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KEPHALAIA

KEPHALAIA, genre of literature developed by the Manichean communities in the early Sasanian empire that spread with the church across Eurasia and North Africa, primarily preserved by two large papyrus codices in Coptic translation from Egypt dating to the early fifth century CE (see COPTIC MANICHEAN TEXTS).

The *Kephalaia* (Greek and Coptic: “chapters,” “summaries,” “principal points”) are better characterised as an evolving and open-ended genre of literature than as a single book. The governing features are the formatting of text into numbered chapters each with a header (“This *kephalaion* tells about such and such”) and a formulaic opening that presents the material as the verbatim teaching of Mani himself, often in response to a question (“Once again, it happened one time while the apostle was sitting in the congregation of his disciples, a catechumen questioned him,” *vel sim.*). The earliest kephalaic material was primarily doctrinal, the format providing a suitable vehicle for the complex teachings of the community as organised by the scholastic tradition of the elect into elaborate but tersely-expressed taxonomies (e.g., “Concerning the five forms that exist in the rulers of darkness”; “Concerning the three days and the two deaths”). The utility of the genre was such that it came to incorporate a wide variety of literary styles subjected artificially to the constraints of the format: instruction, exegesis, narrative, dialogue, parable, miracle-story, and even epic traditions. Although it is probable that some authentic details of the life and teaching of Mani himself are preserved, the *Kephalaia* do not belong to his authored canon of scripture. They are

apocryphal, heavily-reworked, and came in time to incorporate other bodies of textual material beyond the oral memory of the community concerning its founder and his revelation (Pettipiece, pp. 8-9). Current scholarly research is only beginning to disentangle the redactional layers of the extant texts and attempt an archaeology of the resources preserved (Gardner, 2010, for initial comments; Pedersen, 2017, considered application of the method). The value of the Coptic sources for information regarding Iranian epic traditions (BeDuhn, 2015b), *andarz* literature and folk-tales at such an early date has not yet been realised.

The earliest evidence is a brief allusion found in a fragmentary passage of the apocalyptic text *The Sermon on the Great War* (*Manichaean Homilies*, ed. Pedersen, p. 18, 6): "I weep for the *Kephalaia*." This tragic vision of the wrath and suffering visited upon the churches is ascribed to Koustaios (Kuštai), Mani's scribe according to one of his own *Epistles* (unpublished, Berlin P. 15998, f. 13). The line is rendered as if spoken by the apostle himself, but notably without the possessive found in the previous line for one of his authentic works ("my Picture-Book"; see ARŽANG). Although the Coptic codex in which the only copy of *The Sermon on the Great War* is preserved dates to circa 400 CE, the original writing would have been composed in eastern Aramaic in Sasanian Mesopotamia during the persecutions subsequent to the apostle's martyrdom in 277 CE(?). This would locate the existence and perhaps source of the *Kephalaia* within Mani's immediate circle in the late third century or the very start of the fourth; thus during the reign of Bahrām II or his immediate successors as persecutors of the community. The early date appears confirmed by its naming (Lat. *Capitula*), together with authentic works by Mani in the *Acta Archelai* (ed. Beeson, 62, 6; see ARCHELAUS), a polemic that must be dated to circa 330-340 CE (Lieu in Vermes, pp. 6-8). Note also the *Capitula* of the Manichean bishop Faustus of Milevis, written late fourth-century in Latin in Roman North Africa and cited at length by Augustine in his *Contra Faustum* (for caution as regards dating van den Berg, 2013, pp. 20-21 and for an overview of research van Gaans). G. Wurst has argued for a parallelism between this work and the *Kephalaia* themselves (also van den Berg, 2010, pp. 181-84) as represented in the Coptic codices; but the broadly Biblical content of Faustus' book and the fact that the teaching is his own and not cited as the words of Mani makes it preferable to assign it to the *erōtapokrisis* or question-and-answer literature widespread in late antiquity. The *Kephalaia* necessarily belong to this category (Pettipiece, pp. 9-10), but they had notable features and possible parallels with Iranian and Buddhist

models (Dilley, 2015a, pp. 22-23) that mark them out as a specific, definable sub-group.

In 1929 there appeared on the Cairo antiquities market a cache of large Coptic papyrus codices, two volumes of which included the term *Kephalaia* (Coptic *n-kephalaion*) in their titles. The date of the artifacts is most probably between 380-430 CE (BeDuhn and Hodgins, 2017). The exact history of the so-called Medinet Madi (in the Egyptian Fayyum) find, its gradual publication and many problems is exceedingly complicated (see Robinson); but broadly speaking one *Kephalaia* volume is now preserved in Berlin (1Ke = *The Chapters of the Teacher*) and the other in the Chester Beatty Library in Dublin (2Ke = *The Chapters of the Wisdom of My Lord Mani*).

At first the editing and publication of the Coptic text of 1Ke (Berlin P. 15996) in the series *Manichäische Handschriften der Staatlichen Museen Berlin* with German translation proceeded rapidly, the first half completed by 1940 and edited by H. J. Polotsky (pp. 1-102) and A. Böhlig (pp. 103-244). Publication of the so-called second half by Böhlig commenced in 1966 (to p. 291), although much of the work for this had been prepared earlier; but then nothing further was made available for several decades. As a consequence, the English translation by I. Gardner in 1995 of the edited text to that point (pp. 1-295, chapter 122 completed by means of an unpublished draft provided by Funk) has become the standard means by which the work is accessed and cited in the anglophone world. This is what is commonly glossed as the *Kephalaia*, but it is misleading as it covers only part of the contents of 1Ke and none of 2Ke; nor is there reason to suppose that these Coptic codices preserve an archetypal version of the work. Funk has now completed the original series published by W. Kohlhammer of Stuttgart (1999, 2000 and 2017) to a final total of 522 pages for the Berlin codex; but these latter sections are less well-known to non-specialists nor widely available. A summary account of the codicology, with indices to the complete Coptic text and extensive addenda and corrigenda to the entirety of 1Ke from its start, is in process by Funk and projected as a final volume of *Supplementa*.

The contents of 2Ke remained largely unknown until a facsimile edition of the manuscript was made available by S. Giversen in 1986. The publication provided no transcripts, and left many codicological problems unsolved; but the opportunity to view the plates led to a series of articles with readings and discussions of short passages (Böhlig, 1989, 1992; Funk, 1990, 1997, 2002; Gardner, 2005; Gnoli; Sundermann; Tardieu, 1988, 1991). A particular interest

was the question of the relationship between 1Ke and 2Ke, noting the different titles. Gh. Gnoli and M. Tardieu argued that the latter codex might represent an eastern or Iranian tradition associated with the apostle's disciple Mār Ammō, whilst the former was associated with Mār Addā/Adimantus and the mission to the west. In 2005 Gardner and BeDuhn, later joined by Dilley, began a new project to edit 2Ke (Gardner, 2015a). An initial part has been published in 2018 (Coptic text and English translation of chapters 321-347, pp. 343-442) with three more in process to complete the edition of the Dublin codex. This on-going work has advanced the understanding of the Coptic *Kephalaia* corpus as follows.

Despite the different titles it appears that the two volumes were part of a continuous production totalling in excess of one thousand pages on papyrus. Funk (private communication) calculates that 1Ke probably concluded between chapters 205-210; the final identifiable number and header being that for 199. The first kephalaion number in 2Ke as yet read is 220, and the last one in this redaction is 347. The final quires of 1Ke and the earlier of 2Ke are poorly preserved but it is most economic to suppose that the chapter sequencing was continuous between the codices. The primary distinction is not between the two, but rather the entire massive work is composed of a series of separate 'books' so that the chapter numbers and total of 347 can only be a secondary imposition on the whole, and presumably specific to this redaction rather than archetypal of the work as a single-authored composition. The original books are apparent because each of them starts with a version of the text known as *On the Coming of the Apostle* (kephalaion 1) or some form of duplicate title or contents. The first 'book' begins at chapter 1 and gathers together scholastic teachings concerning cosmology and cosmogony; theology, theogony and demonology; human origins; time and soteriology. It is possible that this was the 'original' *Kephalaia*, and if the notion of authorship has any meaning it should be found here although a great deal of other material has been added to the core in the only comprehensive version available (i.e., 1Ke). A second 'book' begins in chapter 76 entitled *On Lord Mani: How he Journeyed*. It deals with topics that can loosely be described as community practice and ethics, although again a great many other text-units and subjects have been collected here. Redaction is very unstable and limited throughout: Some individual chapters clearly contain multiple blocks of material; introductory formulae are mostly artificial; organization according to subject, catchphrase or an overall schema is rudimentary (Gardner, 1995, pp. xix-xxiv).

In 2Ke another block of material is inserted and arranged from chapters 295 (*[On Jesus the Christ]: How his Coming to the World Occurred*) to 304, which can be dubbed the 'Jesus-book' as it collates traditions about the savior in gospel sequence from his advent to the ascension. At number 305, more than midway through 2Ke, there begins the 'Iranian *Kephalaia*-book', which contains duplicate material to chapter 1 but here the advent of the apostles is framed by an Iranian genealogy rather than the Biblical history from the antediluvian prophets to Jesus that controls the former. Iranian epic and Buddhist traditions are utilized for parallel purposes to those of the first kephalaion, where the frame was broadly Judeo-Christian, and point to an eastern cultural context for the formation and redaction of the contents that follow. This 'book,' which itself incorporates discrete sources all of a distinct Sasanian cultural and geographical setting, will prove an invaluable resource for Iranian scholarship. Here are found parallels to Manichean Middle Iranian texts previously recovered from Central Asia (BeDuhn, 2015a), as well as entirely unexpected evidence of the use made by the community of *andarz* literature and folk-tales previously known only from Middle Persian and Arabic sources of a much later date.

Thus the distinguishing features noted by scholars such as Tardieu in their first examination of pages from 2Ke made available by Giversen in 1986 are not between the two Coptic volumes in themselves, but rather between different *kephalaia*-books that have been incorporated into the collection as it is represented in the Medinet Madi codices that circulated in Egypt at around 400 CE. Finally, it is notable that around the entire corpus there is gathered introductory material provided to frame and justify the work (1Ke, pp. 1-9.10), while after the final kephalaion ends (2Ke, p. 442.6) the compilation concludes with a lengthy version of the literary cycle concerning Mani's last days (Gardner, 2015c) together with comments on the very final page to record the writing of these *Kephalaia* (unpublished, but see Funk, 1997, pp. 153-54).

Now that the overall construction of the Coptic volumes has become clear it is certain that one cannot speak of this compilation as a single composition with an author to be identified. One could suppose an original redactor, responsible for the distinct features of the genre; and this person might be sought in the first generation of disciples (see above). It is possible that the contents of that primal *Kephalaia* might be at the core of the first 'book' where there is a somewhat stronger sense of ordering manifested in actual numbers given to the earliest chapters (e.g., *The Second: On the Parable of the Tree*), but any

attempt to reconstruct this would be highly speculative and the idea itself is only an hypothesis. The identification of this person as Addā as first suggested by Tardieu is unprovable, although has been attractive to scholars (Funk, 1997, p. 154; van den Berg, 2010, pp. 208-11 for the proposal that the figure of Adimantus connects it to Faustus as his student and the latter's own *Capitula*, cf. Augustine *c. Faust.*1, 2). It is linked to the idea of the work as somehow intrinsically connected to the western mission; but the new identification of an "Iranian *Kephalaia*-book" embedded in 2Ke reopens this construction. Manichean scholarship has been enormously advanced by the rapid publication of the earlier parts of 1Ke, but this has also prejudiced the meaning given to the term. There are substantial examples of very similar types of textual material circulated by the Manichean communities in Iranian (Sundermann and e.g., Henning) and Chinese (Lieu and Mikkelsen, pp. xxxii-xxxiv); but there has been a noted reluctance to name these as *Kephalaia* due to comparison with the supposed archetype recovered in the Coptic translation of the first Medinet Madi codex (1Ke). For possible evidence of kephalaic material circulated in Coptic in other formats see the finds at Ismant el-Kharab (in the Dakhleh/Daḵla Oasis), notably T. Kellis II Copt. 1, P. Kellis II Copt. 5 and 8 (Gardner, 1996).

The publication of the *Kephalaia* has greatly influenced all research on Manicheism since its inception (e.g., major studies by Böhlig, 2013; van Lindt; Pettipiece; Woschitz). Despite the apocryphal and heavily reworked nature of the available text, most prominently from Coptic translation, it is an authentic representation of traditions first held and developed by the Manichean communities in the early Sasanian period and within the Iranian empire. As such, this is a unique source for literature, religion and society from a known context that substantially pre-dates most other available resources concerning the reigns of Šāpur I and his successors. Strictly historical data (though much stylised) is thickest in the biographical sections relating to Mani's call and the announcement of his public mission (chapter 1), his travels (76), and the appendix where community tradition records his final travels, trial and imprisonment. Other notable passages include the apostle witnessing the Tigris in flood (61), his dialogue with a Nazorean (89), his encounter with the King of Ṭurān (323), and the remarkable debate before King Šāpur that is facilitated by the courtier Kirdīr, son of Ardawān (338, see ŠKZ and discussion by Gardner, 2015b). Information on other presumed historical persons and Mazdayasnian festival or ceremony are found in chapters 322 and 326, whilst a written 'law of Zarades' (Coptic *p-nomos n-zaradēs*) is directly cited in 341

and 345 (Dilley, 2015b). The Iranian epic material with the story of Kay Ḵosrow (here as 'Chasrō the blessed') and much more may be 306; but this number is uncertain and awaits final editing. Examples of *andarz* literature and folk-tales incorporated into the tradition are prevalent in the series of chapters concerning Mani's debates with Gūndēš and other sages at the Sasanian court (327-340).

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