concerning the Birth of his Body' ( $\pi\epsilon\rho\iota$   $\tau\eta\varsigma$   $\gamma\epsilon\nu\nu\eta\varsigma$  /  $\tau\omicron\upsilon$   $\sigma\omega\mu\alpha\tau\omicron\varsigma$   $\alpha\upsilon\tau\omicron\upsilon$ ). This odd-sounding title conforms to the Manichaean teaching of Mani's body as only a vehicle of his earthly life and yet also as the symbol of his Church.<sup>45</sup> A total of one hundred and ninety-two pages in eight quires together with some unlocalizable fragments were conserved,<sup>46</sup> making it one of the longest texts to be recovered from a miniature codex.

The *Codex Manichaicus Coloniensis* (hereafter *CMC*) is unique among extant Manichaean texts both in its literary format and in the information it provides.<sup>47</sup> The conserved pages probably once formed the first part of a historical text similar to the Coptic work now so very partially preserved in P15997 (*v. supra*). However, the format of the *CMC* is different. It is a compilation of the written testimonies by some of Mani's closest disciples such as Salmaios the Ascetic, Baraies the Teacher, Timotheos, Abiesus the Teacher, Innaios the brother of Zabed, Za[cheas?], Kustaios the son of the Treasure of Life, and Ana the brother of the disciple Zacheas. It concerns the early life (i.e. the first twenty-four years) of Mani. There are also citations from Mani's writings, e.g. the *Evangelium* and his 'Letter to Edessa', as well as from the writings of St Paul and several hitherto unattested apocalypses. The work was clearly translated from Syriac as indicated by a number of unmistakable semiticisms; and the fact that it was a translated document obscures the stylistic differences between the different authors from whose individual eye-witness accounts the excerpts were drawn.

The tone of the work was suitably auto-hagiographical. Mani told his disciples that from his early childhood he had been put under the special tutelage of his divine *alter ego* (Gr.  $\sigma\acute{\upsilon}\zeta\upsilon\gamma\omicron\varsigma$ ). The term is found in Valentinian gnosticism and was used deliberately as a *terminus technicus* by the translator, for the Syriac original *tōmā* would have naturally suggested  $\delta\acute{\iota}\delta\upsilon\mu\omicron\varsigma$ . This figure is known to us already as al-Twam ('twin') in an Arabic source on Manichaeism, which also informs us that Mani grew up in a baptizing sect

<sup>43</sup> cf. L. Koenen, 'Zur Herkunft des Kölner Mani-Codex', *ZPE* 11 (1973), 240-1.

<sup>44</sup> 'The Cologne Mani Codex reconsidered', *HSCP* 83 (1979), 339-67.

<sup>45</sup> *ibid.*, 342-9.

<sup>46</sup> So far 192 pages have been successfully conserved. See the facsimile edition: L. Koenen and C. Römer, *Der Kölner Mani-Kodex, Abbildungen und diplomatischer Text*, Papyrologische Texte und Abhandlungen 35 (1985).

<sup>47</sup> The *editio maior* remains A. Henrichs and L. Koenen, 'Der Kölner Mani-Kodex (P. Colon. inv. nr.

4780) ΠΕΡΙ ΤΗΣ ΓΕΝΝΗΣ ΤΟΥ ΣΩΜΑΤΟΣ ΑΥΤΟΥ', *ZPE* 19 (1975), 1-85; 32 (1978), 87-199; 44 (1981), 201-318; and 48 (1982), 1-59. The commentary on the last part of the text by C. Römer is eagerly anticipated. All citations, however, are from the *editio minor*: *Der Kölner Mani-Kodex (Über das Werden seines Leibes), kritische Edition aufgrund der von A. Henrichs und L. Koenen besorgten Erstedition, herausgegeben und übersetzt von L. Koenen und Cornelia Römer*, Abhandlungen der Rheinisch-Westfälischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, Sonderreihe, Papyrologica Coloniensia XIV (1988).

(the Mughtasilah, i.e. those who baptize themselves), and that his 'Twin' was a source of the special revelation which eventually formed the basis of his new universal religion.

The content of this *gnosis* is revealed by the accounts in the *CMC* of Mani's dealings with his fellow 'baptists' (βαπτισταί). The young Mani was forbidden to work in the fields and to pick fruit and to practise ritual washing of both body and food. The first two prohibitions led to complaints against him by the elders of the sect, but the third hit at the very heart of the ethical teaching of a baptizing sect. When summoned before a gathering (συνεδρίον) of the sect, Mani appealed to the teaching of a certain Alchasaïos (Ἀλχασαίος) who was ὁ ἀρχηγὸς τοῦ νόμου ὑμῶν. Mani alleged that when Alchasaïos was going to bathe in water an image of a man appeared from the spring and rebuked him for defiling the water, and when this happened to him a second time he gave up bathing in water. When he ploughed, the soil objected to being exploited by him; and on another occasion when he found his disciples baking and the loaf spoke to him, he forbade them to bake again.<sup>48</sup>

The mention of the name Alchasaïos as the possible founder of the sect in which Mani spent the formative years of his life caused a sensation. It altered overnight the direction of research on the vexing problem of Manichaean origins and has generated vigorous controversies. That a possible link might have existed between the sect of the Mughtasilah and Elchasaïos, the putative founder of one or more Jewish-Christian sects in Palestine and Mesopotamia, had already been argued for by Chwolsohn, the eminent scholar on the Šabians in the last century, based on a brief reference in an Arabic source to the Mughtasilah who styled themselves as the 'Šabians of the Marshes':

The Mughtasilah. These people are very numerous in the regions of al-Baṭa'ih they are [called] the Šābat al-Baṭa'ih (i.e. Šabians of the marsh-lands). They observe ablution as a rite and wash everything which they eat. Their head is known as al-Hasīh and it is he who instituted their sect. They assert that the two existences are male and female and that the herbs are from the likeness of the male, whereas the parasite plants are from the likeness of the female, the trees being veins (roots). They have seven sayings, taking the form of fables. His (al-Hasīh) disciple was named Sham'un. They agreed with the Manichaeans about the two elemental [principles], but later their sect became separate.<sup>49</sup>

This description of the beliefs and practices of the Mughtasilah appears to have combined material from Manichaean and Mandaean sources. The 'baptists' of the *CMC* certainly washed everything they ate. The Mughtasilah may have been dualists or at least they would have been imputed as such because of their links with Manichaeism. The name of the founder and of the disciple Simeon would have come almost certainly from Manichaean sources in Syriac or Aramaic.<sup>50</sup> It is important to note that the Mandaeans styled themselves the 'Šabians of the Marshes' in the Islamic period in order to receive protection as a 'people of the book' by the Muslims.<sup>51</sup> We know that the Mandaeans were already in existence as a distinctive community in southern Iraq in the early Islamic period.<sup>52</sup> No founder by the name of 'lks, however is known from Mandaean sources.<sup>53</sup> The use of two sources may have been due to the Mughtasilah also claiming the protective name of the Šabians in the Islamic period or there may be some other as yet unknown connection between the two sects.

<sup>48</sup> *CMC* 94.10–97.17, ed. Koenen and Römer, pp. 66–8 (cf. *ZPE* 32 (1978), 115–17).

<sup>49</sup> *The Fihrist of al-Nadim*, trans. B. Dodge (1970), 811. Cf. D. Chwolsohn, *Die Ssabier und der Ssabismus* I (1856), 543–4.

<sup>50</sup> On the Manichaean Simeon see *Fihrist*, trans. Dodge, p. 755, and *CMC* 106.19 (?) [Συμεὸν]v.

<sup>51</sup> K. Rudolph, *Die Mandäer, I, Prolegomena: Das Mandäerproblem* (1960), 36–43.

<sup>52</sup> The earliest incontrovertible evidence for the existence of the Mandaeans in Iraq comes from the well-known Nestorian heresiologist, Theodor bar Kōnī of Kaškar (fl. eighth century) who cites, in his chapter, on the Kanteans phrases from an important Mandaean work known as the *Left Ginza*. Cf. Rudolph, op. cit. (n. 51), I, 255–9, esp. 256, n. 4.

<sup>53</sup> On the other hand, the Mandaean *Right Ginza* castigated as 'zandiḡia' (i.e. heretics = Arab. *zndyq*, heretic, esp. dualist) the followers of Mar Mani (undoubtedly the eponymous founder of the Manichaeans) who belong to the 'gate' (i.e. religion) of the Messiah. See e.g. *Right Ginza* IX,1, ed. H. Petermann, *Thesaurus s. Liber magnus vulgo "Liber Adami" appellatus opus Mandaeorum summi ponderis* (1867), 228, 9–18, trans. M. Lidzbarski, *Ginza, Der Schatz oder das große Buch der Mandäer*, Quellen der Religionsgeschichte (1925), 229, 17–27. For another example of Mandaean anti-Manichaean polemic see *The Canonical Prayerbook of the Mandaeans*, 357,10, ed. and trans. E. Drower, text p. 379, trans. p. 251.

A second problem concerning the identification of Alchasaïos in the *CMC* with the Elchasaïos known to us from heresiological sources is that in the latter he is inseparably linked to the 'Book of Elxai'. Excerpts from this work are found in Christian sources, especially the writings of heresiologists like Hippolytus of Rome and Epiphanius of Salamis. It came into prominence at the Church in Rome during the pontificate of Callistus (217–22) in relation to the controversy over re-baptism. Alcibiades, a native of Apamea in Syria, was said to have gained followers through advocating the practices laid down in a specially revealed work. This he claimed to have originally been received from (the) Seres (= silk-merchants?) by a certain 'righteous man' called Elchasai. He in turn transmitted it to a certain Sobiai (or a community of baptists, Aram. *šb'* = to baptize) as a book revealed by an angel of gigantic proportions.<sup>54</sup> Hippolytus makes no mention of Elchasai as a founder of a sect nor whether he was a Jew or a Christian of Jewish origin. That Alcibiades was a Christian there is no doubt, but there is nothing specifically Christian in the surviving excerpts of the 'Book of Elxai'.<sup>55</sup>

By the time of Origen (c. 245), however, the Elchasaïtes were attested as a troublesome evangelizing sect and they were characterized by their rejection of the teaching of Paul.<sup>56</sup> More information is furnished by Epiphanius, the famous heresy-hunter from Salamis in Cyprus. We learn from his encyclopaedic work the *Panarion* ('medicine-chest') that Elchasaïos was of Jewish origin and his beliefs were Jewish but that he did not live according to the Law.<sup>57</sup> He later joined a Jewish-Christian sect called the Osseans (also known as the 'Sampseans') and his name meant 'hidden power'.<sup>58</sup> To add apparent veracity to his biographical reconstruction of the heresiarch, Epiphanius adduced two sisters called Marthous and Marthana who claimed descent from Elxai and who were venerated as goddesses in the reign of Constantius II (337–62).<sup>59</sup>

The circumstantial and sometimes contradictory nature of the patristic evidence on Elxai has led one scholar, Luttikhuisen, to sound a note of warning on accepting too readily the link between the Mughtasilah and the Elchasaïtes of the Church Fathers. While the existence of a Jewish apocalyptic work compiled under Trajan called 'the Book of Elxai' which was used by a number of Jewish-Christian texts is amply attested, that of a Jewish-Christian leader called Elchasaïos is less so, as the heresiological accounts give the impression of a developing myth.<sup>60</sup> There is little to link the beliefs and practices of the Elchasaïtes of the heresiologists with the 'baptists' of the *CMC*. The second baptism taught by Alcibiades allegedly from the 'Book of Elxai' has nothing in common with the daily ablutions and ritual washing of food practised by the 'baptists'. Moreover, there are no citations from the 'Book of Elxai' in the *CMC* and there appears little in common between the teaching it contains and that of the 'baptists' save for the doctrine of the cyclical rebirth of the True Prophet.<sup>61</sup>

The discovery by Sundermann of the name 'lxs' in a biographical text of Mani in a Parthian text suggests that the Alchasaïos of the *CMC* was not an ordinary leader of the

<sup>54</sup> Hipp., *ref. omn. haer.* ix.13.1–2, p. 357, ed. Marcovich: ἐπήλθε τῆ Ῥώμῃ φέρων βίβλον τινά, φάσκων ταύτην ἀπὸ Σηρῶν τῆς Παρθίας παρεληφέναι τινὰ ἄνδρα δίκαιον (ὄνόματι) Ἠλχασαί. ἦν παρέδωκεν τιμὴ λεγομένῳ Σοβιαί, χρηματισθεῖσαν ὑπὸ ἀγγέλου. On the place of Elchasaïos in Jewish Christianity see esp. L. Cirillo, *Elchasaï e gli Elchasaïti. Un contributo alla storia della comunità giudeo-cristiane*, Studi e ricerche 1, Università degli Studi della Calabria, Centro interdipartimentale di scienze religiose (1984) and idem, 'Elchasaïti e Battisti di Mani: i limiti di un confronto delle fonti', in L. Cirillo and A. Roselli (eds), *Codex Manichaicus Coloniensis, Atti del Simposio Internazionale (Rende-Amantea 3–7 settembre, 1984)* (1986), 97–139.

<sup>55</sup> With the exception perhaps of the description of a vision of two celestial figures of gigantic proportions which finds a Jewish-Christian parallel in the *Ascensio Jesajae* ix, 27–40, ed. Tisserant.

<sup>56</sup> ap. Eusebius, *hist. eccl.* vi.38, p. 592, 16–22. A dominant feature of the 'baptists' of the *CMC* for whom to have read Paul was to have 'gone over to the enemies' and 'eaten Greek bread'. Cf. *CMC* 87.19–21, p. 60: 'οὐτό[ς] ἐ[σ]τ| σ|τιν ὁ ἐχθρὸς το[ῦ νόμου] | ἡμῶν'. καὶ οἱ με[τ] ἐλεγον. | 'εἰς τὰ ἔθνη βού[λ]εται πο[σ]|-<sup>20</sup>ρευθῆναι καὶ Ἐλ[ληνικὸν] | ἄρτον φαγεῖν'.

<sup>57</sup> Epiph., *haer.* xix.1.4–5, p. 218, 4–10.

<sup>58</sup> *ibid.* xix.1.10, p. 219, 5–10.

<sup>59</sup> *ibid.* xix.1.12, p. 219, 13–16.

<sup>60</sup> *The Revelation of Elchasaï, Investigations into the Evidence of a Mesopotamian Jewish Apocalypse of the Second Century and its Reception by a Judaeo-Christian Propagandist*, Texte und Studien zum Antiken Judentum 8 (1985), 210–20 and 225–6. See also idem, 'The Book of Elchasaï: a Jewish apocalypse', *Aula Orientalis* 5 (1987), 104–6.

<sup>61</sup> Luttikhuisen, *op. cit.* (n. 60), 222.

sect.<sup>62</sup> This rules out the possibility of Manichaean missionaries active in the more Christianized parts of Mesopotamia and the Roman Empire 'inventing' the Alchasaïos anecdotes to strengthen the sect's link with Christianity. In any case the Manichaeans were hardly likely to have chosen to connect themselves with a heretical figure of shadowy existence for missionary purposes. Though the name of the founder of the sect of the 'baptists' is consistently spelt with an alpha rather than an epsilon, there are plenty of examples of such vowel changes in papyri, especially if the name was transliterated from a Semitic source.<sup>63</sup> Furthermore, if the search for Elchasaïte influences on Mani is widened to what is known of Manichaeism in general from Western sources rather than focusing narrowly on the *CMC*, there is much to be found. Both sects placed great emphasis on apocalyptic literature, on the call to repentance, and on the cyclical reappearance of Christ. Both reject the Mosaic Laws and both believe in all matter, plants, and animals possessing souls and in the transmigration of souls.<sup>64</sup> Though none of these similarities is in itself conclusive of a definite link, they do suggest a similar Jewish-Christian background for the Elchasaïtes and the 'Baptists' of the *CMC*, especially when one takes into account Mani's one-sided representation of the teaching of a sect whose teaching he rejected.

A second controversy surrounds the date of the production of the codex. The original editors have suggested a fourth-century date mainly on historical grounds: the fourth century was the heyday of the sect in Roman Egypt and the texts from Medinet Madi are most likely to have come from the same period. But the fifth century is preferred by some scholars on palaeographical grounds.<sup>65</sup> However, a recent attempt has been made by two scholars to date the *CMC* on palaeographical grounds to the seventh or eighth centuries.<sup>66</sup> The distinctive style of the writing, termed 'die rechtsgeneigte Spitzbogenmajuskel *palästinischen* Duktus', is typical, according to the two scholars, of texts produced in the early Islamic period, and in particular of liturgical texts with Syriac and/or Arabic. The similarity is specially marked in a number of letters ( $\alpha$ ,  $\delta$ ,  $\zeta$ ,  $\rho$ ,  $\upsilon$ ,  $\phi$ ,  $\psi$ ,  $\omega$ ), especially in the alternation of thick and thin strokes and the distinctive use of serifs in the letter  $\tau$ .<sup>67</sup>

The historical problems confronting such a late dating are considerable. The *CMC*, apart from the Biblical citations, shows clear Semitic influence, which is characteristic of an early stage of textual diffusion. The codex could, of course, have been merely a *prophylactus* in which the text copied is of little importance. Nevertheless, the high quality of the calligraphy and the trouble the scribes took to ensure legibility (even in its minute format), down to the very strict rules observed by the scribes in line-breaks involving long words, implies that it is designed to be read by members of a community which still placed considerable importance on the historical roots of the sect. There are hardly any accurate citations from Manichaean works in Greek after the sixth century, the last being the citations in the Cathedral Homily of Severus of Antioch, which have come down to us only in two Syriac translations.<sup>68</sup> On the other hand, the names of some of the witnesses whose accounts of Mani's self-revelations are excerpted in the *CMC* are given in a document compiled in the early years of Justinian's reign and in no earlier text.<sup>69</sup> Much detailed work on the palaeography of the *CMC* clearly needs to be

<sup>62</sup> The text is very fragmentary but the autobiographical nature is clear due to the word *ymg* 'Twin' on the previous line. M1344 + M5910, W. Sundermann, *Mitteliranische manichäische Texte kirchengeschichtlichen Inhalts*, Berliner Turfantexte XI (Berlin, 1981) 2.2, 25–7, p. 19: ](.rynd 'w' s tw y(mg) | [ ... . ... ](.oo 'lxs' (.hr) (...)] [ ](.jmn' n (p)[ ]].

<sup>63</sup> cf. F. T. Gignac, *A Grammar of the Greek Papyri of the Roman and Byzantine Periods* 1 (1976), 235 and 242–9.

<sup>64</sup> As well demonstrated by R. Merkelbach, 'Die Täufer, bei denen Mani aufwuchs', in Bryder, op. cit. (n. 38), 105–33.

<sup>65</sup> See esp. the palaeographical remarks in E. Turner and P. Parsons, *Greek Manuscripts of the Ancient World*, BICS Suppl. 46 (1987), 129.

<sup>66</sup> B. L. Fonkič and F. B. Poljakov, 'Paläographische

Grundlagen der Datierung des Kölner Mani-Kodex', *Byzantinische Zeitschrift* 83/1 (1990), 22–30.

<sup>67</sup> *ibid.*, 25–6.

<sup>68</sup> *Homilia cxxxiii*, ed. M. Brière, *Les Homiliae Cathédrales de Sévère d'Antioche*, PO xxix (1961), pp. 124–88 (trans. of Jacob of Edessa); ed. A. Rahmani, *Tractatus de Haeresibus*, ed. I. Rahmani, *Studia Syriaca* IV, *Documenta de antiquis haeresibus* (Beirut, 1909), pp. 48–89 (Syriac Text) (trans. of Paul of Callinicum).

<sup>69</sup> See e.g. Baraies and Salmaïos. On these see S. N. C. Lieu, 'An early Byzantine formula for the renunciation of Manichaeism, the *Capita VII contra Manichaeos* of Zacharias of Mytilene', *Jahrbuch für Antike und Christentum* 26 (1983), 196 (repr. *idem*, *Manichaeism in Mesopotamia and the Roman East* (1994), 266).

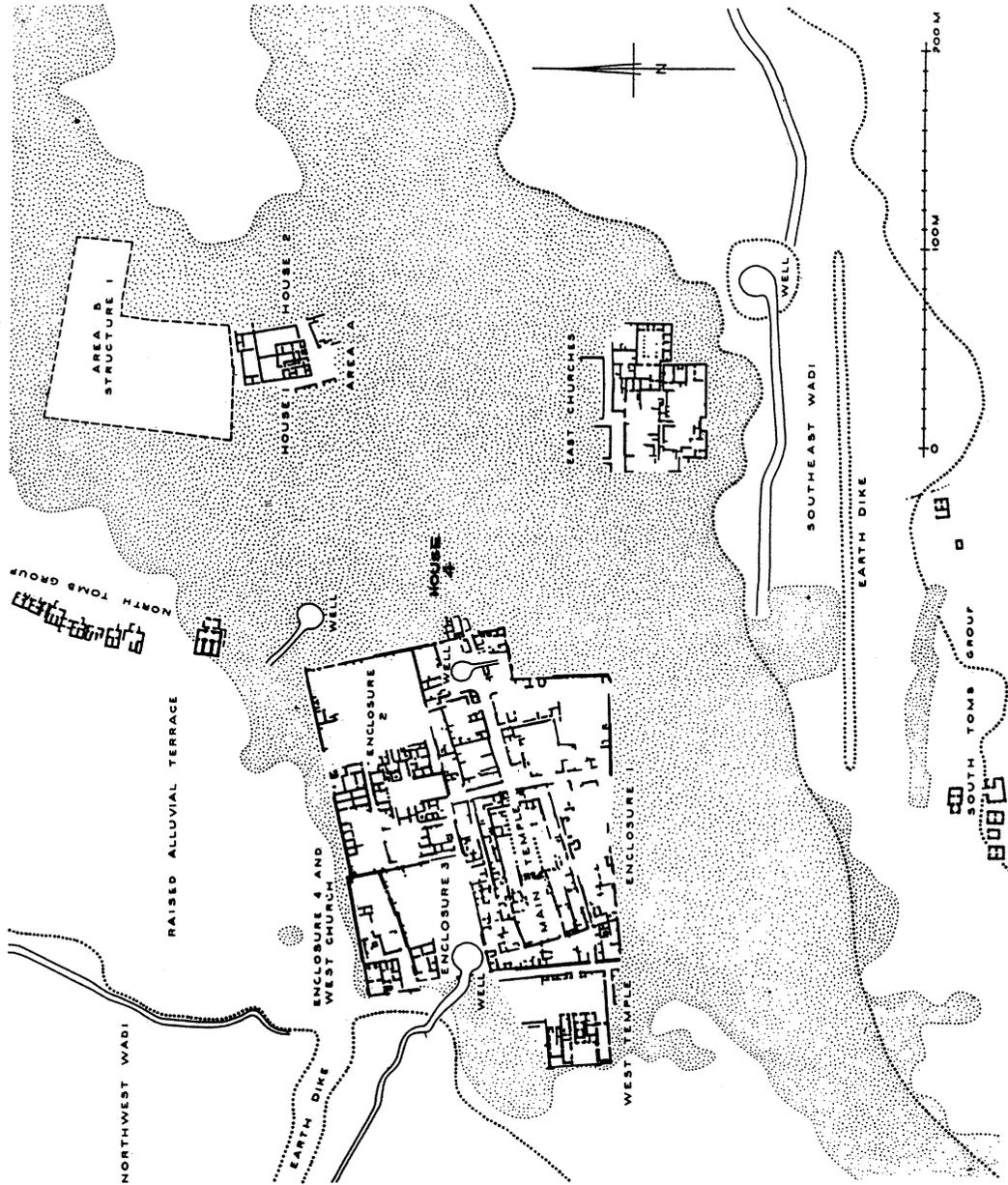


FIG. 1. ISMANT EL-KHARAB (KELLIS). LOCATION OF EXCAVATION AREAS.

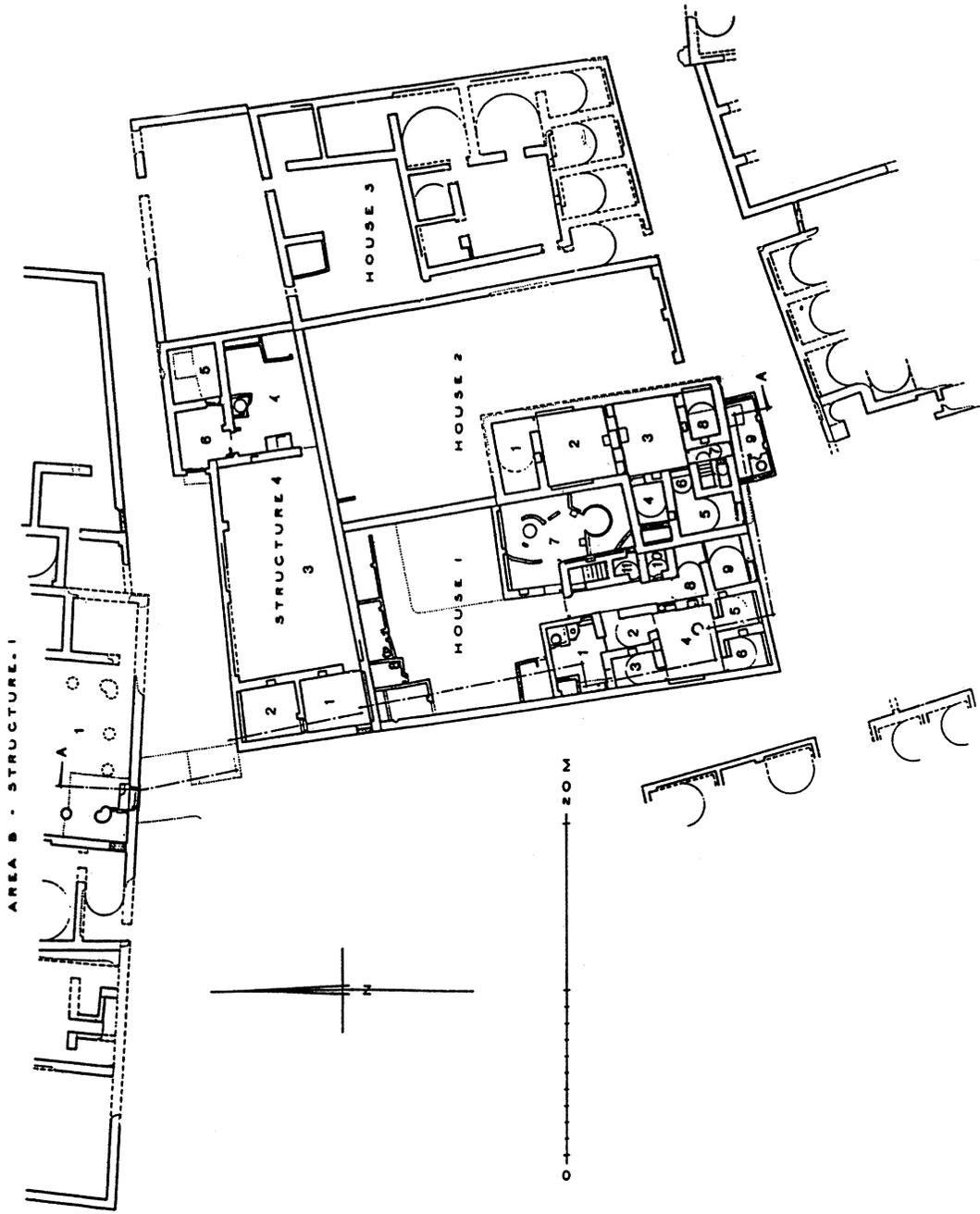


FIG. 2. ISMANT EL-KHARAB (KELLIS). PLAN OF AREA A, STRUCTURE 4, HOUSES 1, 2, AND 3, AND NEIGHBOURING BUILDINGS.

done, and some of the more intriguing questions surrounding its origin remain to be answered.

### III. THE NEW DISCOVERIES AT KELLIS

While the Medinet Madi corpus remains, at present at least, the prime source for an understanding of Manichaean traditions, doctrine, and liturgical practice in the formative period, it is apparent that the mostly alien nature of the texts makes it difficult to establish from these alone any clear history for the Manichaean communities in Roman Egypt. However, this situation has been radically altered by the unearthing of the site and texts of a fourth-century Manichaean community at Kellis. There are clear lines of connection to be established between the two sets of material so that not only does Kellis explain itself, but it also provides a number of keys for the unravelling of the history of the Medinet Madi corpus.

The on-going archaeological excavations at Kellis (Ismant el-Kharab) are directed by C. Hope of Monash University.<sup>70</sup> They are held under the auspices of the Dakhleh Oasis Project (A. J. Mills), which takes a holistic approach to the study of the adaptation of humans and other life to a semi-arid environment. Specialists from many disciplines are involved in the overall project, for instance prehistorians and palaeo-botanists, and the sites across the oasis range up to the beginning of the Islamic period.

Archaeological work began at Kellis in the mid-1980s. The site was surveyed, and a rich variety of structures identified, including temple, churches, and an administrative complex. The town appears to have been deserted about *c.* A.D. 400, and was then gradually covered with sand. The reason for this may be supposed to be the drying up of the underground water-supply upon which all life depends in the oasis, or similarly the harsh climactic conditions, thus rendering agriculture not viable. However, fields in this area have been tended in living memory, and the modern village of Smint is nearby. Whether there was some sudden natural disaster, or upheaval of some other kind, remains open to conjecture.

The reconstruction of the social and religious history of the Dakhleh Oasis during this period is still at a formative stage. The account in the standard work by Wagner<sup>71</sup> can only serve as a basis upon which to build the results of each new season's work at Kellis. Nevertheless, the majority of the site remains as yet unexcavated and other Roman period towns in the Oasis, in particular Trimithis, are virtually untouched. For these reasons it is necessary to concentrate on the specific histories of the excavated areas and beware of, or at least be cautious in, extrapolating any general theory about Manichaeism and Christianity in late Roman Dakhleh.

The Manichaean material has been found in residential structures in Area A, in the context of dated contracts (and coins) that span the period A.D. 301–390. The 1992 season completed the excavation of three houses, in the last of which (House 3 or Structure A/5) was found the majority of the literary and documentary texts. In 1993 work began on House 4 (A/6), which is at a substantial distance from the earlier sites. Here a Manichaean psalm inscribed on wooden board has also been found. This strongly indicates that the inhabitants of House 3 were not an isolated group of believers. This evidence, together with that of the personal letters in Coptic found in House 3 that address and greet a community of elect and catechumens, allows us to say that the religion was widespread throughout Kellis in the mid-fourth century. At the least there was a Manichaean community at Kellis, but the question of its strength relative to Christians and pagans in an age of transition must at the present remain unanswered.

There is currently no clear evidence in House 3 of what may be termed, for the sake of convenience, catholic Christianity. All the religious texts are Manichaean, or (given

<sup>70</sup> Reports of progress on the excavation are published in *Journal for the Scientific Study of Egyptian Antiquities*; with briefer but more rapidly published

accounts of each season's work appearing also in the *Bulletin of the Australian Centre for Egyptology*.

<sup>71</sup> G. Wagner, *Les Oasis d'Égypte* (1987).

the context) may be regarded as being utilized by Manichaeans. The documentary texts, once it is understood that the Manichaeans believed themselves to be Christians, the true and holy church (see below), betray the same faith. Only some minor phrases remain open to conjecture. The evidence from House 2 is less certain, though here too there may also be Manichaean material (perhaps Text A/2/88). In House 4, currently being excavated, there appears to be firmer evidence of catholic Christianity but still with a Manichaean psalm on the same site.

### *The Manichaean Texts from Kellis*

First the Manichaean and associated literary texts as yet identified can be listed.<sup>72</sup> These texts are being edited for publication by Gardner (Coptic) with contributions as regards the Greek and Syriac from other project members.<sup>73</sup>

#### A: Canonical works by Mani

i. ex P 93C<sup>74</sup> etc.

About 100 fragments from a papyrus codex in Coptic containing a canonical *Epistle/s* by Mani. Substantial remains of perhaps nine leaves survive, and are in the process of reconstruction.

ii. ex P 30/55/59B

Sixteen fragments of a single papyrus codex leaf in Coptic from an *Epistle* (?) by Mani, concerning *agape* and *sophia*.

#### B: Manichaean doctrinal texts

i. A/5/346

Catechetical and highly structured text in Coptic on wooden board concerning the five *schema* of the Father.

#### C: Manichaean psalms and liturgical texts

i. Titled: 'Prayer of the Emanations'

Complete prayer in Greek on wooden board, for confessional use.

ii. A/5/53B

Manichaean liturgical codex in Coptic on wooden boards, containing probably six abbreviated psalms (i.e the beginning of each strophe is given) and an eschatological prayer. Text A2 is parallel to Medinet Madi Psalm 68.<sup>75</sup>

iii. A/5/6

Two Coptic Manichaean psalms on wooden board. The first parallels Medinet Madi Psalm 222, Allberry 8:6 to the end; the second is Psalm 109, in Giversen's facsimile of the *PsBk I*, pl. 154.

iv. A/5/195

Poorly preserved Coptic Manichaean psalm/s on wooden board. Medinet Madi Psalm 261 identified.

<sup>72</sup> An expanded although earlier version of this material can be found in I. M. F. Gardner, 'The Manichaean community at Kellis progress report', *Acta Orientalia Belgica* 1993 (1994), 79–87.

<sup>73</sup> All the Kellis texts are being edited for publication in a series of Dakhleh Oasis Project monographs, to be published by Oxbow Press (Oxford).

<sup>74</sup> The numbering here is that of the excavation inventory, and is provisional to the assigning of 'P. Kell.' numbers to be used for the critical editions.

<sup>75</sup> Published by I. M. F. Gardner, 'A Manichaean liturgical codex found at Kellis', *Orientalia* 62/2 (1993), 30–69.

v. A/5/107

Small fragment wooden board, Coptic Manichaean psalm.

vi. A/6/14

Coptic Manichaean psalm, with devotional postscript, on wooden board.

vii. P 82A

Coptic Manichaean devotional texts on papyri; Text A parallels Medinet Madi Psalm 246, Allberry 55:3–13, but does not include the doxology.

viii. P 82Bi/ii

Coptic Manichaean psalms on papyri. Includes a somewhat garbled version of a Medinet Madi psalm found in Giversen's facsimile of the *PsBk I*, pl. 277–8.

ix. P 92.17A

Fragment of Coptic Manichaean psalm on papyrus.

There are in all at least eighteen psalms very similar in style and terminology to the Medinet Madi *Psalm-Book*. So far six have been identified, and there seems little doubt that further parallels may be discovered, especially when Part I of the Chester Beatty codex is edited. From the textual evidence it seems certain that the Kellis versions predate those from Medinet Madi. The six identified come from widely divergent portions of the codex, and show no evidence of the numerical sequence established in the Medinet Madi codex. They equate to Psalms 68, 109, 222, 246, 261, and one as yet unplaced.

A further point worthy of note is not so much the quantity of Coptic Manichaean psalms, but the variety of different hands, and the evidence of many codices both on wooden board and papyrus. A number of the hands are unpractised, while others are good; on occasion appearing in conjunction. This requires explanation.

#### D: Coptic-Syriac glossaries of Manichaean technical terms

i. A/5/196

Glossary of cosmological phrases on wooden board, with details of the lunar phases in terms of Manichaean eschatological doctrine.

ii. A/5/239

Glossary of devotional terms on wooden board; e.g. 'We have gathered together', 'We have erred', 'We have been eager'.

iii. A/5/26

Syriac/Greek fragment on parchment.

#### E: Manichaean amulets

i. A/3/19

Greek amulet: 'I glorify you, the firstborn word . . .'

ii. P 56J

Greek amulet in praise of the Father.

#### F: Biblical and apocryphal texts

i. P 75A

Single leaf from Coptic codex (dialect I), from Paul's *Epistle to the Romans*, ch. 2:6–29.

ii. A/3/24 *et al.*

Fragments from Greek codex parallel to *Acts of John*.

#### G: Miscellaneous literary fragments from A/1–5, possibly Manichaean

i. A/2/88

Poorly preserved codex leaf in Coptic.

ii. P 27B

Coptic literary fragments from a codex.

iii. P. 82C

Page from a codex, illegible.

iv. P 92.13

Greek literary fragment.

Although the volume of this material is not great, compared to the Medinet Madi codices, the variety is of particular value from an historical point of view. The texts identified as by Mani are unique. The psalms predate the Medinet Madi codex of the *Psalm-Book*. The passage from Paul's *Epistle to the Romans*, and the text related to the *Acts of John*, are to be regarded as having been used by the Manichaean community at Kellis, rather than as Christian. In particular, the bilingual Coptic/Syriac glossaries evidence the presence of a Manichaean missionary cell at Kellis, engaged in the actual process of translating the religion and its texts. The close parallels between the Kellis and Medinet Madi material enable the historical context of the latter to be better understood.

Firstly, it becomes apparent that the codices in the Medinet Madi corpus are *collections* of material that betray, on the whole, substantial textual histories. Thus the *Psalm-Book* has been constructed from groups such as the Bema psalms, which are themselves collections of material. Duplicate psalms with divergent histories can be noted. Doxologies have been added and standardized. An index has been made, after which again more material has been added. Such points are attested by the Kellis psalms. These circulated freely and more fluidly; they were written by different hands on papyrus and wooden board; texts were added and erased. This is not to say that collected material did not exist at Kellis, from which individual psalms might be taken according to need; but rather that the Medinet Madi *Psalm-Book* is not a necessary or fixed scripture at this period.

Similarly the *Kephalaia*. The chapters vary greatly in length, and seem to incorporate blocks of oral and perhaps written tradition from a variety of sources. In general they follow a standard pattern wherein a disciple (occasionally an opponent) asks a question of the apostle, the 'enlightener'. Usually contextual or historical detail is missing. The body of the chapter is then taken up with a summary of doctrine on that particular question which convinces all listeners; the chapter may end with a prayer of praise for Mani and thanks for his revelation. The wooden board A/5/6 from Kellis enumerates the five-fold *schema* of the Father of Greatness as reflected in the Third Ambassador. It could be termed a kind of 'flip card' or easily memorized summary used for teaching purposes. In style it resembles much of the kephalaic material, but lacks the framing sequences where a disciple asks Mani some question. It would be easy to construct such a sequence, for instance: At one of the times when the enlightener (Mani) was sitting in the midst of the congregation, one of the disciples stood up and asked him: 'Tell us, our master, what are the five qualities of the Father about which you have spoken?' It can be supposed that the rapid multiplication of kephalaic material occurred in this way, as providing apostolic authority for the constructed teachings of the community. Similarly, the repetition of blocks of material in different settings attests an extended textual history, which belies the assertion that they are verbatim accounts of Mani's teaching. A number of sequences appear to have attained a stylized form. It is also possible to show the development of semi-creedal formulae.

Secondly, in that the Medinet Madi codices are collected and constructed, they do not illuminate the life of a community. They are formal works, a library. Since it is difficult to suppose that they belonged to any but Manichaeans, the question is raised as to why they were in the Fayyum, if indeed they were found there. Presumably they were a portion of the core reference works utilized by a missionary cell, that itself was an outreach from some mother-house. Alternatively, they may have been salvaged by believers in flight. In either case the dialect betrays their origin in Upper Egypt.

Thirdly, the Coptic-Syriac glossaries from Kellis demonstrate the direct translation of originals into a form of Lycopolitan Coptic. There are close dialectical parallels between these, and the Kellis material in general, and the Medinet Madi codices. There are also variant forms that throw the entire construction of dialectical archetypes into question. Nevertheless, it does seem certain that this area formed a prime and not secondary mission field for the Manichaeans. The Greek Manichaean literature seems to have a different composition history. In style such material from Kellis is notably distinct from that of the Coptic and Syriac.

## IV. THE MANICHAEAN COMMUNITY AT KELLIS

The reconstruction of the social history of the Manichaean community at Kellis, and its relations with the Nile valley, must be based on the evidence from the documentary texts. The quantity of such material is much greater than the literary. While there are more Greek fragments than Coptic, the number of usable texts in each language is perhaps approximately equal. The inhabitants of House 3 were bilingual and highly literate. There is as yet no evidence for supposing discrete periods of occupation, and some of the same inhabitants are referred to in both the Greek and Coptic documents. However, the languages appear to be used for different purposes. The Coptic texts are almost entirely personal letters, with only a couple of economic documents. The Greek are predominately economic and legal, although there are a few personal letters.

The editing of the Greek documentary texts is being undertaken by Worp (University of Amsterdam), with contributions from other team members. The editing of all the Coptic documentary texts is being undertaken as a collaborative enterprise by Alcock, Funk, and Gardner (co-ordinator). A dossier of the material has now been established, and systematic work has begun.

*Dossier of Coptic Documentary Texts*

A/2-3: eight files, seven of which are from personal letters.

A/5: 125 files. A number of these refer only to small fragments that may be joined to others, thus reducing the total number; but then some files contain small fragments from two or more separate texts. Thus it is difficult to calculate exactly the total number of separate documents that must originally have existed. However, it is likely to exceed 125. The material is almost entirely personal letters. Depending upon exact definition, there would seem to be the substantial remains of about sixty to sixty-five letters; that is, documents with more than a few lines of coherent text. A number are complete or virtually so. At present twenty one separate letters in Coptic (and one in Greek) have been marked as Manichaean in that they contain distinctive terminology. It can be presumed, and the cross-referencing of authors will demonstrate this in the future, that a much greater percentage of the letters were actually written by Manichaean believers. Certainly this substantial archive is in date, content and dialect unique; and it can be suggested here that it will make a significant contribution to the documentary history of the period.<sup>76</sup>

A/6: four files. Includes substantial remains of three personal letters; from the first season of excavation in House 4.

Clearly, there is extensive research to be undertaken before any definite conclusions can be presented. Many of the texts have only been cursorily read, and partially transcribed if at all. The process of reconstruction is not yet complete. However, it is evident from the find sites of the Manichaean letters (all from House 3) that, although the greatest number were excavated from the floor of the central living area (Room 6, Levels 3-5), which was the richest site in the house overall, a number were scattered through other rooms. It, therefore, seems unlikely that they can be regarded as a single cache of letters, but rather represent the general interests of the inhabitants.

The letters also attest a variety of authors and recipients, and represent distinct genres: close family letters; letters of secular interest that incidentally demonstrate Manichaean belief; and what appear to be formal letters of support or requests from

<sup>76</sup> Intense work is currently being undertaken on the prosopographical and other data provided by the

archive, with the first volume of Coptic documentary texts projected for 1996.

fellow-believers in the Nile valley. These last are of particular interest, and possess a more detailed religious content.

A useful place to start is with the greeting formulae used in introductions and conclusions. Thus P57A + P51B/C/D begins:

(r. 1–6) My brother, my master. The beloved of my soul and my spirit. The child of righteousness. The good member of the Light Mind. The sweet name in my mouth. My beloved brother Hor. I Orion, in the lord God. Greetings.

The standard epistolary greeting of ‘in the lord God, χαίρειν’, which would normally occasion no notice as a Christian letter, is here betrayed by the reference to the distinctively Manichaean divinity: the Light Mind (ΠΝΟΥΣ ΝΟΥΔΙΝΕ). This God is an emanation of Jesus, incarnated in the apostles, and in each individual as the ‘old man’ is transmuted into the ‘new man’. Thus here Hor is addressed as ‘the good member of the Light-Mind’, because he belongs to the spiritual body of the Church. The Manichaeans at Kellis regarded themselves as an élite, the community of the saints. Thus again, ‘the child of righteousness’ can here be taken as an indication of Manichaean faith. Further evidence appears amongst the concluding formulae:

(r. 27–30) Greet me warmly to they who give rest to you, the elect and the catechumens, each one according to his name.

In the context of this letter, with its reference to the Light-Mind, and the other Manichaean material found in House 3, this phrase has to be taken as a specific indication of the presence with Hor of both levels of the Manichaean community: the elect and the catechumens.

To turn now to more assertively Manichaean letters, it has already been mentioned that there appears to be a genre of formal letters of support or requests written by members of the Church in the Nile valley. These may be characterized by a careful and professional book-hand, clear punctuation, and even some formal detailing. There is also more overt religious and doctrinal content. Thus P92.10 + P51E + P17D. The letter begins:

(r. 1–43) My beloved daughters, who are greatly revered by me. The members of the holy church, [the daughters] of the Light Mind, they wh[o also are numbered wi]th the children of God; the favoured, blessed, God-loving s[o]uls; my women daughters (?). I am your father who is in Egypt, the one who writes to you in the Lord. Greetings!

Before anything I greet you warmly, and your children together, according to their names; I am praying to God every hour that he will guard you for a long time, free from anything evil of the wicked world; you being for us the helpers, and worthy patron, and firm, unbending, pillar.

We ourselves are relying upon you. Indeed, when I heard about your good, God-loving fame; I rejoiced greatly. I gave thanks to you exceedingly, thousands, ten thousand times; [though you/we (?)] are far; [. . . and] indeed [w]e find remembrance among [you]. Now, therefore, it (remembrance) will remain for [you, that we may] receive this knowledge and this faith, [so that it may be kn]own.

You have believed [me. I], therefore, [b]eg you, [my] blessed [daughters], that you will [send me] two jars of oil; for [you kn]ow yourselves that we are [in need] here. Since we are afflicted, [send] the portion of oil. Indeed, when I came [. . .] I being confident that yo[u will find the tim]e to send them to me. [I hope th]at you will do it like [every thing, as y]ou do them [. . . the]m with certainty [. . .] at all. Do not [hesit]ate [. . . and yo]u send them to my son as [he is bringing a lett]er to you with [certainty . . . write] to me quickly.

It would seem that the reference to hearing about their ‘fame’ indicates that the author is not a close family relative, and even suggests that the Manichaean community at Kellis may have been renowned for their zeal and evangelical success. In this case the author, styling himself as ‘your father in Egypt’ would be a leading member of the Church. Here, as elsewhere in the Kellis texts, Egypt indicates the Nile valley in contradistinction to the oasis.

If this is so, then the comment that ‘we are afflicted’ or ‘oppressed’ may be a reference to persecution. In other letters there certainly appear to be indications of such, including a number of heart-felt hopes and prayers to see one another with ‘free speech’

or 'candour (παρρησία)'. While it is difficult to know exactly what weight to place on such a complex term, clearly this must be a major direction for future research.

As regards the specific Manichaean terminology of the letter there is again the reference to the Light Mind. Phrases such as 'the members of the holy Church' and 'the children of God' indicate that they regarded themselves as a chosen élite. This opens up the questions of self-definition and relations with Christians. There would seem to be no reason to suppose that they would have defined themselves as 'Manichaeans' in the sense that their opponents sought to label them as heretics. Indeed, the modern use of the term, though standard in objective scholarship, nevertheless originates in heresiology. By comparison with the evidence from Augustine, it would seem that, in the Roman Empire at least, they would have promoted themselves as the true Church of Jesus Christ, as followers of the Spirit; indeed, as *the* Christians.

These points can be further developed with a reading of the letter P92.18, which is essentially complete:

(r. 1-51) Our beloved daughter, the daughter of the holy church, the catechumen of the faith; the good tree whose fruit never withers (Mt.7:18), w[hi]ch is your love that emits [radian]ce every day. She has [gen]erated for herself her riches, [which] are stored in the treasuries that are in [the] he[i]ghts, where moths shall not find a way, nor shall the thieves g through to them to steal (Mt. 6:19-20); which (storehouses) are the sun and the moon. Shē whose deeds resemble her name, [my] daughter, peace. I am your [fa]ther who writes to you in Go[d]. Greetings.

I greet warmly in love, God-loving, good-loving; I am praying that you may continue in health of the body, and gladness of the spirit, and joy of the soul, until we see you (pl.) again.

Furthermore, I write tasting (?) the memory that you [ . . . ] for the matter is fine. Until I come up once for all to lay the foundation of your house, fight in every way to put on its coping that you may be at ease therein for ever. Do the work and mix the warp (?) until I come.

If you have oil standing, give a jar to our brother; let him send it to me, either bodily or naturally (?). If also there is [m]ore, give him eighteen measures.

Until we meet one another we give our account. Just fight in every way to complete the work, for a person knows not at what hour the thief will come to dig through to the house (Mt. 24:43). Indeed, I have heard that you are sick several days. I am grieving, but (for) the worship of God. They say that (you) come to health. Health upon your health! Live in God, our beloved daughter.

Here the 'Manichaean' doctrine is presented through a Christian garb; or as might be preferable, is put forward as in truth Christian, this without need for discussion. Nevertheless, in our terms, it is indisputably Manichaean.

The reference to 'the good tree whose fruit never withers' is based upon a stylized exegesis of the Gospel parable (Mt. 7:18), whereby it becomes a fundamental proof-text for dualism. This derives back to Marcion, and echoes of such an 'arboreal' theology suffuse Manichaean texts. Of more detailed significance is the interpretation of Mt. 6:19-20:

Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust consume and where thieves dig through and steal, but lay up for yourselves treasures *in heaven*, . . .

In this letter, which also returns to the theme near the end with an allusion to Mt. 24:43, the riches wrought by goodness are stored in the *heavenly treasures* of the sun and the moon. In Manichaean doctrine the sun and the moon are indeed storehouses and homes for the Gods of redemption, to which the light and goodness purified from the world and matter ascend, on the path to the eternal kingdom.

Apart from this telling reference to the sun and the moon there is nothing in the letter that is unambiguously Manichaean. However, once that is understood, the whole tenor and style is read in a different way. This is generally the situation with the letters from Kellis.

This point is well made by the references in the letters to prayer to 'the Father, the God of truth (ΠΩΤ ΠΝΟΥΤΕ ΝΤΑΜΕ)'. The term is distinctively Manichaean, as shown by its authority as a title throughout the Medinet Madi texts. To the reader

looking for such phrases it is often the first and perhaps only point of terminology in some letters that stands out as distinctive. However, it may be that the casual and uninterested observer would take no note of such distinction; and perhaps this is an indication of what the community meant when they prayed for a future in which they could meet with *παρρησία*.

This brief introduction to some of the research in progress at Kellis allows some tentative hypotheses to be established. Manichaeism first reached Egypt (Alexandria) about A.D. 260. At the end of the third century it had attained a sufficiently high profile to be attacked both by the State and the Church; and, as Alexander of Lycopolis shows, had attracted attention and interest in philosophical circles. Evangelization in Upper Egypt seems to have been particularly successful, with Syriac-speaking missionaries translating texts directly into Lycopolitan Coptic. Here there may have been direct communications by sea to Mesopotamia, rather than north up the Nile valley.

A central mission would have been founded, perhaps in Lycopolis itself; and Kellis must originally have been part of an outreach to the western desert oases. For some reason Manichaeism established itself well there in the earlier fourth century, and possibly also elsewhere in Dakhleh. Perhaps Christianity was less entrenched; and certainly a remote area such as this suggests a weakening of both ecclesiastical and state authority that would have been to the Manichaeans' advantage.

The hypothesis continues that Manichaeism succeeded well enough at Kellis to become part of the normative culture. References in the personal letters are often casual, if on occasion guarded, and mixed with discussion of trade and other family business. There would have been a community of the elect, holding fast the higher teachings of Mani; but also a substantial number of native-born catechumens, families for whom the faith was becoming part of their established religious life, seemingly a purer and truer form of Christianity.

It can be tentatively suggested that in the mid-fourth century the situation was such that an increasingly beleaguered community in the Nile valley began to look to the Oasis for support, and as some kind of safe haven. Certainly the presence of the Syriac-Coptic glossaries suggests an unusual prominence for Kellis, given its location. However, the future of the community beyond the later fourth century can be a matter only for speculation. It would be reasonable to imagine that the authorities eventually caught up with Kellis; but whether this has anything to do with the desertion of the town is unknown.

## V. CONCLUSION

The study of Manichaeism in the Roman Empire has advanced in the course of this century by a series of spectacular discoveries. The weight of evidence now points to Manichaeism as an essentially Semitic religion with strong Judaeo-Christian roots arising out of the vortex of Judaeo-Christian and Gnostic movements that flourished at this period in the Syrian Orient; and one which most particularly promulgated itself as the true Christian Church. In this Brown was ahead of his time in his lecture delivered several years before the identification of the Cologne Mani-Codex. However, the history of discovery of the genuine Manichaean texts must bring caution, for the finds have certainly been haphazard and unexpected in character; and the future may even yet bring new and unexpected twists to the story. The fact that the Manichaeans, like the Gnostics, concealed their texts for fear of persecution led to the extraordinary survival of original manuscripts from Late Antiquity, but the sheer volume of the material should not lead us to view the religion as a serious competitor to Christianity. Its Judaeo-Christian origins allowed the religion to spread along with the expansion of Christianity in the post-Constantinian era, but its negative attitude to society and family life meant that the religion had a limited appeal to the masses.<sup>77</sup>

<sup>77</sup> On the limits of Manichaean mission see G. Fowden, *Empire to Commonwealth, Consequences of Monotheism in Late Antiquity* (1993), 75–6.

What is of importance is the manner in which a powerful and influential movement in the later Roman Empire has, by the vagaries of its own history as a discipline, in part been by-passed by mainstream scholarship, particularly in the English-speaking world. Now the continuing work at Kellis, where for the first time in the West Manichaean texts have been discovered in their communal context, surely opens new gateways that historians of the later Roman Empire cannot afford to ignore. That the religion was in a dominant position in the community enabled it to develop in a manner unique in the Roman Empire. The full publication of the texts from Kellis will undoubtedly offer scholars many unique insights into the development of a religion whose history in its land of origin was all too brief.

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