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MANI

MANI, the founder of the religion of Manicheism in the 3rd century CE.

As the founder of the Manichean religion, Mani did not play the same role in the beliefs of his community as that of Jesus Christ in Christianity. He was not the only-begotten son of God, the divine sacrifice for the sake of mankind, the only revealer of the gospel of truth. His position (although not his lifestyle and biography) can be compared, rather, with that of Moḥammad in Islam. But Mani was highly praised as the founder of his church, the ultimate revealer of divine gnosis, and a model of righteous behavior, compassionate philanthropy, and brave martyrdom. He was also credited with supernatural healing power, clairvoyance, the gift of levitation, and with miraculous locomotion over considerable distances.

It is certainly a later development that Mani came to be regarded as an eternal spiritual personality with a prenatal existence, and the title of the famous Greek Mani vita preserved in the *Cologne Mani Codex* (abbrev. *CMC*), namely *Peri tēs gennēs tou sōmatos autou* "About the genesis/procreation of his body," may presuppose the transcendental precedence of his spiritual nature, as does the Parthian fragment M 6032, which states that Mani "through mercy put on the earthly garment," that is, his material body. Mani's prenatal, spiritual existence is indeed to be assumed when the prophet explains to his father Pattikios that he only begot Mani's body; "another one, however, came to dwell in it" (*CMC*, p. 155; ed. Koenen and Römer, 1988, pp. 82-83; a further interpretation of Mani's "body" in the *Cologne Mani Codex* as being his church has now been revised by Koenen, 1990, pp. 19-20).

Being the central human subject of Manichean salvation history, Mani's life necessarily underwent hagiographical stylization (and, equally, became the subject of hostile anti-legends) to such a degree that one may ask whether it is possible at all to sort out the essential historical facts from the legendary tradition. That is possible indeed, mainly because the development of the hagiographic stylization can sometimes be observed. Although it existed from the beginning as a self-stylization of the Apostle of Light, it became a perfect system only after Mani's death. One can state as a rough rule: the older a hagiographic tradition on Mani's life is, the greater is the chance that it also contains simple historical facts. It is the task of a critical analysis of our sources to try to establish a chronology (at least a relative one) of the sources and to find criteria for the historical or the legendary character of traditional dates.

Another precondition for a qualified evaluation of sources with a claim to historicity is to take into consideration their literary genre and consequently their purpose. It is also to be noticed that different periods of Mani's life—his youth, his missionary work, and his passion—underwent hagiographic stylization in different ways and to varying extents. A fourth factor, the role of the individual author and his rendering of a given piece of tradition, cannot properly be judged on the strength of the fragmentary remains of the once enormous Manichean literature.

For a distinction between legendary and historical traditions, some tentative criteria have been proposed (Sundermann, 1987, pp. 42-79 = 2001, pp. 358-95). Their probative force is sometimes, however, no more than a plausible option. Their weight is generally greater in the effort to identify legendary components of the prophet's vita than in providing the proof of historical facts. In any case, the historicity of Mani as a human being has obviously never been challenged.

SOURCES ON THE LIFE OF MANI

A survey of the sources, both Manichean and non-Manichean, with summaries, is given in Sundermann (1986a, pp. 48-64 = 2001, pp. 225-41).

Mani's own works. (1) *Šābuhragān*: early missionary work in his paternal community, permanently supported by his Twin Spirit (on which, see below); journeys in Mesopotamia (Sundermann, 1981, pp. 91-98; cf. idem, 1986a, pp. 55, 83 = 2001, pp. 232, 260). (2) Quotation of the *Šābuhragān* in Biruni's *Āṯār al-*

bāqia ʿan al-qorun al-ḵālia concerning Mani's vocation (Sundermann, 1986a, p. 63 = 2001, p. 240). (3) Biographical dates in Mani's *Letters*: (lost) Coptic corpus of letters by Mani and his disciples (Schmidt and Polotsky, 1933, pp. 23-24; cf. Sundermann, 1986a, p. 54 = 2001, p. 231). (4) Still unpublished Middle Persian fragments of Mani's (?) letters (Sundermann, 1986a, pp. 56, 85-86 = 2001, pp. 233, 262-63; an edition is forthcoming).

Words or works by Mani are abundantly attested in his disciples' traditions. It is hard to tell when such an attribution is justified. There is a good chance of finding genuine quotations of great historical importance in the *Cologne Mani Codex*, e.g., Mani's Sysygos calling him in his 25th year of life, when King Ardašir conquered Hatra and King Šābuhr I took the "greatest diadem" (Römer, 1990, pp. 82-89; Sundermann, 1986a, p. 49 = 2001, p. 226).

Works of Mani's disciples of the first generation. The *Cologne Mani Codex* (beginning of the 4th century) frequently refers to authorities like Abiēsous, Anā, Baraiēs, Innaios, Koustaios, Timotheos, or to an anonymous group of teachers who must have belonged to the first generation of Mani's disciples. The existing fragment of the *Codex* is our main source on the youth of the prophet up to his vocation to spread his gospel all over the world, when he had reached his 25th year, and it is an important source on his first missionary journeys, surely in the 240s CE. According to its title (see above) "About the genesis/procreation of his body," the whole book cannot have contained much more information. Important points are: the introduction of Mani into the community of (Elkhasaite) baptists in his fourth year of life, repeated visions and interventions of angels and "holy powers," mention of the prophet Elkhasaios, the revelation by the Twin Spirit of the whole gnosis in Mani's 25th year, temptation by the baptist presbyter Sitaios (Sita), Mani and his father Pattikios taken to court in their Elkhasaite community, Mani's apology. He is maltreated, but now receives the command of the Twin Spirit to part from the paternal community and teach the world. Mani is active in Ctesiphon, Nasēr, *Ganzak, Pharat (beginning of his journey to India?), and in other remote places, where he converts, among others, an anonymous king. He meets a hairy hermit (see Koenen and Römer, 1988; Sundermann, 1986a, pp. 49-51 = 2001, pp. 226-28).

The lost, so-called Coptic *Church History* may have been of similar character, because it mentioned, as did the *Cologne Mani Codex*, the authorities who supplied and sanctioned pieces of tradition (Schmidt and Polotsky, 1933, p. 27; Sundermann, 1986a, pp. 88-89 = 2001, pp. 265-66). The work described Mani's

last days in prison and then reported on the persecution of Manicheism and its spread after Mani's death. (For a short description, see Schmidt and Polotsky, 1933, pp. 27-28; cf. Sundermann, 1986a, p. 54 = 2001, p. 231.) A most precious piece of firsthand tradition from a disciple is the Middle Persian fragment M 3, the well-informed and trustworthy eyewitness report of Nūḥzādag, Mani's interpreter, about his master's fatal audience at the court of King Wahrām (see BAHRĀM), which led to Mani's arrest (see Henning, 1942, pp. 949-53 = 1977, II, pp. 89-93).

Later Manichean works. The *Apomnēmoneumata* (Memoirs, Copt. *prpmeue*) are perhaps the oldest specimens of this kind of literature, because they are already quoted in the Coptic and Parthian versions of the hagiographical homilies (Sundermann, 1988, p. 226 = 2001, p. 96). They transmit the most detailed and most precise dates of Mani's passion, including the time of his death (Polotsky, 1934, p. 60.2-16; p. 45.19-22; Andreas and Henning, 1934, pp. 861.13-862.1 = Henning, 1977, I, pp. 288-89). But the possibility that at least some of those dates are fixed by the ritual calendar of the Manichean Lenten month and the Bema festival has to be taken into consideration (Sundermann, 1988, pp. 227-31 = 2001, pp. 97-101).

Hagiographical homilies are fragmentarily preserved in Middle Persian, Parthian, Sogdian, Old Turkish(?), and Coptic. They may have dealt with the whole of Mani's life and with events following his end. They are related in content and may all go back to a lost Aramaic original text, which may have been composed about or even before 300 CE (Sundermann, 1986b, pp. 309-15 = 2001, pp. 345-51). Best preserved is the Parthian version (extending from a mention of Elkhasaios and the Baptists to Mani's passion and death). The Middle Persian text is restricted to the so-called missionary history, i.e., the first journeys of Mani and his disciples in and beyond Iran. The Sogdian text records mainly the same events in greater detail (Sundermann, 1981, pp. 34-54). An Old Turkish fragment offers details of the conversion of Havzā, the king of Waruzān (Zieme, 1975, pp. 50-52). The Coptic version, namely the third homily, "The part of the story about the crucifixion," is devoted to Mani's passion and following events (Polotsky, 1934, pp. 42-85).

Occasional information on Mani's life can be gained from the (Coptic) *Kephalaia*,which claim to be Mani's own oral instructions and admonitions (Polotsky and Böhlig, 1940; Böhlig, 1966; Funk, 1999; idem, 2000; Engl. tr. up to chap. 122, Gardner, 1995); from Manichean tales and parables (Sundermann, 1986a, pp. 79-81 = 2001, pp. 256-58); and from hymns and psalms (Allberry,

1938; cf. Sundermann, 1986a, pp. 52-53 = 2001, pp. 229-30; Andreas and Henning, 1934, pp. 862-65 = Henning, 1977, I, pp. 289-92). Some of these pieces of information are of considerable importance, e.g., the chronology of Mani's birth and vocations and a survey of his missionary activities under King Šābuhr I (Polotsky and Böhlig, 1940, pp. 9, 11–16, 31).

The Chinese *Compendium of the Doctrines and Styles of the Teaching of Mani, the Buddha of Light*, composed (rather than just translated) in 731 by *Mihr-Ohrmezd (Haloun and Henning, 1952, p. 188), contains a highly legendary Mani vita (Haloun and Henning, 1952, pp. 189-94; cf. Sundermann, 1986a, pp. 48-49 = 2001, pp. 25-26). The most important part of it is the exact, although wrongly calculated, dates of Mani's birth and death which Henning corrected to 14 April (8 Nisannu) 216 and 2 March (4 Ādār) 274 (Haloun and Henning, 1952, pp. 190, 197-201).

Non-Manichean sources. Arabic and New Persian Islamic sources are collected in Taqizadeh and Širāzi, 1956-57. (A brief survey is given in Sundermann, 1986a, pp. 62-64 = 2001, pp. 239-41, with reference to Puech, 1949, pp. 18-26.) Most important is the information in Arabic afforded by two Muslim scholars: the Mani vita given by Ebn al-Nadim (see FEHREST) and the biographical notes by Biruni.

Ebn al-Nadim compiled in his *Fehrest al-ʿolum* (ca. 987-88) a biography of the prophet (see FEHREST iii = Sundermann, 2001, pp. 557-65). His parents are given an Arsacid affiliation; to his father is ascribed a conversion which caused him to join the baptismal community of the *moḡtasela* in southern Mesopotamia; to his mother is ascribed the miraculous birth of the future prophet. Mani is later introduced into the community of the baptists and remains a member until his 25th year. After his 12th year the angel *al-Taum* (his twin spirit) reveals to him the secrets of the divine gnosis and of his future mission. *Al-Taum* appears again after Mani's 24th year and commands him to teach the world. For forty years Mani travels the Orient, where his greatest success is the promised conversion of King Šābuhr I, who henceforth protects the missionary activities of the Manicheans, but according to some he finally arrests the prophet. Mani's death occurs under King Wahrām I. Sisinnios becomes his successor. There is a description of Mani's physical defects and of how he died (text: *Fehrest,* ed. Flügel, 1871-72, pp. 327-28, 334-35; ed. Tajaddod, 1971, pp. 391-92, 397-98; tr. Dodge, 1970, pp. 773-76, 791-94; ed. and tr. Flügel, 1862, pp. 49-52, 69-71, 83-85, 99-101).

Biruni offers three important notes on Mani's life in his *Āṯār al-bāqia* (ca. 1000 CE): (1) From the *Šābuhragān*, "The coming of the prophet": Mani was born in 527 Sel. (Seleucid lunar year; 216/217 CE); he received his first revelation in 539 Sel. (228/229 CE; ed. Sachau, 1923, p. 118, 12-19; tr. Sachau, 1879, p. 121). (2) From the *Šābuhragān*: Mani's early career is described as the climax of an apostolic succession; from Mani's *Gospel*: he claims to be Christ's Paraclete (ed. Sachau, 1923, p. 207.13-19; tr. Sachau, 1879, pp. 189-90). (3) From the *Šābuhragān*: Mani was born in 527 Sel. in Mardinu (southern Mesopotamia); he received his revelation in 539 Sel. Manicheism spread under the first Sasanian kings. Mani was killed under Wahrām I, and his followers were persecuted. According to Jabrāʾil b. Nuḥ, however, Mani fell into disfavor because of a failed attempt to cure one of the king's relatives. He died in prison (ed. Sachau, 1923, pp. 208.7–209.10: tr. Sachau, 1879, pp., 190-92).

Less informative and even maliciously misleading are Christian sources on Mani's life—first of all the *Acta Archelai* of Hegemonius (ed. Beeson, 1906; tr. Vermes, 2001; see ARCHELAUS), composed between 330 and 348, and subsequently the works of many other authors who drew on this artful anti-legend (cf. Puech, 1949, pp. 17-19, 99-100). Yet the *Acta* are not entirely devoid of merit as a historical source, because it reflects genuine Manichean traditions in its own distorting way (Puech, 1949, pp. 17, 25-26, 110, n. 77; Sundermann, 1987, pp. 90-91 = 2001, pp. 406-7; Lieu, 1988, pp. 69-88). An additional, later anti-legendary motif is the assertion that Mani first was a frustrated Christian priest, who then lapsed and created his worldwide heresy (Henning, 1936, pp. 84-85 = idem, 1977, I, pp. 397-98; Klein, 1997, pp. 201-16; accepted as historical by Merkelbach, 1986a, p. 7).

THE NAME "MANI"

An almost exhaustive collection of the onomastic forms of the prophet's name is given in Klíma (1962, pp. 260-70). Mani's name is attested in Manichean Middle Persian, Parthian, Sogdian, and Old Turkish texts as (mʾ)r(y)) mʾny, also with extensions at the end of the word. (See Boyce, 1977, p. 56; Gharib, 1995, p. 207; Zieme, 1975, p. 81; and *Drevnetyurkskiĭ slovar'*, 1969, p. 336.) In Zoroastrian Middle Persian the spellings are mʾnʾ and mʾnyy (*Dēnkard,* ed. Madan, pp. 216.19; 216.22 and subsequently), in Pāzand *mānāe* (*Škand gumānīg wizār*, ed. Jâmâsp-Ãsânâ and West, 1887, p. 167 and subsequently), in Zoroastrian Sanskrit (ibid.) *māneyasya* (genitive, with long *e*). The New Persian spelling is mʾny; Arabic has m(ʾ)ny (Tubach and Zakeri, 2001, p. 278), Chinese *mo-ni* (Schmidt-Glintzer, 1987, p. 147). The main Western forms are Greek

Manēs, Greek (and Coptic) *Man(n)ichaios* (Tubach and Zakeri, 2001, pp. 274, 281; *Dictionary of Manichaean Texts* [henceforth *Dict.*], p. 184), Latin *Manes* (and *Manis*? *Dict.,* p. 206), *Manichaeus* (*Acta Archelai*, ed. Vermes, p. 35, n. 2), and *Mannicheus* (*Dict.,* p. 206). Manes became the traditional European form of the name (just as Zoroaster beside Zarathuštra) and is still used sporadically as a given name.

All these forms go back to a name in Mani's native Aramaic language which must have been correctly rendered by the Syriac spelling *mny* (Tubach and Zakeri, 2001, p. 277; also mʾny), i.e., *Mānī* or *Mānē,* depending on whether the forms in other languages point to an *ī* or *ē* in the second syllable.

In favor of *Mānē,* preferred now by François de Blois (personal communication; he writes Manes), one might adduce Greek *Manēs* and Latin *Manes.* But the Latin form evidently imitated the Greek spelling; and, as for the Greek form, the itacistic pronunciation (i.e., tending to /i/) of the letter *ēta* prevailed in the 3rd century CE and later (E. Schwyzer, *Griechische Grammatik,* Munich, 1939, p. 186). Besides, the extended forms *Manichaios*, etc. have an *i,* not an *ē.* In favor of *Mānī* is Chinese *Moni*, but the possibility that its final vowel was influenced by Buddhist Sanskrit *maṇi* "jewel"—the catchword of the most popular Mantra *om maṇi padme hūm*—must not be disregarded. In favor of *Mānē* are the late Sanskrit form **māneya-* and Pāzand *mānāe*, if they stand for **mānai*, which might have become *mānē.* Syriac *mny* allows both readings (however. its vocalization with *Ḥb̰āṣā,* the vowel sign for *i*, demands *Mānī;* cf. Klíma, 1962, p. 266).

De Blois, too, admits that the testimonies in Syriac, Arabic, and New Persian are contradictory and partly in need of interpretation. His arguments will be given in the Arabic section of the *Dictionary of Manichaean Texts* and will not be anticipated here.

Three etymologies of the name Mani are worth mentioning. One is that it belongs to a proper name *Mānēs,* mainly given to slaves, which is frequently attested in Asia Minor (see Ph. Huyse, *Iranische Namen in den griechischen Dokumenten Ägyptens*, Iranisches Personennamenbuch V, 6a, Vienna, 1990, pp. 46-48). O. Klíma assumed that the word, as a slave's name, derived from Old Iranian **māniÁa*, which denoted any kind of serving manpower in a household (Klíma, 1966, p. 138). This Iranian component, Klíma argued, explains why Mani, himself a born slave according to the *Acta Archelai,* later bore the same name. But Klíma had to admit that "in the Middle Iranian

vocabulary we find no *mānī* for the slave as a generic term" (Klíma, 1966, p. 140).

Another option is to start with the extended Greek form *Manichaios*, etc. (reproduced in Middle Persian as *m'ny'xyws*, for *m'nyxyws*; Henning, 1937, p. 19 = 1977, I, p. 433). This is what Schaeder did (1927, p. 88, n. 1), followed by many others (Tubach and Zakeri, 2001, p. 281, n. 38). He explained the extended form as a rendering of Aramaic *Mānī ḥayyā* "the living Mani," which leaves *Mānī* unexplained. Adam (1969, p. 76, n. 4) regarded *Mānī* as belonging to Aramaic *mānā* "vessel" and reconstructed *mānā dḥayyē* or *mānā ḥayyā* as "living vessel," meaning embodiment of the Holy Spirit, an honorific title rather than a proper name. The *ī* of *Mānī* remained unexplained.

A problem with both these explanations is, as Tubach and Zakeri justly underlined, the rendering of an Aramaic *ḥ* by Greek *chi* (the letter for /x/ or /kh/). They doubt any connection with the Aramaic words "life" or "living" and regard *Manichaios* as representing **Mānīxai*, the short form of an unknown extended name. But their statement that Aramaic *ḥ* was not rendered by Greek *chi*, even if it is true of Greek Manichean texts, may sometimes be contradicted by other sources, such as the *Septuaginta* (*Kheiram* from *ḥyrm*, *Kharran* from *ḥrn*, *Khōrēb* from *ḥrb*, etc.), and by the Greek of the New Testament (F. Blass, A. Debrunner, and F. Rehkopf, *Grammatik des neutestamentlichen Griechisch*, 16th ed., Göttingen, 1984, sec. 39, p. 31 with n. 4; all these examples were given to me by Desmond Durkin-Meisterernst).

As a third etymology, not only Tubach and Zakeri's **Mānīxai* but also the shorter *Mānī* might be regarded as one of several Manichean hypochoristic (?) abbreviations, such as *Addā*, *Ammō*, *Habzā*, *Ḥannī* (or *Ḥannai*?), *Quštai*, *Taδī* (or *Taδai*?), *Uzzī*, *Zakū* (see Sundermann, 1994 [1996], pp. 245-46 = 2001, pp. 486-87). Beside *Mānī*, a short form **Mānai* might be considered, and this might have resulted in *Mānē*. In that case *Mānī* and *Mānē* would both be acceptable forms.

If "Mani" is the short form of a title *Manichaios* (or something similar), the quest for his real given name imposes itself. The admittedly unreliable *Acta Archelai* has it that Mani's real name was *Curbic(i)us* or *Corbicius*, and this piece of information was later repeated by other polemicists (Tubach and Zakeri, 2001, p. 284). The name was explained by Puech (1949, p. 25) as a rendering of the Middle Persian and Parthian noun *kirbakkar* "the pious one" (also to be restored in inscriptional literature; see Ph. Gignoux, *Noms propres*

sassanides en Moyen-Perse épigraphique, Iranisches Personennamenbuch II, 2, Vienna, 1986, p. 105). In Middle Iranian Manichean texts it is used as a common epithet of Mani. Tubach and Zakeri's proposal, however, to derive *Curbic(i)us*, etc. from Parthian (or Middle Persian) *kirbag* "good, pious" fits the Latin form even better than *kirbakkar* (Tubach and Zakeri, 2001, pp. 285-86).

A weighty argument against these considerations, however, is the fact that Mani as a proper name need not have been an uncommon one. In the primitive community there was also an abbot Mani (Sogdian mʾny-stʾnδʾrʾk, in Parthian called dbyr "writer"; Sundermann, 1981, p. 36, l. 347, with n. 11). Therefore, the most likely solution seems to be to start from a hypocoristic proper name *Mānī*, given to the prophet but also to other persons. In Mani's case the name was upgraded by adding *ḥayyā* "living," which confirms Schaeder's old etymology and the form *Mānī* rather than Mānē.

Not surprisingly, Mani's names became the object of uplifting transformation (Greek, Coptic *Mannichaios*, Latin *Mannichaeus*, i.e., *Mannam fundens* "pouring out Manna"; Tubach and Zakeri, 2001, pp. 274-75) and, in Christian anti-Manichean polemics, denigrating distortions (Greek *maneis* "madman," Syriac *mānā dbīštā* "vessel (!) of evil," *mānāw dbīšā* "vessel of the evil one"; Tubach and Zakeri, 2001, pp. 273, 276-77).

MANI'S LIFE

Modern descriptions of Mani's life (a selection). Information about pertinent studies up to the end of the 19th century can be found in Kessler, *Mani und die Manichäer* (1903). The two classical biographies are part of H. J. Polotsky's concise "Manichäismus" (1935) and of H.-Ch. Puech's well documented *Le Manichéisme son fondateur sa doctrine* (1949). Although both works were written before the progress in Manichean studies made since the 1970s, their main results remain the underlying ground of further research work. G. Widengren's *Mani und der Manichäismus* (1961) underlines the Iranian background of Mani's personality and doctrine; O. Klíma's *Manis Zeit und Leben* (1962) describes the prophet's life within the frame of the social history of the early Sasanian Iran. Another long biography of Mani is L. J. R. Ort's *Mani. A Religio-Historical Description of his Personality,* published in 1967, i.e. shortly before the first description in 1970 of the *Cologne Mani Codex.* This misfortune is not the only reason for the almost complete oblivion the work has suffered. It largely consists of summaries of earlier studies; its re-edition of Iranian source texts suffers from insufficient familiarity with Iranian

languages (see Mary Boyce's review in *JRAS*, 1968, pp. 82-84); and its results are mainly the interpretation of well-known facts in the light of C. J. Bleeker's criteria of phenomenology. The biographies that take into consideration the results of research work since the discovery of the *Cologne Mani Codex* are to be found in K. Rudolph's *Mani* (1972), F. Decret's *Mani et la tradition manichéenne* (1974), J. Ries' *Mani et le Manichéisme* (1977), A. Böhlig's and J. P. Asmussen's *Der Manichäismus* (1980), M. Tardieu's *Le Manichéisme* (1981), and R. Merkelbach's *Mani und sein Religionssystem* (1986). Mani's relations with the Sasanian kings are described in detail and with due regard to the Iranian sources in Hutter's *Mani und die Sasaniden. Der iranisch-gnostische Synkretismus einer Weltreligion* (1988, pp. 13-31). A complete Italian translation of sources on Mani's life and the history of his church, along with a study of Mani's vita, appeared in 2003 under the title *Il Manicheismo I. Mani e il Manicheismo,* ed. Gh. Gnoli.

Legendary elements. Legendary elements of Mani's vita may be sheer inventions. They are more often exalting stylizations of historical events.

More than any other part of Mani's life, the story of his youth is filled with legendary motifs. That could already be observed in the brief report given in the *Fehrest* (ed. Flügel, 1862, pp. 50, 9-16; 84). It is elaborated in the *Cologne Mani Codex.* The child is guided and protected by heavenly spirits and powers, mainly his Twin Spirit, who is called his "pair" or "twin" ([Syriac *tāmā*], Greek *syzygos*, Coptic *saïš,* Middle Persian *nar-jamīg* and *jamīg,* Parthian *yamag* [*rōšn*], etc.; on these words, see de Blois, 2003, pp. 7-16). The Twin Spirit reveals to him the secrets of his divine message and finally commissions him to teach the world. The child is provided with the gift of clairvoyance and the ability to listen to the voices of suffering plants, and he behaves like an elect member of his future church.

The intensive hagiographical formation of Mani's youth is not a peculiarity of the *Cologne Mani Codex.* In the later (8th century) *Compendium of the Doctrines and Styles of the Teaching of Mani, the Buddha of Light*, it led to an assimilation to the Buddha legend (e.g., miraculous prenatal omens, being born as a son of a king in a royal palace, being born through the chest of his mother; see Haloun and Henning, 1952, pp. 189-93; Figure 1).

The description of Mani's subsequent period of life, which includes his work as a missionary and a teacher, his writing of books and epistles, organizing his church, and being the confidante of kings and noblemen, i.e., the time from ca.

240 to 274/77, does not lack hagiographical events and stylizations either, but it contains more elements with a claim to historicity. Regularly, the miraculous conversions achieved by Mani and, in particular, the conversions of high-ranking dignitaries or the gaining of their support are hagiographically stylized. Thus the conversion of the Turān-šāh is accompanied and accomplished by a spectacular levitation (Sundermann, 1981, pp. 19-22; Skjaervø, 1994, pp. 244-48). The Mēšun xwadāy (Lord of Mesene) Mihr-šāh is given insight into the grandeur of Mani's paradise in a hypnotic vision (Sundermann, 1981, pp. 101-3). Mani's most important missionary success, without doubt, was the granting of permission to preach his gospel freely in the realm of Šābuhr I. This is a fact. and as such it is described without embellishment in a Parthian text (Sundermann, 1981, pp. 106-7). However, the measures of Mani's success were later extended by legend. In the report given in Ebn al-Nadim's *Fehrest,* the king, awed by the visible signs of the prophet's charisma, ceases to be a mortal enemy, becomes his supporter, and promises to convert later (Sundermann, 1986a, p. 63 = 2001, p. 240). Biruni records the tradition in his *Āṯār* that Mani converted the king by way of a levitation (Sundermann, 1986a, p. 64 = 2001, p. 241; on the increase of legendary elements in this story, see Sundermann, 1987, pp. 79-81 = 2001, pp. 395-97). In the case of the conversion of the king's brother Mihr-šāh, it cannot be ruled out that the whole story is completely fictitious (Sundermann, 1987, pp. 61-63 = 2001, pp. 377-79).

Another often-mentioned miraculous power of Mani's is his ability to move supernaturally, i.e., to appear in a far distant place wherever and whenever his disciples have encountered trouble and need his help. Thus Mani appears at the watch-post on the frontier of *Xwarāsān*, i.e., Central Asia, and teaches Mār Ammō a passage from his *Treasure of theLiving* which legitimates Ammō in the eyes of the protective frontier spirit and allows him to do his work in her region (Sundermann, 1986a, pp. 55, 57 = 2001, pp. 232, 234). Another miraculous appearance seems to happen in the legend of the conversion of the king of *Waruzān* (Sundermann, 1986a, p. 56 = 2001, p. 233). Mār Addā is helped by the appearance of Mani at the court of Palmyra, where he heals Nafšā, the queen's sister, from an illness and converts many. Mani appears a second time and explains a prophetic dream to Addā (Sundermann, 1986a, p. 60 = 2001, p. 237). The *Cologne Mani Codex* confirms the Iranian legends about Mani's miraculous locomotion (*CMC,* pp. 126, 2-129; ed. Koenen and Römer, pp. 90-93; Römer, 1990, pp. 77-91).

Mani himself, as the legends of his youth best show, lived in a world of continuous, supernatural, protective interventions and visions, of exceptional clairvoyance and enlightening instructions. The Twin Spirit remained his faithful companion even after he had received his second great revelation (*Šābuhragān*, ed. Andreas and Henning, 1933, pp. 307-8, on which see Sundermann, 1981, pp. 91-94). Mani was given visions revealing the fate of deceased persons (Sundermann, 1986a, p. 58 = 2001, p. 235). His canonical works were, with the exception of the *Letters*, inspired by several deities (*Kephalaia* I, fasc. 13/14, 1999, ed. Funk, pp. 354-55). Mani, the "Doctor from Babel," claimed not only to cure the spiritual ailments of mankind but also their bodily diseases (it is certainly an exaggeration to explain Mani's claim to medical competence as nothing but a metaphorical image for his soul-saving work, as Oerter, 1985, pp. 219-23, proposed). This may have been achieved partly by natural means, and Mani might have obtained genuine medical instruction, but he also claimed to have cured many servants of King Wahrām I "who were on the point of death" (Henning, 1942, pp. 950, 951-52), which certainly implies supernatural healing power.

The last part of Mani's life, his passion and death, is the best documented and least miraculously elevated one. Not even Mani's failure to cure a relative of the king and its fatal consequences are withheld (Biruni, following Jabrāʾil b. Nuḥ; see Sundermann, 1986a, p. 64 = 2001, p. 241). Its mythical part is a postmortem event, the glorious ascension of the prophet to the Realm of Light according to the eyewitness report of Uzzī (Sundermann, 1986a, p. 57 = 2001, p. 234).

It is not impossible, however, that the chronology of Mani's passion from his arrest in Bēlābād to the day of his death is based on the timetable of a pre-Manichean, Mesopotamian ritual calendar, as it was still practiced in Islamic times among the pagan Ḥarrānians (Sundermann, 1988, pp. 225-31 = 2001, pp. 95-102).

It must have been some time after Mani's death that his life came to be arranged in equal sections of twelve years, the sum total of his years being sixty. Henning uncovered the traces of this dodecadic system and underlined its legendary character; its "figures are no more than approximate values at best" (Henning, 1957, p. 119 = 1977, II, p. 518). It must be objected, however, that a dodecadic partition covering Mani's whole life is nowhere attested in the early, primary sources, and what is attested comes from the late and secondary sources of Ebn al-Nadim's *Fehrest* (first revelation of the Twin Spirit

when Mani was 12 years old, second revelation when he was 24, no mention of his death at sixty) and Biruni's *Chronology* (revelation of the Twin Spirit when Mani was 13 years old!). (On these sources see Sundermann, 1986a, p. 63 = 2001, p. 240.) The question whether both revelations are already presupposed in the *Cologne Mani Codex* is disputed (pro: Merkelbach, Tardieu, now also Henrichs and Koenen; contra: Sundermann; see Sundermann, 1986c, pp. 205-14 = 2001, pp. 83-93, esp. 2001, p. 93). Koenen's and Tardieu's propositions of a third dodecadic period (240-52) are doubtful (Koenen, 1971, p. 249, n. 3; Tardieu, 1998, p. 173; cf. Sundermann, 1987, p. 49 = 2001, p. 365). The dodecadic stylization of Mani's life was evidently an incomplete process. Its raison d'être may have been historical dates such as the beginning of his world mission when Mani was twenty-four years old.

It would certainly be over-simplistic to delete the legendary part from Mani's life. It has its rational historical function as an expression of his community's belief (as of the prophet's own belief) in Mani's superhuman role as the charismatic revealer of gnosis, the great healer of all kinds of diseases, and the merciful advocate for all sorts of living beings. In any case, belief in the miracles of Mani's life was not undisputed. Baraies the apologist defended the credibility of Mani's visions, and Biruni knew about Manicheans who held that Mani could not work miracles (Sundermann, 1987, pp. 81-84 = 2001, pp. 397-400).

Childhood and youth (see Ries, 1980, pp. 138-43; Tubach, 1993, pp. 119-38). Mani was born, according to Biruni, who quoted the prophet's *Šābuhragān,* in 527 Sel., i.e., 216/7 CE, in the (not yet localized) village of Mardīnū "on the upper canal of Kūṯā" (Sundermann, 1986a, pp. 63-64 = 2001, pp. 240-41), i.e., at a canal connecting the Euphrates and the Tigris south of the capital Seleucia-Ctesiphon. There is no reason to doubt the date. The place name, however, cannot be confirmed, and Theodore bar Kōnai has ʾbrwmyʾ "Aḇrūmyā" instead (Henning, 1942, p. 947, n. 2 = 1977, II, p. 87), which was identified with Arabic Afruniya (Tubach, 1993, p. 128). The *Fehrest* (ed. Flügel 1862, p. 49, 4) says that Mani was from ḥwḥy (etc.), and Henning (following Schaeder) argued from this that Mani's birthplace was in fact Gaukhay (Arabic Jawḵā) in Bēth Dərāyē, east of Seleucia-Ctesiphon. A heavily mutilated Parthian fragment, not known to Henning, mentions a "shepherd of Gaukhay" (Sundermann, 1981, p. 71). If Mani was meant, this might confirm Henning's assumption. But what about the other place names mentioned by Biruni and Theodore bar Kōnai? A plausible solution of the problem is suggested by Tubach. Mani's place of birth

and his home country are not identical: he was born in Mardinu near Seleucia-Ctesiphon but was then taken by his father to the baptists of Gaukhay/Aḇrūmyā, where he grew up (Tubach, 1993, pp. 130-31).

The precise date of Mani's birth came to light surprisingly and far away from Mesopotamia, in the Chinese *Compendium of the Doctrines and Styles of the Teaching of Mani, the Buddha of Light*, as the 8th day of the second (Chinese) month (i.e., 12 March) of the 13th year of the period *Jianan* of emperor Xian, i.e. CE 208 (Haloun and Henning, 1952, pp. 190-91; cf. Sundermann, 1986a, pp. 48-49 = 2001, pp. 225-26). The evidently wrong year was corrected by Henning to 216 (Haloun and Henning, 1952, pp. 197-98), and the date of the month and day were explained as the 8th of Nisān in Mani's Aramaic calendar, i.e., 14 April 216 (Haloun and Henning, 1952, p. 200). That is convincing, but on the other hand Puech pointed out that, according to Pelliot, the 8th day of the second month Chinese style is also celebrated as the Buddha's birthday in some Chinese sources (Puech, 1949, p. 115). Accordingly, the possibility of a local assimilation of Mani's birthday to that of the Buddha should not be disregarded.

According to the *Fehrest,* Mani was of Arsacid stock on both his father's and his mother's sides, at least if the readings *al-ḥaskāniya* (Mani's father) and *al-asʿāniya* (Mani's mother) are corrected to *al-aškāniya* and *al-ašḡāniya* (ed. Flügel, 1862, p. 49, ll. 2 and 3) respectively. The forefathers of Mani's father are said to have been from Hamadan and so perhaps of Iranian origin (ed. Flügel, 1862, p. 49, 5-6). The Chinese *Compendium,* which makes the father a local king, maintains that his mother was from the house *Jinsajian,* explained by Henning as the Armenian Arsacid family of *Kamsarakan* (Henning, 1943, p. 52, n. 4 = 1977, II, p. 115). Is that fact, or fiction, or both? The historicity of this tradition is assumed by most, but the possibility that Mani's noble Arsacid background is legendary cannot be ruled out (cf. Scheftelowitz, 1933, pp. 403-4). In any case, it is characteristic that Mani took pride in his origin from time-honored Babel, but never claimed affiliation to the Iranian upper class.

The names of Mani's father and mother are attested in many forms. It is impossible to reconstruct definitely the real name of his mother (undecided, Klíma, 1962, pp. 281-84; the most likely variant is *Maryam*; cf. Henning, 1943, p. 52, n. 4 = 1977, II, p. 115; and Tubach, 1993, p. 124, n. 19). His father's name is attested in many different spellings (see Klíma, 1962, pp. 270-74), to which can be added *Pattikios* of the *Cologne Mani Codex* and Sogdian *ptty*; all point to *Pattī*, which looks like an Aramaic abbreviated form. In the *Fehrest* (ed. Flügel

1862, p. 49, 1), the name, written *fttq* "Futtaq" is followed by *Bābak*, which is either a Persian proper name or the Persian word for "daddy." The latter might offer a further argument for the reasonable assumption that there was more than one *Pattī* in Mani's environment (see Sundermann, 1981, p. 56, n. 4).

While Mani's mother plays a totally shadowy or legendary role in Manichean hagiography, his father's part is more concrete. To him is ascribed a vision which converted him to the ethical rules of the later Manichean *electi* and led him to join the baptist sect of the *Moḡtasela* in Dastumaisān in southern Mesopotamia (*Fehrest*, ed. Flügel, 1862, pp. 49.7–50.5, 83). According to another variant of the story, however, he must have already been a follower of the baptists for quite some time, because he took his child to where his relatives (*qrby*) and fellow-believers were living (*Fehrest*, ed. Flügel, 1862, pp. 50, 8-9; 84). According to the *Cologne Mani Codex*, our main source on Mani's childhood and youth, this must have happened when Mani had reached his fourth year (*CMC*, p. 11; Koenen and Römer, 1988, pp. 6-7).

We owe the main information of historical character to the largely legendary *Cologne Mani Codex,* i.e., that Mani grew up in a Jewish Christian baptist community (called *al-Moḡtasela* in the *Fehrest*) which regarded Elkhasaios (*'lk̲syj, *Alkhasaios* in the *CMC*) as their prophet (cf. de Blois, 1995, pp. 53-56). Not much about the beliefs and rules of this particular Elkhasaite sect is known to us, and part of what the *Cologne Mani Codex* ascribes to Elkhasaios and his followers may have been biased by the Manichean tendency to approximate the image of Elkhasaios as much as possible to that of Mani (Henrichs and Koenen, 1970, pp. 154-55). In any case, the Elkhasaite character of Mani's paternal community is safely established (see, e.g., with earlier literature, Merkelbach, 1988, pp. 105-33; differently, G. P. Luttikhuizen, *The Revelation of Elchasai,* Tübingen, 1985). The importance of this piece of information for the understanding of the genesis of the Manichean system cannot be overestimated. It shows that Mani was educated in a Jewish-Christian sect and not in a community of Mandaic character which had undergone influence from the Zoroastrian side (see MANDAEANS). Unfortunately, what neither the *Cologne Mani Codex* nor any other source discloses is how Mani acquired his early knowledge of the other religions and confessions of his world, of the theology of Saint Paul, the doctrines of the Gnostic systems, and the contemporary teachings of the Zoroastrians. This remains one of the great enigmas of the prophet's career. Instead, the *Cologne*

Mani Codex tells us that Mani received his wisdom through the revelations of his Twin Spirit, but that for good reasons he was hesitant to communicate it to the baptists and to refute their errors. Once he did, he had to suffer the suppressive measures of those whom he could not convince. He and his father were taken to task, and Mani had to vindicate himself before a synod of the presbyters (*CMC,* pp. 79, 13–93, 23; ed. Koenen and Römer, 1988, pp. 54-65). Since Mani did not give in, the outcome was his maltreatment at the hands of the baptists (*CMC*, pp. 100, 1- 23; ed. Koenen and Römer, 1988, pp. 70-71) and obviously his expulsion from the community.

The founding of the Manichean Church. *The founding of the Manichean Church*. Mani accepted his expulsion from the community as a chance for a new start. He felt commissioned by his Twin Spirit to part from the community in which he had grown up (his so-called second revelation, *CMC,* pp, 101, 11–106, 14; ed. Koenen and Römer, 1988, pp. 70-75; cf. *CMC,* p. 17, 7–20, 17; ed. Koenen and Römer, 1988, pp. 10-13 and *Fehrest,* ed. Flügel, 1862, pp. 50, 15-16; 84). Followed by two disciples ([Simeon] and Abizakhias) and later by his father (*CMC,* p. 106.6–23; ed. Koenen and Römer, 1988, pp. 74-75; cf. *Fehrest,* ed. Flügel, 1862, pp. 51.6-7, 84) he appeared in the capital of Ctesiphon (*CMC,* p. 109.14-17; ed. Koenen and Römer, 1988, pp. 76-77) and began to preach his gospel to the gentiles. This happened when Mani was twenty-four years old and coincided almost perfectly with the day of the future King Šābuhr I's coronation with the "greatest diadem." Mani himself highlighted this meaningful synchronism of the beginning of a promising new political era and the first proclamation of his gospel (*CMC,* pp. 17.23–18.16; ed. Koenen and Römer, 1988, pp. 10-13; *Fehrest,* ed. Flügel 1862, pp. 51.3-6, 84). If the dates of coronation and proclamation given in the Greek and the Arabic texts are reliable, the date of the coronation was most likely 12 April 240 and the date of Mani's vocation to proclaim his new doctrine in public possibly (according to Henrichs and Koenen, the *CMC's* date "eighth day of month *Pharmuthi*" is unfortunately doubtful) 18 or 19 April 240 (Sundermann, 1990, pp. 295-96 = 2001, pp. 103-4; differently ["au début du mois sacré de Pharmouthi/Nisan"] Tardieu, 1998, pp. 170-71). It must have been only in the source of the *Fehrest* that Mani's first appearance in public was shifted to the exact date of Šābuhr's coronation.

The importance of Mani's separation from his paternal Elkhasaite community is obvious. Was it (first) meant to be a reform of the Elkhasaite community and its rules or (second) to be the inauguration of a new religion? The first option

is endorsed by those who lay weight on Mani's high esteem for Elkhasaios (Henrichs and Koenen, 1970, p. 154) or underscore the many borrowings of Elkhasaite concepts from the Manichean side (Merkelbach, 1988, p. 133). On the other hand, Mani's dismissal of such fundamental Elkhasaite rules as their permanent baptismal purification practice (cf. Koenen, 1981, pp. 734-56), their dietary regulations, and their engagement in agricultural labor, as expressed in the *Cologne Mani Codex*, was so uncompromising that Mani as a reformer of his sect is hardly credible even if only for an initial period.

When Mani broke with the Elkhasaite community of his childhood and began to propagate his own gospel, on the one hand he had obviously thought out a completely developed, complicated theological and cosmological doctrine, the rules of a system of distinct morals for the perfect and the lay people respectively, clear ideas about the organization of his followers in a hierarchically structured church, and a concept of how to missionize mankind in an effective way. The completion and endurance of the essentials of his religious system from the very outset and through the centuries are all the more remarkable as, on the other hand, Mani was, to put it in Henning's words, "always lavish with details. Unfortunately he frequently failed to notice that the details he produced on the spur of the moment did not square with his teachings of the day before. His picture of the world is a case in point. Minute circumstances are absurdly elaborated, but the whole is utter confusion. One saving quality is Mani's consciousness of his shortcomings: to make his cosmologic views clear he published a volume of drawings and paintings," etc. (Henning, 1948, p. 310 = 1977, II, p. 305). Much more than a logically trained, systematic thinker, Mani was a fanciful artist hounded by ever-new ideas and inspirations.

The 106th *Kephalaion* expresses Mani's wishful expectation that his followers will be called after his name, i.e., that they will be called Manicheans the same way as the followers of Jesus are called Christians (*Kephalaia* II, ed. Böhlig, 1966, pp. 258-59). On the one hand, this formality underlines Mani's claim to have established an independent, autocephalous church and a new religion. But, on the other hand, Mani's new doctrine could also claim to be a kind of rectifying and perfecting reform of almost all existing religions. That was so because Mani regarded his religion as the real, unadulterated essence of what, for their time and for their land, Zoroaster, the Buddha, Jesus Christ, and also the prophets of the Old Testament before Abraham had once preached, and what had later been misunderstood or misrepresented by their disciples

(Polotsky, 1935, pp. 265-66; Puech, 1949, pp. 61-62). The important consequence for the missionary work was that the Manichean propaganda could outwardly adapt itself to the terms and concepts of other religions to the point of sheer mimicry. Mani himself was the first to introduce this practice. He gave his theology and cosmology a seemingly Zoroastrian appearance, so much so that even modern scholars were misled into assuming a Zoroastrian "*Urform*" of Mani's doctrine (on this problem and its convincing solution, see Schaeder, 1927).

Mani devoted more than thirty years of his life, from 240 to 274 or 277, to the propagation of his new religion and the establishment and consolidation of his church. Even if our knowledge of this second and longest phase of his life is scantier than what we know of his youth and passion, one can say that missionary work and pastoral care were Mani's main concerns and gave rise to a well-organized Manichean church in and beyond Persia.

In Mani's own missionary journeys and the subsequent Manichean missions, the most successful method of propagating the Manichean gospel was to approach the rulers of a given territory first, to win their support and their permission to teach their subjects or even to convert them. Examples known from Mani's life are: the spectacular conversion of the Tūrān-šāh as the highlight of Mani's journey to India between 240 and 242 (see Sundermann, 1986a, pp. 56, sub 2.2 /II/, and 58, sub 9 = 2001, pp. 233, 235); the possibly legendary conversion of the brother of Šābuhr I, the Mēšūn-xwadāy Mihr-šāh (see Sundermann, 1986a, p. 58, sub. 10, and 1987, pp. 61-63 = 2001, pp. 235, 377-79); the winning over of Pērōz, another brother of Šābuhr, who introduced Mani to the ruler (before or in 242? cf. *Fehrest,* ed. Flügel, 1862, pp. 52.1-2, 85), and the conversion of an anonymous king and his princes "far from [Seleucia–Ctesiphon]" (i.e., the Tūrān-šāh? cf. CMC, pp. 130-32; ed. Koenen and Römer, pp. 92-95). The repeated mention of a certain Havzā, king of Waruzān (Georgia or Garčistān near Balkh?) certainly means that he also became an object of Mani's missionary efforts (Sundermann, 1986a, pp. 56, sub 2.4, 2.5; 61; 281-83 = 2001, pp. 233, 238, 317-19).

The most momentous success was gained, however, when Mani presented himself at the court of King Šābuhr I. This happened possibly, according to a heavily damaged passage of the *Cologne Mani Codex* restored and interpreted by its editors, in 241/242 (*CMC,* pp. 163-64; ed. Koenen and Römer, 1988, pp. 112-13), shortly after the death of King Ardašīr. It may have been on this occasion that Mani submitted to the king his book *Dō bun ī Šābuhragān* "The

two principles, (dedicated) to (King) Šābuhr," in which he gave a description in the Middle Persian language of his cosmogony and eschatology, his prophetology, and personal career. A trustworthy Parthian hagiographic fragment makes it clear that Mani did not succeed in converting the king. But he did win his favor to such a degree that he was authorized to propagate the new faith in the Iranian empire (Sundermann, 1986a, p. 58, sub 11.2; cf. Sundermann, 1981, pp. 106-7).

Another favor that he could not possibly refuse followed Mani's successful self-presentation: for some years he was taken into the kings retinue (*komitaton*), which means that he had to perform court service (*Kephalaia,* ed. Polotsky and Böhlig, 1940, p. 15.33-34). In what capacity? Surely not as the king's father confessor, but because of his expert knowledge in matters of medicine (as the "doctor from Babel") and astrology. An example is to be found in a Parthian text: Mani gives the king's chief singer carmelite. She produces a distillate of it and takes it to the king (Sundermann, 1981, pp. 58-59; idem, 1986a, p. 57 sub 4a.2 = 2001, p. 234). The often expressed assumption that King Šābuhr may have intended to make Mani's teaching the universal, unifying religion of his empire, one which would appeal to and be acceptable to Zoroastrians, Christians, and Buddhists alike (e.g., Puech, 1949, p. 39; Böhlig and Asmussen, 1980, p. 25) is attractive but unprovable. Alexander of Lycopolis' assertion that Mani accompanied King Šābuhr even on his campaigns (against the Romans) is as doubtful as the following statement is wrong that Šābuhr put him to death (sec. 3 = 4, 20-22; tr. Villey, 1985, p. 58). In any case it illustrates the Roman image of Mani as the enemy from Persia (on which see van der Lof, 1974, pp. 75-84).

As a courtier Mani had to reduce his service to the community, which evidently aroused the discontent of his disciples. A telling example is the 76th Coptic *Kephalaion*, which says that Mani, within a short interval, was called to court three times. Being so often deprived of the presence of the master, his disciple Aurades asked Mani to give them "two Manis resembling you; [pass]ing for you! one Mani will remain with us as you; [and the other go to] king [Sha]pur" (*Kephalaia,* ed. Polotsky and Böhlig, 1940, p. 183; tr. Gardner, 1995, p. 193).

The solution to the dilemma came when Mani was given permission to leave the *komitaton* and continue his missionary work. He was already equipped with protective (Parthian: ʾbr hw phrgbʾnyft "concerning his guardianship") [letters] from the king, the Lord Pērōz, and the chief secretary Ohrmezd

(Sundermann, 1981, pp. 106-7; on the contents of the letters, see the Coptic *Homilies,* ed. Polotsky, 1934, p. 48.2-5). It is of this period that Mani said: “(I spent) many years in Pers[i]a, in the country of the Parthians, up to Adiabene, and the bor[de]rs of the provinces of the kingdom of the Romans” (*Kephalaia*, ed. Polotsky and Böhlig, 1940, pp. 15.34–16.2; tr. Gardner, 1995, p. 21).

Biruni’s report, on the authority of a certain Espahbaḏ Marzobān b. Rostam, that Mani was banished by Šābuhr from Persia and traveled to India, China, and Tibet, only to return to Persia under Wahrām I (see Sundermann, 1986a, p. 64 = 2001, p. 241), must be due to a misunderstanding. But this does not mean that first anti-Manichean measures did not take place under Šābuhr I. There is a possible reference to this effect to be found in the 226th Coptic Psalm: “From the day of the great persecution (*diōgmós*) to the day of the cross (*staurós*) there are six years” (*Psalm-Book,* ed. Allberry, 1938, p. 19.12-13). That must have happened in Šābuhr’s last years, in 268 if Mani died in 274, in 271 if 277 was the year of his death.

However that may be, after Šābuhr’s death in 272 Mani did win the favor of his son and successor king Ohrmazd I. That is unanimously attested in the Manichean literature (for references see Sundermann, 1986a, p. 51 [Coptic *Homilies,* p. 42], p. 53 [Coptic *Psalm-Book,* p. 43], p. 59 [Parthian, text 22] = 2001, pp. 228, 230, 236; and also Klimkeit, Geng, and Laut, 1987, pp. 44-58). This gave Mani and his church a last period of peaceful development—a short one, since Ohrmazd died in 273.

An achievement of Mani that left its traces in the literary tradition is his activity as a prolific writer (and a much admired painter). Being convinced that only the conservation in written form of the true divine revelation could save it from being misunderstood or falsified by future generations, and having acquired the qualities of a unique, subtle prophet (*propheta doctus*), he set about having his message written down. He doubtlessly did that himself, but we also know from the Dublin *Kephalaia* that he made use of a group of scribes, to whom he dictated letters to be sent to different places and addressees (Böhlig, 1992, pp. 67-68).

That Mani began to compose his first literary works even before his separation from the Elkhasaite community is possible but not provable (Sundermann, 1979, pp. 109-11 = 2001, pp. 135-37). His *Šābuhragān,* however, must have come into being in the first years of his missionary work, if he dedicated it to King Šābuhr I in 242.

The main results of Mani's literary work are, besides the *Šābuhragān,* five or seven quasi-canonical works, tracts, and collections of letters and hymns: the *Great Gospel*, the *Treasure of Life*, the *Pragmateia*, the *Secrets*, the *Book of the Giants* (see GIANTS, BOOK OF THE), *Epistles*, and *Psalms and Prayers* (for references, see Henning in Haloun and Henning, 1952, p. 204; for the contradictory counting of five and seven works, cf. Tardieu, 1981, p. 66 and Böhlig, 1992, p. 74).

Of these works. the *Great Gospel* and the *Treasure of Life* were certainly written in the early 240s CE (Sundermann, 1987, pp. 70-71 = 2001, pp. 386-87). Henning has decoded the report of the 148th *Kephalaion* (publ. Funk, 1999, p. 355, together with a commentary) on the divine inspirers of Mani's books as a kind of legendary relative chronology of the composition of Mani's works from the very early *Gospel* down to the prophet's letters to the community (Henning in Haloun and Henning, 1952, pp. 208-9, where the *Psalms and Prayers* are erroneously included). Mani's writing work was in fact a lifelong occupation. His last composition, the *Letter of the Seal,* was written in prison.

Mani's fame as a unique painter has survived the prophet and his church in the Islamic world, which holds (NPers.) *Māni-ye naqqāš* "Mani the painter" in high esteem (so in Ferdowsi's *Šāh-nāma*: see Taqizāda and Širāzi, 1956/57, p. 482; see also Asmussen, 1965, pp. 10-11; Gulácsi, 2001, pp. 4, 7; Hutter, 1997, p. 190). Mani produced a picture book meant to illustrate the complicated dogmatic statements of his lore, the (Gk.) *Eikō´n* "Picture" (MPers. *Nigār*), which is commonly identified with the (Parth.) *Ārdhang*, etc. (see ARÛANG; Henning in Haloun and Henning, 1952, pp. 209-10). No trace of it survives, but a copy of the *Ārdhang* (*Aržang*) is said to have been kept in the treasure-house of Ghazni in Islamic times (Abo'l-Maʿāli Moḥammad al-Ḥosayni al-ʿAlawi, in Taqizāda and Širāzi, 1956/57, p. 491). One may assume that Mani's artistic achievements became the model and incentive for his church to excel in the fine arts of book painting and calligraphy. In any case the arts were for Mani no end in themselves. They were meant to elucidate and embellish the divine message of gnosis.

It is impossible to know how many practical problems relating to the transmission and dissemination of his gospel had to be solved by Mani. An ingenious, indeed a revolutionary, innovation which could only have been introduced on the authority of the prophet himself was the practice of writing Middle Persian in the variant of the court dialect, and subsequently other Iranian languages, with the Palmyrene form of the Aramaic alphabets

(Lidzbarski, 1916, pp. 1213-22; Durkin-Meisterernst, 2000, pp. 169-78) which was familiar to Mani from his home country. Some additional letters were required (see MANICHEAN SCRIPT). The new alphabet proved to be much more suitable for writing the Iranian languages as spoken in the 3rd century CE than the indigenous Pahlavi script was, with its historical spellings and heterographic oddities, so much so that its general introduction would have been a great relief for writers and readers, if only it were not the invention of a notorious heretic (cf. Henning, 1958, p. 73).

Another innovation of great consequence for the church, one that proved its deep insight into a foreign religion, was the identification of deities and demons of the Manichean doctrine with matching Zoroastrian counterparts (Sundermann, 1979, pp. 106-15 = 2001, pp. 132-41). This outward “iranization” of Mani’s theology and demonology became the methodological pattern of the not completely identical Parthian and Sogdian systems and must have facilitated access to the complicated Manichean system in Persia and Central Asia (see also MANICHEAN PANTHEON).

The passion. The time of peaceful development and untroubled prosperity of the Manichean church ended with the early death in 273 of king Ohrmazd I. Under his successor, Wahrām I, the situation changed radically for the worse. This period led to Mani’s passion and end.

Under Wahrām the strict opposition of the Magi caste to the quickly expanding Manichean community became apparent. They attacked Mani in malicious libels (in Coptic *hnbiblidion*; *Homilien,* ed. Polotsky, 1934, p. 81.24) which they submitted to the king. A Sogdian text, definitively edited by Sims-Williams (1990, pp. 283-87), testifies to discussions Mani had with an inquisitive magus, in which Mani wisely preferred to withhold his opinion. There is no doubt that the archpriest (*mowbed*) Kerdīr was the moving spirit of the anti-Manichean movement. The more Kerdīr rose in rank and power, the more precarious Mani’s position became (often treated: cf. Hinz, 1971, pp. 485-99; Russell, 1990; and Skjærvø, 1997).

An early warning of a counter-Manichean policy of the new king was the [interdiction] of a proposed journey of the prophet to Kūšān (*Homilien,* ed. Polotsky, 1934, p. 44, 10-12).

A further restriction imposed by the new king was that in the three last years of his life Mani was commanded to attach himself (to “go and come with him”;

cf. NPers. *raft o āmad* “going and coming,” i.e., “intercourse, company”?) to a local Mesopotamian king, Bāt (Parth. bʾt, Sogd. βγw ptw, Copt. *Baat*, but not *Badia*; for the name, see Henning, *BSOAS* 14, 1952, p. 511 = 1977, II, p. 397; Sims-Williams, 1990, p. 282; and Sundermann, 1986a, p. 304 = 2001, p. 340). The latter was eventually converted by Mani, which aroused the anger of the king. (On Bāt and Mani, see *Homilies*, ed. Polotsky, 1934, pp. 44.22, 45.5, 46.12-15; Henning, 1942, pp. 944-45 = 1977, II, pp. 84-85; Sundermann, 1981, p. 80; Sims-Williams, 1990, p. 282.)

Another restriction on Mani was the banishment of the prophet from court. This follows from Wahrām’s unfriendly words in his encounter with Mani in Bēlābād: “You are not welcome... I have sworn not to let you come to this country” (M 3, Henning’s translation, 1942, p. 951 = 1977, II, p. 91), and perhaps also from the probably misrepresented report in Biruni’s *Āṯār al-bāqia* that it was Šābuhr I who banished Mani from his realm, so that he returned only under Wahrām. It is true that the prevailing opinion is that, on the contrary, Mani was commanded to appear together with King Bāt at the royal court (e.g., Henning, 1942, p. 945 = 1977, II, p. 85). The preserved sources are in fact fragmentary and sometimes ambiguous. But it seems more likely that it was not Mani but Bāt who was commanded to go to court and, as Mani’s “intercessor” (Parth. *andarbed*; cf. Sundermann, 1981, p. 80), to defend him against the accusations of the Magi. Bāt preferred not to obey the order, and Mani, wishing desperately to change his fate and trusting in the charisma of his personality, dared to defy the king’s ban and to appear at Wahrām’s court in Bēlābād in person. He left Bāt behind and set out on what Henning justly called his “last journey.” That this journey was a dangerous risk Mani was well aware. He made it a farewell visit to his south Mesopotamian parishes. It took him, following Henning’s precise reconstruction on the strength of the third Coptic *Homily* and the Parthian hagiographic *Homilies*, from Ctesiphon eastwards to Pargalia, Kholassar, and Gaukhai in Bēth Dərāyē “across the plain at the foot of the Persian hills” to Bēlābād (Bēth Lāpāt, Jundaišāpūr; see GONDEŠĀPUR) in Khuzestan (Henning, 1942, p. 912 = 1977, II, p. 82).

Mani’s ostentatious arrival in Bēlābād, his passing through or entering the (Parth.) [*šā*]*hīgān bar*, i.e., the “royal gate” of the town or the “royal palace,” provoked the fierce resentment of the Magi, who in successive administrative stages forwarded their complaint to the king. The third Coptic *Homily* (Polotsky, 1934, p. 45, 11-18) reports that the Magi approached (the *mowbed*) Kerdīr (Coptic Kardel); Kerdīr informed the Synkathedros; they both applied to

the Magistōr, and the latter told it to the king. A similar report is given in a Parthian hagiographic *Homily*, where (as Böhlig first saw) the Parthian *šāh andar*[*zbed*] "counsellor of the king" corresponds to the *Magistōr* (Sundermann, 1986a, pp. 254-55 = 2001, pp. 290-91).

Nevertheless, neither the king nor Mani aimed at an immediate meeting. According to the sources analyzed below in the next section, Mani was busy "fortifying" his Church during the rest of the week. On Saturday or Sunday he received the command to appear at court. About his fateful encounter with Wahrām I a unique document exists, the Middle Persian fragment M 3, an eyewitness report of Mani's interpreter Nūḫ-zādag, which renders the event with minute exactness and surely a high degree of credibility (definitive edition Henning, 1942, pp. 949-52 = 1977, II, pp. 89-92; Henning was the first to see that the king in question was Wahrām I and not Šābuhr I). Mani was given an audience under the most humiliating circumstances. He was kept at one side of the watch-post (*wēnag*) and had to wait until the king finished his meal and passed by in order to go hunting. The king overwhelmed Mani with reproaches for his unauthorized appearance in Bēlābād and accused Mani and his followers of being useless subjects in every respect. He evidently alluded also to an unsuccessful medical treatment of a member of the royal family (the king's sister? cf. *Homilien*, ed. Polotsky, 1934, p. 46.25 and Tubach, 1994, p. 480). Mani's dignified reply, better than any legendary elevation, testifies to the deep impression his personality must have made on those who came into contact with him. The end of the report is missing. It may have led to more serious accusations and finally to Mani's arrest, which according to the sources analyzed below must have ensued immediately.

A totally different, but possibly complementary, report about Mani's encounter with the king (or two meetings?) is given in the third Coptic *Homily* (ed. Polotsky, 1934, pp. 45-49). In it Wahrām makes the following noteworthy representation to Mani: "Why is it that God revealed this to you and not to Us who are the Lords of the whole country?" (*Homilien,* ed. Polotsky, 1934, p. 47.22-24).

Manichean tradition unanimously has it that Mani was kept in prison for twenty-six days, beginning on Wednesday the 8th of (Aramaic) Šabāṭ and ending with Mani's death on the 27th day, Monday the 4th of Ādār. Of these dates, only the day of Mani's death is not under suspicion of hagiographic stylization (see next section). What can safely be stated is that Mani died in prison. There was no execution. Mani was chained to a guard (Parth.

pahragbān) who, towards the end, released Mani from the chain around his neck (Sundermann, 1981, p. 75, with n. 3 and reference to earlier literature). As was common practice, Mani was allowed to receive the visits of people near to him. Three lay women followers, (Copt.) Banak, Dinak, and N[ušak], served him in prison and, after his death, closed his eyes (*Homilien,* ed. Polotsky, 1934, p. 59.3-7; Coptic *Church History*, cf. Schmidt and Polotsky, 1933, pp. 27-28).

In prison Mani admonished and comforted his disciples in his farewell speeches, which are extensively reported in the Coptic, Middle Persian, and Parthian hagiographic tradition, and he instructed the keeper of the prison (see Sundermann, 1986a, pp. 51, 54, 55-56 (no. 24), 58 (no. 4a.16) = 2001, pp. 228, 231, 232-33, 235). Of those who listened to Mani's instructions, admonitions, and prophecies, the teachers Mār Ammō and Mār Uzzī (Parthian ʾwzʿy(y), Coptic Ozeos, and possibly Ou[zias], on whom see Henning in Andreas and Henning, 1934, p. 862, n. 1 = 1977, I, p. 289) are mentioned (Sundermann, 1987, p. 68 = 2001, p. 384). Ammō is noted as the co-sender of Mani's last epistle, written in prison, the *muhr dib* "Letter of the Seal" (see Henning, 1937, p. 18 = 1977, I, p. 432). He had to leave Mani, however, three days before the master's end (Sundermann, 1987, p. 68 = 2001, p. 384). Mār Uzzī stayed with Mani until his end and recorded his last three days, from Saturday to Monday, the 4th of Ādār (Sundermann, 1986, pp. 56 [no. 24.2 and 3], 57 [no. 2.10] = 2001, pp. 233, 234).

Mani's last three days are exhaustively described. Not only did Mani foresee his imminent death, he even craved it. He bade farewell to his desperate friends and disciples (*Homilies*, ed. Polotsky, 1934, pp. 52-56, 57-59; Parthian *Homilies*, see Sundermann, 1986a, p. 58 [no. 4a.17]). About his death, described as the triumphal ascension of his immortal soul to the realm of light, there is what claims to be an eyewitness report by Uzzī (Sundermann, 1986a, p. 57, text 2.10 = 2001, p. 234), who tells that he accompanied the master up to the sphere (Parth. ʿspyr) of the skies (Sundermann, 1981, p. 30).

The authorities, it seems, first doubted Mani's death and had medical examinations undertaken and a fire test applied (*Psalm-Book,* ed. Allberry, 1938, p. 17.12-17).

The Manichean hagiographical tradition called Mani's passion and death—in imitation of Christ's execution—his "crucifixion" (Greek in Coptic *staurōsis,* Parthian **dārūbadagīft*). This may be the origin of the wrong assertion of the *Acta Archelai* (Vermes, 2001, p. 148; Sundermann, 1987, p. 91 = 2001, p. 407),

the *Fehrest* (ed. Flügel, 1862, pp. 76.10-11, 105; also pp. 69.5-10, 99-100), and even Biruni's *Chronology* (see Sundermann, 1986a, p. 64 = 2001, p. 241) that Mani was executed at the king's command and his body hung up at a gate of Bēlābād (the "Mani-gate"). The assertion, however, that his dead body was mutilated (so that his death in prison might appear as a kind of execution) is substantially correct. A postmortem decapitation of the prophet and the exhibition of his head over a gate of the town is confirmed by Manichean sources (*Psalm-Book,* ed. Allberry, 1938, pp. 24.2-3; 44.17-20). This agrees exactly with what Biruni reported on the authority of the well-informed Jabrāʾil b. Nuḥ (see Sundermann, 1986a, p. 64 = 2001, p. 241). Athimar, an otherwise unknown disciple of Mani, seems to have kept the mutilated body of the prophet in his house (Tubach, 1994, pp. 481-83). Later it was taken to Ctesiphon (Puech, 1949, p. 54).

Those of Mani's disciples who were with him in his last days fulfilled his will to make Mār Sīsin (or Sisinnios; on him and his name see Tardieu, 1991, pp. 3-8) his successor (doubted, however, by Puech, 1949, pp. 53 and 140, n. 223). As a visible token of investiture, they handed over to him Mani's *Gospel*, his *Ārdhang*, his garment, and his walking stick (Andreas and Henning, 1934, p. 862 = Henning, 1977, I, p. 289; Sundermann, 1981, pp. 30-31).

THE DATES OF MANI'S PASSION

A kind of chronology of Mani's passion in Bēlābād is given in the Coptic *Apomnēmoneumata* (memorandums) which are incorporated in the third Coptic *Homily.* If their dates are trustworthy (see the remarks above, under "Legendary elements"), then we are better informed about the end of Mani's life than about all its preceding phases. The longer *Apomnēmoneuma* is quoted in the third Coptic *Homily* (ed. Polotsky, 1934, p. 60.2-16; new translation in Böhlig and Asmussen, 1980, p. 99). It reads (according to Böhlig's German translation) as follows: "[On Sunday] he entered Bēlābād, on Monday he was accused, on Wednesday there was… and he fortified his Church [till] Saturday. He was summoned and enchained. Then… all those who hated him. On Saturday [new restoration by Böhlig in Sundermann 2001, p. 102] they sealed his chains and took him [to prison]. He was enchained on the 8th of M[šīr]. [Un]til the day of his ascension to heaven there were 26 days which he passed in chains. At the eleventh hour of the day he rose [from his body] to the residences of his greatness [in] the hights, and he met his shape…"

The shorter *Apomnēmoneuma* (*Homilies,* ed. Polotsky, 1934, p. 45.19-22; tr.

Böhlig in Böhlig and Asmussen, 1980, p. 95) states that it was on Sunday (evidently the Sunday after Mani's arrival at the residence) that the king summoned and condemned (?) Mani, not on a Saturday, as the longer *Apomnēmoneuma* and also the Coptic *Church History* have it (Schmidt and Polotsky, 1933, pp. 27-28). Yet another date for the imprisonment is given in the longer *Apomnēmoneuma* when it says that it happened on the 8th of Mšīr, which, however, was a Wednesday. (It was 26 days before Mani's death, which fell on a Monday.)

Either the earliest tradition on Mani's passion was already contradictory on this important point, or one has to assume with Böhlig that the chaining on Saturday/Sunday was only a kind of civil confinement and that the real punishment began on the following Wednesday (Sundermann, 2001, p. 102). The first alternative seems to be the more likely one, for it was surely the intention of the king to sentence Mani to capital punishment and not to mere imprisonment. It is possible that the alleged imprisonment on (Wednesday) the 8th of Mšīr (and together with it the duration of Mani's 26 days in prison) are mythical dates (Sundermann, 1988, pp. 229-31 = 2001, pp. 99-101). But if these dates are devoid of any historical value, it is impossible to identify precisely the preceding weekdays with days of a month, and so to calculate the length of Mani's passion.

Of Mani's death only the hour of the day is given in the longer *Apomnēmoneuma.* The complete date is preserved in the 225th and 226th Coptic Psalms (*Psalm-Book,* ed. Allberry, 1938, pp. 17.24-27, 18.6-8; cf. Wurst, 1996, pp. 53, 55), in a Parthian homiletic text and a hymn (Andreas and Henning, 1934, pp. 861.14–862.1, 864.3–7 = 1977, I, pp. 288-89, 291; Engl. tr. Klimkeit, 1993, pp. 215, 86), and in the Chinese *Compendium* (Haloun and Henning, 1952, p. 193). It is the 4th day of (Copt.) *Phamenot,* (Parth.) *Šahrēwar*, (Chin.) First Month. These all are months of early spring; they are certainly parallel translations and render the Aramaic date of 4th of Ādār (February/March). The date, as it can be determined, does not betray any form of mythical stylization and can be regarded as historically trustworthy.

None of these sources gives the year of Mani's death. In order to determine the year of his death one has to bear in mind that it happened on a Monday in early spring, and one has to consider two contradictory pieces of evidence.

Firstly, Mani died at the age of sixty years, i.e., in 277 (Taqizadeh in Henning, 1945, p. 163; idem in Taqizāda and Širāzi, 1956/57, p. 15 and *Takmela*, pp. ʾ-b, y;

idem in Taqizadeh and Henning, 1957, pp. 113-14). The question is whether the round figure of sixty years is a reliable or a mythically stylized number (Henning in Haloun and Henning, 1952, p. 199).

Secondly, the dates given in an Old Turkish colophon (Le Coq, 1911, p. 12) and in the Chinese *Compendium* (Haloun and Henning, 1952, pp. 197-99) can be identified as or corrected to the year 274 (Henning in Haloun and Henning, 1952, pp. 198-99). A kind of Manichean era from the year of Mani's death (his ascension) is indeed attested in early sources. If that was still a living tradition in the 8th century, it may preserve the date of Mani's death correctly. The weak points in Henning's argument are the ruling years of the Sasanian kings at the end of the third century. Henning calculated them on the basis of the so-called early chronology, with Wahrām I ruling from 271 to September 274 (Henning in Haloun and Henning, 1952, p. 199, n. 4; idem in Taqizadeh and Henning, 1957, p. 116 = Henning, 1977, II, p. 515). But Henning was the first to stress the precariousness of this solution, so that "one would be inclined to date the rule of Bahrām I by the death of Mani, in preference to the reverse procedure."

The situation has changed thanks to the testimony of the *Cologne Mani Codex* that King Ardašīr I was still in power in 240 and his son Šābuhr his co-regent (Sundermann, 1987, p. 51 = 2001, p. 367). Sarkārāti convincingly refuted Taqizadeh's late dating of Šābuhr's coronation. Not convincing is his refutation of a co-regency of Ardašir I and Šābuhr, (see Sarkārāti, p. 177, n. 27). This is a weighty argument in favor of Nöldeke's and Taqizadeh's late chronology of the early Sasanians. It shifts Wahrām I's rule to the years 274-277. That does not make Mani's death in 274 impossible, but a later date towards the end of Wahrām's rule is certainly more likely. If that was so, the early dating of Mani's death, as it became current in Central and East Asia, must be based on a miscalculation (Taqizadeh in Taqizadeh and Henning, 1957, p. 114 = Henning, 1977, II, p. 513; Sundermann, 1987, p. 52 = 2001, p. 368).

Other solutions between 273 and 277 have been suggested by A. Böhlig, O. Klíma, H. H. Schaeder, and others (see Sundermann, 1987, pp. 52-53 = 2001, pp. 368-69). But only Henning's and Taqizadeh's solutions are compatible with the statement that Mani's death happened on the 4th of Ādār, a Monday. That would be either 2 March 274 (Henning) or 26 February 277 (Taqizadeh).

THE IMAGE OF MANI

Ancient pictures and descriptions of Mani. Some pictures of the prophet are preserved, but they cannot claim to be genuine. They are a rock crystal intaglio in the Bibliothèque Nationale in Paris (good reproduction in Decret, 1974, plate XXXII with commentary on p. 50), an imprint on paper and wood in the manner of a seal, acquired and described by S. Ol'denburg (Sundermann, 1985, pp. 172-74 = 2001, pp. 849-51; on these images see also Ebert, 1994, pp. 23-25), and the Mani statue in a recently discovered Manichean temple near Quan-zhou in the Chinese province of Fujian (Lieu, 2000, pp. 381-83). A high-ranking Manichean cleric from Central Asia, but certainly not Mani, is represented in a wall-painting from Qočo (formerly Völkerkundemuseum Berlin, destroyed in World War II; excellent reproduction in Le Coq, 1913, plate 1, later often copied). Most doubtful is an alleged image of Mani on a coin from Characene (reproduced in Rudolph, 1972, p. 544; cf. van der Lof, 1974, p. 81). The same is true for the mosaic of a "Religious Leader" in the Bible Lands Museum of Jerusalem. Lieu's explanation of the figure as Mani is furnished with a question mark by Lieu himself (Lieu, 2000, pp. 383-85). A miniature of Mani hanging on a palm tree was published from the "Demotte *Šāh-nāma*" by the *Markaz-e farhangi wa honari "Reżā ʿAbbāsi"* and brought to the knowledge of the author by the late Aḥmad Tafażżoli. How an artist in counter-reformation Bohemia, in Choltice, visualized "Manes" in the 17th century is shown by Oerter (2000, pp. 441-46, with photo). For further inimical Mani portraits see Lieu (2000, p. 380).

Descriptions of the physical appearance of Mani are given only in anti-Manichean polemics. The most detailed one is in the *Acta Archelai*: "[Mani] wore a kind of shoe which is generally known commonly as the 'trisolium', and a multi-coloured cloak, of a somewhat ethereal appearance, while in his hand he carried a very strong staff made of ebony-wood. He carried a Babylonian book under his left arm, and he had covered his legs with trousers of different colours, one of them scarlet, the other coloured leek green. His appearance was like that of an old Persian magician or warlord" (text, Beeson, 1906, pp. 22-23; tr. Vermes, 2001, p. 58). It was certainly the intention of the author to draw the picture of an exotic man from hostile Persia, but his description is an exaggeration rather than an invention, and some parts of it may hold true (see Sundermann, 1981, pp. 30-31).

Mani in the memory of friend and foe. Mani appears in the memory of his church as a personality of great self-confidence, spiritual authority, and practical competence, a preacher and a teacher of considerable persuasive

power, an able organizer of his church, a gifted artist who excelled in calligraphy and book painting, a charismatic personality who was able to impress and sometimes to win over even kings and noblemen, a sensible visionary who knew himself permanently guided and protected by a heavenly twin and who was afforded insight into the world beyond the human sphere. He regarded himself as an instrument of the divine world and the messenger of ultimate truth. In imitation of St. Paul he called himself "the apostle of Jesus Christ" (Quispel, 1975, pp. 234-37; Betz, 1986, pp. 217-18), but certainly not with reference to Jesus of Nazareth, his forerunner, but to the redeeming deity of Jesus the Splendor.

Mani spoke to his posthumous believers in his books and letters, his hymns and prayers. His books were decorated with illustrations, some of which were the work of his own hand. His passion was commemorated during the Mani or Bēma *yimki* (see FESTIVALS ii. MANICHEAN = Sundermann, 2001, p. 76; see also BĒMA) and at the most solemn Bēma festival. A "tribunal" of five steps was erected in the center of the congregation, on which Mani himself was supposed to take his seat and grant absolution to the confessing community. It is even possible that a painting of the prophet, his *Eikōˊn*, was put on top of the Bēma (throne) in order to symbolize his spiritual presence (Henning, 1937, pp. 9-10 = 1977, I, pp. 423-24; Allberry, 1939, p. 5 = Widengren, 1977, p. 321; Nagel, 1981, p. 202, n. 8).

In the Christian world the image of Mani was determined through the centuries by the malicious anti-legend of the *Acta Archelai*. In medieval times it grew into a prototype of all the subsequent dualist sectarians. So there was considerably more knowledge of the Manichean heresy than of its heresiarch. It was only in the 18th century that Isaac de Beausobre proved the fictitious character of the Mani vita in the *Acta* (Beausobre, 1734, pp. 5-6). Since then and also thanks to the publication of less polemical Oriental sources, a more objective image of the founder of Manicheism has come into being (see in general Ries, 1988). Mani received a positive re-evaluation in the anthroposophical teachings of Rudolf Steiner (1861–1925), who respected Mani as an upholder of true Christianity. On the anthroposophical image of Mani in general, see Roll (1989); see also Decret (1974, pp. 176-78) and Ries (1977, cols. 201-2), who further report about worship of Mani in modern-day France, in "neo-catharisme" and the "Auguste Fraternité Universelle." In addition, a Neo-Manichaean Church has presented itself on the internet (accessed 20 July 2009; no longer available).

The Zoroastrian attitude towards Mani himself was no less hostile than it was towards his doctrine. This follows from the reports of Islamic authors about Mani's execution under King Wahrām I, because those reports go back to the Sasanian chronicle, the *Xwadāy nāmag*.

Islamic authors adopted these polemical allegations. Only in late sources do tales about Mani's feigned travel to heaven and his pretended divine revelations occur (see Kessler, 1889, pp. 377-81). But Islamic authors did not disregard the famous artistic skill of Mani the painter. This not totally negative attitude towards Mani (in contrast to the attitude toward Manicheism, which was regarded as the most heinous heresy of *ṭanawiya*; cf. S. and G. G. Stroumsa, 1988, pp. 17-58) is certainly due to the fact that Mani himself did not oppose Islam in the same way that he had been a rival of the Christian church and the Zoroastrian community.

Mani's personality. "[Mani] is one of the greatest founders of a Church and religious organizers that the world has seen" ([Mani] ist einer der gewaltigsten Kirchengründer und religiösen Organisatoren, die die Welt gesehen hat). Nobody will contradict this statement of Geo Widengren (1961, p. 141 = 1977, p. 492). One may add that, more than other creators of new religions, he was a subtle prophet, one familiar with the great religious systems of his environment, familiar also with the philosophical doctrines of his time and country, a prophet who himself reduced his basic ideas to writing and admonished his disciples to preserve his didactic sermons in written form so that, more than was Islam, Manicheism was a religion of the book.

Mani is perhaps the first representative of systematic syncretistic and cosmopolitan religious thinking, not as an eclectic compilation of elements of former doctrines but in the sense of finding one's own concepts in traditional religions. In this capacity he may be called an early forerunner of Bahāʾ-Allāh (for the comparability of both, see Scott, 1985, p. 102 with n. 2, where a separate study on this subject was announced) and of the already mentioned Rudolf Steiner in Europe.

Mani excelled as a multi-talented artist, a gifted painter who illustrated his written texts with a kind of picture book (see above). He was an imaginative storyteller and a composer of two cycles of *Psalms.* These artistic achievements made Manicheism a decidedly aesthetic religion, and its well-told parables, the fine lyric poetry of the *Bēma* hymns in praise of the beautiful springtime, and the complaints of the *Hymn Cycles* are masterpieces of their

kind and may claim a place in world literature.

All this looks like the work of a refined, ingenious *savant d'artiste*, a man of creative imagination who happened to make the founding (one is tempted to say the construction) of a new religion the task of his life.

But Mani was also a man who underwent supernatural experiences from his early youth on and a prophet in the proper sense and in the Oriental tradition. He claimed to be a religious visionary who received commands and instructions from the World of Light. Divine revelation, not arguments and human instruction, were the source of his message and the ultimate proof of its truth.

If Mani is still a somewhat enigmatic personality for those who take an interest in his ideas and work today, it is mainly because of his strange loathing of the human body, human sexuality, and the procreation of offspring. Puech assumed a possible explanation in Mani's own alleged physical deformation. The *Fehrest* stated: *kāna aḥnaf al-rejl* "he had a deformed leg" (ed. Flügel 1862, p. 45.5, tr. p. 83; ed. Tajaddod, 1971, p. 391.29), and again: *wa ḥakā baʿż al-nās annahu kāna aḥnaf al-rejlayn, wa qila al-rejl al-yamin* "some people reported that his legs were deformed, and, it is said, the right leg" (ed. Flügel, 1862, p. 69.10-11, tr. p. 100; ed. Tajaddod, 1971, p. 398.15-16). Puech inferred from these meaningful and grammatically correct statements: "This infirmity might serve to illustrate certain sides of his moral character, it might partly explain his dread of the body, his sharp sense for the brutality and the inborn defectiveness of this evil world, perhaps also the meditative and artistic flavor of his soul, of all that is delicate and a bit morbid in his ideal" (Puech, 1949, p. 35). Jackson restricted himself to the last option: Mani's being "somewhat crippled" might explain his "peculiar idealism and refinement combined with rare vision" (Jackson, 1938, p. 240).

The reliability of the *Fehrest* passages was challenged by scholars like Henning (1936, p. 86 = 1977, I, p. 399) and Klíma (1957, pp. 384-87). But even if the texts as they stand are beyond reproach, the possibility cannot be excluded that they are the product of a calumnious imputation from a hostile side. Mani's fixedly anti-corporeal ideas might be the kind of Gnostic, anti-cosmic attitude that necessarily followed from his own doctrinal system.

On Mani's doctrine: see MANICHEISM with references to further articles given there.

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