



## ARŽANG

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**ARŽANG** (Mid. Ir. *Ardahang*), an extra-canonical work of Mani. It was a volume of drawings and paintings (a *negār-nāma*, in a text quoted by Thomas Hyde in 1700 [Flügel, *Mani*, p. 383]) to illustrate the most important aspects of the dualistic doctrine. It probably formed an appendix to, but was certainly distinct from, the *Living Gospel/Great Gospel*, one of the canonical works of Manicheism (Puech, *Gnostische Evangelien*, pp. 269f.; see [Angalyūn](#)). The book is mentioned in Parthian texts with other books by Mani (Andreas and Henning, *Mir. Man.* III, pp. 858, 862). In the Coptic Manichaica it is called the *Eikón* (Schmidt and Polotsky, *Ein Mani-Fund*, p. 45 n. 3, and especially Polotsky, *Manichäische Homilien*, p. 18 with n. a) and is distinguished from the picture (*eikón*, Mid. Pers. *phykyrb*, Parth. *p'dgyrb*, Uighur *körk*) of Mani which, at the Bema festival, was placed on a throne in front of the community (Henning, *Bet- und Beichtbuch*, p. 9; Haloun and Henning, *Compendium*, p. 210 n. 4). The book is also referred to as containing pictures of the final judgment (Henning, *Sogdian Fragment*, p. 310 n. 5). In the Chinese “Compendium of the Doctrines and Styles of the Teaching of Mani, the Buddha of Light,” it is called “the Great Mên-ho-i” (according to Ē. Benveniste from an adjective *\*bungāhīg* derived from Parthian *bungāh*, “foundation”), which is interpreted as “the drawing of the two great principles” (Haloun and Henning, *op. cit.*, pp. 195, 209-10).

For the etymology of Parthian *ʾrdhng*, H. H. Schaeder suggested Old Persian *\*arta-θa<sup>n</sup>ha* “message of truth” (“Wahrheits-Botschaft,” Schaeder, review, p. 347, and *Beiträge*, p. 563 n. 1) corresponding to Arabic *bošraʾl-ḥaqq* in the *Fehrest* of al-Nadīm (Flügel, *Mani*, pp. 51, 84). But a generally accepted solution



has not yet been found; cf. Henning, *Henochbuch*, p. 30 and Haloun and Henning, op. cit., p. 210 (“perhaps “drawing”, if *-hang* from OIr. *θang-* “to draw””). In New Persian literature the word has been preserved in several more or less corrupt forms: *Aržang*, *Artang*, *Arjāng*, *Arsang*, *Arhang*, *Aryang*, *Tang*, *Čang* (Klíma, *Manis Zeit*, pp. 326 and 349; Alfarić, *Les écritures*, p. 41). The drawings themselves are lost, but a number of Parthian fragments of a commentary (*wifrās*) on the *Ardahang* are known (Boyce, *Cat. Man. Script.*, p. 4 sub M 35; Henning, *Book of the Giants*, pp. 71-72).

In the later Islamic tradition Mani was not particularly remembered as founder of a religion or as the great religious personality, but pre-eminently as an artist. The image of Mani drawn by this tradition is dominated by the idea of the painter Mani. The tradition is historically well founded, partly in the Manicheans’ well-known care of, and interest in paper, writing, and illustrations, but especially in Mani’s *Ardahang*. According to Persian historical literature, the *Ardahang* was something extraordinary, carried out with a skill unheard of and under strange circumstances; and a copy is said to have still existed in Ġazna at the end of the 11th century (Abu’l-ma’ālī’s *Bayān al-adyān*, A.D. 1092; *Mīrkvānd*, 15th/16th century A.D.; cf. Kessler, *Mani*, pp. 210, 370ff., 377ff.; Haloun and Henning, op. cit., p. 210; Klíma, op. cit., pp. 325f., 348). In Ferdowsī and in Faḡr al-dīn As’ad Gorgānī’s romantic epics *Vīs o Rāmīn* (11th century), Mani, the creator of the *Aržang*, is depicted as a great painter from China (*Šāh-nāma*, ed. J. Mohl, V, pp. 472-75; text and tr. in Kessler, *Mani*, pp. 373-76; *Vīs o Rāmīn*, ed. Mīnovī, Tehran, 1935, pp. 42, 385; ed. Maḡjūb, Tehran, 1959, pp. 32, 287). His fame was such that *mānī* became a term for any painter of great renown and exceptional powers, like “a Rubens” or “a Titian.” As late as the beginning of the 20th century, when the Iranian poet Ṣaḡ’atīzāda Kermānī wrote his “Narrative about Mani the Painter” (*Dāstān-e Mānī-e naqqāš*), it is the tradition about the artist which above all determined Mani’s posthumous literary reputation (see Asmussen, *X<sup>u</sup>āstvānīft*, p. 10 with references).



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