



MANICHEISM III. THE MANICHEAN PANDAEMONIUM

MANICHEISM

iii. The Manichean Pandaemonium

The great importance of demonology in the Manichean doctrine derives from its dualistic character, i.e. the assumption of two independent and eternal realms of light and darkness, good and evil, life and death. The world of darkness was active in and through a host of demons, and since evil was a real, material and spiritual substance, the demons too had a real existence. They were not phantoms, not just fanciful ideas in a system that regarded evil as the absence of good. And they were not fallen angels. They were evil in every respect and from the outset; and they existed everywhere, in the skies and on earth, on dry land and in the sea, in plants, animals and men. They induced sin and brought disease, they were responsible for heat and cold and for bad weather.

On the other hand, the Manichean conception of what a demon is remains remarkably abstract (cf. Böhlig, 1989, pp. 57, 69 on similar Gnostic concepts (see [GNOSTICISM](#)). Very few individual characters stand out; and few demons are mentioned by name. Mostly demons are described as a host of evildoers. Plural forms of terms for demons abound. Most names for groups of demons are appellative nouns, i.e. substantives that can also be used as adjectives.



When used in that way they can go beyond the limits of precise terminology. Besides, some terms are ethically neutral and can also be used *in bonam partem*.

Like other dualistic religious systems, the Manichean promises the ultimate victory of the good side and the overcoming of the present imperfect state of the world. One reason for this optimistic view is the nature of the demons. They are in permanent conflict with one another and they are inferior to the divine beings in intelligence and knowledge. Their discord is referred to as one reason for their inferiority to the harmonious divine forces (*Keph.*, pp. 127-28 ; tr. Gardner, pp. 136-37). Their intellectual inferiority is demonstrated by the role they play in the cosmological process. They are not inventive and not able to develop a plan for the successful takeover, domination, and destruction of the World of Light that matches the sophisticated salvation process in three evocations designed and realized by their divine counterpart. The best they can do is to imitate the macrocosmic creation of the Living Spirit and the Mother of Life by procreating the first human couple and setting in motion the process of human generation. It is therefore hardly surprising that they allowed themselves to be outwitted by the World of Light at the very beginning of the cosmological process when in their foolish greed they swallowed the divine Light Elements which were offered to them in order to paralyze their aggressiveness and break their fatal force, so that they could no longer direct their attacks against the World of Light itself and could be imprisoned in the structure of the world.

The demons and the nature of evil. The demons are so closely identified with the ethical aspects of evil that many of them appear as personified evil qualities. Evil, according to [Mani's](#) doctrines, manifests itself mainly (though not exclusively) as greed, as desire for destruction (wrath), envy and grief.

Greed is the hallmark of evil, and as [Āz](#) it has become the name of the arch-demoness *Hylē* in the East Manichean tradition. Greed is sexual desire, the will for procreation included, and covetousness and gluttony. The 120th *Kephalaion* mentions “theft, robbery, lustfulness and fornication” and “the insatiability of Mammon” (*Keph.*, p. 287; tr. Gardner, pp. 288-89). The myth of the procreation of the first human couple is a typical example of cannibalistic gluttony and *eo ipso* sinful sexual acts.

The World of Darkness and its inhabitants. The World of Darkness, far below the World of Light, is the demons' place of origin and their first home. The



demons left their habitat when they went to assault the World of Light. They ultimately failed and found themselves imprisoned in the structure of this world (Sundermann, 1993, pp. 311b-312a; repr. 2001a, pp. 16-17). That is their present habitat. When almost all the lost light elements have been regained by the redeeming gods and the world comes to its end, the demons will be locked up in the prison of the *bōlos* (or *bōlos* and *taphos*) (Sundermann, 1998a, p. 571a; repr. 2001a, p. 61) in which the male demons will be kept apart from the female ones, in order to forestall forever their unrestrained procreation (*Keph.*, p. 105, ll. 1-14, 30-35; tr. Gardner, pp. 109, 110; Parth. M 715d, ed. Sundermann, 1973, p. 69).

It is only in the World of Darkness that descriptions of the physical nature of the demons are given. Its arrangement is a frequent object of Manichean cosmogony (see [COSMOGONY AND COSMOLOGY iii](#)).

Our principal sources are: (1) the sixth Coptic *Kephalaion* (*Keph.*, pp. 30-34; tr. Gardner, pp. 34-38), (2) the 27th *Kephalaion* (*Keph.*, pp. 77-79; tr. Gardner, pp. 79-80), (3) a passage of the Parthian homiletic fragment M 4578 (Sundermann, 1981, pp. 64-65), (4) the *Fehrest* passage on the World of Darkness (Flügel, pp. 62-63, 94; tr. Dodge, 787-88), (5) Parth. M 183 + M 3404 I /V/ (Sundermann, 1973, pp. 62-63), (6) Parth. M 8802 (Sundermann, 1973, pp. 64-65), (7) [Theodore Bar Kōnai](#), *Liber Scholiorum II*, ed. Scher, p. 313, ll. 18-21, cf. Puech, 1979, p. 122, (8) [Augustine](#), *Contra Epistulam Fundamenti* 15 and 31 (Puech, 1979, pp. 122, 123), (9) Augustine, *De moribus Ecclesiae Catholocae et de moribus Manichaeorum II*, IX, 14 (Puech, 1979, pp. 122-23), (10) Augustine, *De haeresibus* 46 (Puech, 1979, p. 123).

What all these descriptions of the World of Darkness have in common is its division into five parts arranged one below the other. According to the brief and clear description of Theodore Bar Konai (no. 7 above) the sequence (from top to bottom) is Smoke, (Dark) Fire, Wind, Water, and Darkness (and their demons), the smoke being the counterpart of the Light Element, ether or air, and the other elements corresponding to Light Fire, etc. In other lists the sequence Fire, Wind, Water, Darkness reappears (1, 3, 4) or is given in inverse order (8, 9) or is modified to Smoke, Darkness, Fire, Water, Wind (10). There is confusion concerning the first element, called “Smoke” in (7), but evidently called Darkness in (3) (against the restoration “Welt des finsteren [Rauches]” by Sundermann, 1981, p. 64, the more likely reading is “finstere Welt”), or both Darkness and Smoke in (1) (*Keph.*, p. 33, ll. 2-4; tr. Gardner, pp. 36-37).



The rulers of the five realms of Darkness and their hosts are marked in (1) by four, in (3) by five characteristics. First: their face, in the sequence of Smoke, Fire, Wind, Water and Darkness: [demon], lion, eagle, fish, dragon, in (3): man, quadruped, [bird], aquatic animal, [dragon]. Second: their body: gold, copper, iron, silver, [lead] + tin, in (3): gold, copper + bronze, iron, silver, [lead + tin]. Third: the taste of their fruit: salty, sour, sharp, sweet (not to be corrected to “tasteless, stale,” since the Parthian equivalent is *šyft*[*gyft*] “sweetness”), bitter. Parthian (3) *idem*. Fourth: the spirit: tyranny of worldly rulers, fire-worship, idol-worship, rites of the baptists, omen-watching, in (3): hatred, wrath, carnal desire, [*cetera desunt*], Fifth, in (3) only, corresponding evidently to the fourth Coptic mark: the atmosphere: tyranny, [*cetera desunt*].

Information about the final fate of the demons is rare and, if given, contradictory. Those demons who became the material of the building of the world were slain. Others were imprisoned and will be kept in the *Bōlos* (and *Taphos*) forever. About the giants it is said that they were killed (“obliterated from the earth”) by the punishing angels (*Keph.*, 93, ll. 23-28; tr. Gardner, p. 98) and that they will live in prison for a thousand years (*Keph.*, 117, ll. 1-9; tr. Gardner, p. 123).

It is instructive to analyze the impact of the World of Darkness on the making of the earthly beings. The demons became the pattern of animal and human creatures on earth, the animals being the abortions of the she-demons and men the procreation of their *archōns* (Sundermann, 1993, p. 312a; repr. 2001a, p. 17). Just as the demons of the five realms of Darkness have the shapes of men (or demons), quadrupeds, birds, fish and reptiles, the earthly creatures all fall into these categories.

The Names of Demons. Only a few demons are given the honor of personal proper names (see the brief “démonologie” in Tardieu, 1981, p. 103). Numerous exceptions are figures in the story of the *Book of the Giants* and in the incantations of magic formulæ which need, in order to be effective, the address of a demon in person and by name. The most prominent figures of the pandaemonium, it is true, bear Iranian proper names in the Eastern Manichean literature, namely *Āz* and *Ahramen* (see [AHRIMAN](#)). The procreators of the first human couple, *Ašqalūn* and *Nebrō’ēl/Pēsūs*, are also called by Syriac and Iranian names.

Matter, Greed, Enthymēsis of Death. These three names of the Manichean arch-demoness and producer of every evil are attested as follows: “Matter” only in



the Western tradition: Greek *Hylē* (originally “wood”) (*Dict.*, pp. 26, 48, rendered in Manichean Syriac as *hwl'* (*Dict.*, p. 3), in Coptic Manichean texts as *Hylē* (*Dict.*, p. 85). “Greed” is the common Eastern Manichean equivalent: MPers., Parth., Sogd. *Āz* (Sundermann, 1979, p. 100, no. 2/21; repr. 2001a, p. 126), also borrowed into Old Turkish as *az* (*Drevnetyurkskiy slovar'*, red., Nadelyaev, et al. 1969, p. 71), from MPers. *Āz*, Av. *Āzi-* (masc.!). “*Enthymēsis* of Death,” also “Dark *Enthymēsis*” is a less often used term, but is encountered in many languages of both traditions: Coptic *tenthymēsis mpmou* (*Keph.*, p. 26, l. 18; p. 27, l. 5; p. 31, l. 10; p. 74, l. 15, etc.; tr. Gardner, pp. 30, 31, 35, 75), but also translated as *psačne ... mpmou* (*Psalm-Book* p. 11, l. 10). In the Eastern tradition: MPers. *hndyšyšn y mrg* (Sundermann, 1978, p. 491, with n. 41; repr. 2001a, p. 787), and *hndyšyšn y t'ryg* (Sundermann, 1978, pp. 487, 491; repr. 2001a, pp. 783, 787), Sogdian *mrcync šm'r' z* (Sundermann, 1994, p. 45 /R/7-8;/ repr. 2001a, p. 702), Old Turkish *az yäk ölümlüg saqin* (Polotsky, 1933, p. 78). The Arabic name is *Hammāmat al-mawt* or simply *Hammāma* (Sundermann, 2007 with reference to F. de Blois) and possibly also **Ḥamiyat al-mawt* (cf. 4.2). *Enthymēsis* “consideration, esteem,” etc. render *maḥšabtā* in Mani’s native language which means, inter alia, ‘counsel, piece of advice.’ The best translation of the Manichean term is certainly Polotsky’s “(planendes) Sinnen” (planning).

Hylē is *mala* in both senses: the plurality of all phenomena of evil and the *genetrix* of everything evil. Matter, in Manichean understanding, is not just a passive object of formation. It develops its own activities; it is inspired by destructive energy. Therefore the opposition of God and *Hylē* cannot be reduced to an opposition of spirit and matter. The opposition is good material spirit and bad spirited matter. The destructive energy of matter is called the *Enthymēsis* of death.

Since *Hylē* is everything evil, it is whatever all the demons are or manifest or produce. It is in all the *archōns* (*Keph.*, p. 122, ll. 26-27; tr. Gardner, p. 130), in [earth and] water and the cosmic wheels (*Keph.*, pp. 122-23; tr. Gardner, p. 130), it is the primeval monster which Adamas overcame and imprisoned (*Keph.*, p. 116, ll. 18-22; tr. Gardner, p. 122), the “sin” (the semen) which the seduced *archōns* emitted and which became a tree on earth (*Keph.*, p. 137, ll. 23-29; tr. Gardner, p. 145). *Hylē* is the *formatrix corporum* (Henning, 1937, p. 38, ll. 664-66; repr. Henning, 1977 I, p. 452) and, appearing as *Ašqalūn* and *Nebrō'ēl*, the procreators of Adam and Eve (M 7800 /R/7-10 and ff./, ed. Sundermann, 1994, pp. 45-46; repr. Sundermann, 2001a, pp. 702-703).



The Prince/the King of Darkness. The World of Darkness is the anarchic and chaotic battlefield of innumerable hosts of demons. Before they made the World of Light the common target of their aggression, their only objective was mutual laceration and communal sex. The dissension of the demons was enhanced by their inability to communicate, to understand each other's language (*Keph.*, p. 32, ll. 1-9; tr. Gardner, p. 36). Their mutual conflicts did not end with their onslaught on the World of Light. And yet, even the World of Darkness accommodated to the enumerative patterns of Manichean doctrine, and to a hierarchical order of its pandaemonium.

The World of Darkness was regarded as consisting of the five realms of the Dark Elements. An arch-demon, an *archōn* or king, commanded each of those realms, and above them the Prince or King of Darkness ruled as their chief commander. His name or rather title is attested in Syriac as *mlk ḥšwk'* (*mlek ḥešūkā*), Copt. *prro mpkeke*, Lat. *princeps tenebrarum* (Vermes and Lieu, p. 47, n. 41). In the Eastern Manichean languages he is given the proper name of the Zoroastrian arch-demon Ahriman: MPers. and Parth. *'hrmyn* (*Ahremen*), Sogd. and Old Turkish *šmnw* (*šimnu*). Cf. Sundermann, 1979, p. 101, sub 3/20; repr. Sundermann, 2001a, p. 127, on the name *šimnu* cf. N. Sims-Williams, 1992, p. 40. Further identifications: With Satan (from Hebr. *sātān* and directly Syr. *sātānā*): Parth. *s't'n* (Andreas – Henning, 1934, p. 65; repr. Henning, 1977 I, p. 337), Copt. *satanas* (Dict., p. 89), Ar. *šaiṭān* (*Fehrest*, ed. Flügel, p. 53, l. 8; tr. Dodge, p. 778). Devil (from Gr. *Diabolos*): Copt. *diabolos* (Dict., p. 65), Ar. *eblis al-qadim* “the ancient devil” (hardly: “the devil without beginning”) (*Fehrest*, ed. Flügel, p. 53, l. 13; tr. Dodge, p. 778). The Jewish and Gnostic Aramaic name of Satan, *Sami'el*, appears once in Parth. M 104 /7-8/ (ed. Andreas – Henning, 1934, p. 882; repr. Henning, 1977 I, p. 309).

As lord of the five realms of the World of Darkness his body is a composition of attributes of the demons of all five parts. His head is a lion's head, his hands and feet are demon-like, his shoulders eagle-like, his belly is dragon-like, his tail fish-like (*Keph.*, pp. 30 – 31 [partly restored]; tr. Gardner, p. 35, also *Keph.*, pp. 77-78; tr. Gardner, pp. 79-80; *Fehrest*, ed. Flügel, p. 53, ll. 9-12; p. 86; tr. Dodge, p. 778). Simplicius aptly called him the *pentamorphe* (Puech, 1979, p. 132).

The sixth Coptic *Kephalaion* tends to combine the traditions on two different leaders of the demons, of *Hylē* and the King of Darkness, attributing both of them to the King of Darkness. This re-interpretation of older sources might perhaps explain why some non-Manichean records of Manichean mythology



ignore the figure of *Hylē* and ascribe her deeds to the King of Darkness. The most important exponent of this tendency is Theodore bar Konai.

The two procreators of man. The male partner's name is given by Theodore Bar Konai as ʾšqlwn (*Liber Scholiorum* II, p. 317, ll. 9. 13), read by Franz Cumont *Ašqaloun* rather than *Ašqaloun* because of Greek *Saklas* (Cumont, 1908, p. 42, n. 2), read ʾAšqālōn by Martin Schwartz as an adaptation to the old Palestinian cult centre at ʾAšqālōn (2006, p. 146). The spellings ʾšqlwn/šqlwn might indeed suggest (instead of (a)šaqalūn) the readings ʾšqalūn/šʿaqalūn. This may have been Mani's own form of the name, rendered in MPers., Parth., and Sogd. as šklwn and šqlwn (Sundermann, 1979, p. 99, sub 1/22; repr. 2001a, p. 125). The Chinese form *Lu-yi* depends on the Iranian and should be emended, according to Samuel Lieu, to [*Shi-llu-yi*] (Lieu, 1983, pp. 204-205). The Greek form of the name *Saklas* is evidently to be kept apart. Since this last word is explained as “the fool,” it should be derived from Syriac *saklā* “foolish” (cf. Layton, 1987, p. 36, n. d.). For *Saklas* Nöldeke supposed a derivation from *šaqqālā “porter” (in Cumont, 1908, p. 74-75, n. 6) which disregards *saklā*. *Sakla(s)* is indeed the form of the name in Western Manichean and non-Manichean texts (cf. Cumont, 1908, p. 73; *Dict.* p. 45; Lat. *Saclas*, *Dict.*, p. 211). The Coptic *Kephalaia* have *Saklas* (*Dict.*, p. 185), the *Fehrest* has *Sendid* (*Fehrest*, ed. Flügel, p. 60, l. 8; tr. Dodge, p. 785, etc.).

Ašqalūn's consort is spelled in Syriac *nbrwʾyl* (Michael Syrus) and also *nmrʾyl* and *nqbʾyl* (Theodore bar Konai, *Liber Scholiorum* II, ed. Scher, p. 317, ll. 12. 13). Cf. Cumont, 1908, p. 42, n. 3, where Priscilian's *Nebroel* is quoted. This form advocates a reading with *ō* but Gnostic texts from Nag Hammadi have *ū*, spelled in Coptic *Nebrouel* (Layton, pp. 103, 113). A convincing explanation of the forms of the name is given by Schwartz, 2006, p. 145. She remains anonymous in the Coptic Manichean sources. In Iranian languages (Parth., Sogd.) *Nebrōʾēl* is replaced by the name *Pēsūs* and in Middle Persian probably by *Afsōsag* (Sundermann, 1979, p. 103, sub 4/23; idem, 2005, pp. 207-12; otherwise explained in Schwartz, 2006, p. 145). But the Chinese rendering *Ye-luo-yang* clearly derives from Syriac *Nebrōʾēl* (Chavannes – Pelliot, 1911, p. 525, n. 2. Lieu's derivation from the incorrect form *Nebrod* is unlikely).

On the myth of *Ašqalūn* and *Nebrōʾēl* and their procreation of the first human couple in a “suite d'actes répugnants de cannibalisme et de sexualité” cf. Puech, 1949, pp. 80-81; Polotsky, 1935, coll. 255-256; repr. Widengren, 1977, p. 122. The main sources are listed in Puech, 1949, p. 173, n. 328. To be added are mainly *Fehrest*, ed. Flügel, p. 58, ll. 11-15; pp. 90-91; tr. Dodge, p. 783 and Sogd.



M 7800 (ed. Sundermann, 1994, pp. 45-46; repr. Sundermann, 2001a, pp. 702-703).

Demons in the Book of the Giants. A number of proper names of *egrēgoroi* and giants were adopted from the myth of the fallen angels in the Jewish Enoch literature (see [ENOCH, BOOKS OF](#)). They are attested in the Middle Persian, Sogdian and Old Turkish versions of Mani's *Book of the Giants*. The names are either kept in their Aramaic form or replaced by Iranian legendary names or formally adapted to Iranian name types. On these names cf. in general Henning, 1943, pp. 52-56; repr. 1977 II, pp. 115-19. Of particular interest are the names *hwb'byš* (*Hubābiš*) and *'tnbyš* (*Atnabiš*) which render Aramaic forms and go back to Akkadian *Óumbaba*, the adversary of Gilgameš, and *Utnapištim*, the Mesopotamian Flood-hero (Milik, pp. 29, 311 and 313; Reeves, 1992, p. 159, n. 373; 1993, pp. 114-15; accepted by Stuckenbruck, 1997, p. 73 and Schwartz, 2002, pp. 236-37), attested in MP. M 5900, ed. Sundermann, 1973, p. 78, ll. 1551, 1560, 1566; MP. L /I/V/5/, ed. Sundermann, 1984, p. 497; repr. Sundermann, 2001a, p. 621.

Ohyā's fight with his fellow giant *Māhaway* and with the sea monster Leviathan is given prominence in the Manichean tradition. On the part of Iranian epic traditions in Mani's *Book of the Giants* see in general Oktor Skjærvø, 1995, pp. 196-207.

In the western, i.e. Coptic, tradition the myth of the *egrēgoroi* and giants is only briefly referred to (Henning, 1943, p. 72; repr. Henning, 1977 II, p. 135), and no proper names are mentioned.

Demons in magical texts. MP. M 781 is a spell against the fever demon *'ydr'* (mentioned in /4/, ed. Henning, 1947, pp. 40, 41; repr. Henning, 1977 II, pp. 274, 275). Parth. M 1202 contains parts of a list of Indian and Central Asian *yakšas* (Henning, 1947, pp. 50-51, 52-53, 55; repr. Henning, 1977 II, pp. 284-85, 286-87, 289; further texts in Durkin-Meisterernst, pp. 141-60 and Morano, pp. 221-27).

Demons whose character is obscure: kundag, kunī, kundag, srāčkunde. The Manichean Sogdian *Parable Book* calls the "Giant of the Sea" who gives rise to the tides *sm'wtry kwn'y* "the *kunī* of the world-ocean" (Sundermann, 1985, p. 21, l. 25, p. 27, l. 116).

The demon's name is of Zoroastrian origin, because the Avestan *Vidēvdād* and some other sources mention a male *Kunda-* and a female *Kundī* (see



KUNDA[G]; Bartholomae, col. 447; Gray, p. 208; Bailey, pp. 72-76).

Since *kunī* and *kundag* with all their extensions are certainly names of the same Manichean demon and since a multitude of attributes and functions are attributed to this demon, the only plausible conclusion is that *kunī* /*kundag* is another name of the omnipresent and changeable *Hylē*.

Kūyūne. The Sogdian fragment So 18248 = TM 393 mentions in /27/ *kwγ-wn'kw*, Ahriman's son (ed. Henning, 1944, pp. 138, 141; repr. Henning, 1977 II, pp. 144, 147) as the spoiler of the Magian religion (also, in unclear context, in Sogd. M 549 /11, 13/ as *qwγwnyy* (*ibidem*, pp. 142-144; repr. Henning, 1977 II, pp. 148-50). But the identity of this demon or heretic remains unclear. On the name cf. Henning, 1944, p. 137; repr. Henning, 1977 II, p. 143.

Names of groups of demons. Groups of demons can be distinguished according to their physical nature or their function in the cosmological myth. 1. The monstrous demons of the five worlds of Darkness where they permanently fought against each other before they started their attack on the World of Light (cf. 3). 2. Many demons who were killed by the Living Spirit, the Mother of Life and their helpers, their bodies became the eight earths of this world and their skins the ten or eleven skies (cf. Sundermann, 1993, p. 311b; repr. Sundermann, 2001a, p. 16). 3. Further demons were imprisoned in the earths, the skies and the atmosphere, and were watched over by watcher demons and kept in custody by the sons of the Living Spirit (cf. Sundermann, 1993, p. 311b; repr. Sundermann, 2001a, p. 16). 4. The "abortions," i.e. demons who fell on the earth as a result of the seduction of the demons in the sky by the Third Messenger, their commanders *Ašqalūn* and *Nebrō'ēl* in particular (cf. Sundermann, 1993, pp. 311b-312a; repr. Sundermann, 2001a, pp. 16-17). 5. 200 "watchers" who fell on the earth, copulated with the daughters of men and established a tyrannical rule over mankind, until they were overcome by four punishing angels. The giants, half-demons, procreated by the "watchers" and their female consorts (Sundermann, 2001b, pp. 592b-593a). 6. The demons ruling in the bodies of men of the "Old Man" type or imprisoned in the human bodies of those who attained the state of "New Man" (Sundermann, 1992, pp. 25-26; Henning, 1937, p. 35, ll. 3-7; repr. Henning, 1977 I, p. 449) namely the microcosmic *Āz* and *Āwarzōg*. 7. Those many demons who, although caught in the building of Macrocosm, are still free and active enough to vex humankind with bad weather, bodily diseases, evil dreams and the tortures in hells and have to be averted, if not by divine powers, by magic spells and careful behavior.



The only strictly precise designations of groups of demons are the “abortions” (MPers. *’bg’ng’n*, Sogd. *pš’q, pjwq*) and the “watchers” (Copt. *egrēgoros*, Aram., MPers. *’yr*). They are both derived from the Jewish-Christian Enoch-tradition where the “watchers” were called *’yr* and the “abortions” probably *nēfilim* (Nöldeke, p. 536; cf. Henning, 1943, p. 53; repr. Henning, 1977 II, p. 116; Sundermann, 1994, p. 44, n. 30; repr. Sundermann, 2001a, p. 701).

Demon and she-demon. The general term for all the beings of the world of darkness is “demon,” Gr. and Copt. *daimōn* (*Dict.*, pp. 15, 32, 64-65); MPers., Parth. *dyw* (from *dēw*) (Boyce, 1977, p. 39); Sogd. *dyw* (*δēw*) (Gharib, 1995, p. 150); Old Turkish generalizes *šimnu* (*Drevnetyurkskiy Slovar’*, red. Nadelyaev et al., p. 523). The Syriac text of Theodore Bar Konai has instead “sons of darkness” (*bnwhy dhšwk’*, e.g. *Liber Scholiorum* II, ed. Scher, p. 314, l. 7).

“Demon” is often followed by a word meaning “she-demon.” In those cases it denotes the male demon. Terms for “she-demon” are words commonly translated as “witch”: MPers., Parth. *pryg*, Sogd. *pr’ykh* (also MPers. *pryg’nm’yg’n* “she-witches,” Sundermann, 1973, p. 73, l. 1449) from MPers. *parīg*, Av. *pairikā-*.

Another common term for “she-demon” is MPers. *drwxš* (also translated as “witch”; *druxš* from Av. *druxš*, Nom. Sing. of *druj-* “deceit”): *’wš ’c ns ’yg dyw’n ’wd ’ž rym ’y drwxšn kyrd ’n’d ’yn ns’h* “and from the impurity of the demons and from the filth of the she-demons she (i.e. the *Hylē*) made this corpse (of the body).” (MP. M 9+13, /4-8/, Henning, 1932, pp. 217, 227; repr. Henning, 1977 I, pp. 52, 62).

Spirits, ghosts. The Parthian word *cydyg* (M 6280, ed. Sundermann, 1973, p. 97, l. 1893, with n. 3) and Sogd. *cyty* (M 8005 = T iii 282 /3, 16/, ed. Henning, 1943, p. 66; repr. Henning, 1977 II, p. 129) mean, inter alia, ‘demon’ and are used in the same sense as *dyw*, etc. But the word is ethically neutral and can also denote divine beings. For the reading and etymology (probably *čēdīg/čēte*), cf. Benveniste, p. 174, n. 401.

Powers, principalities. The very general category of both divine and demonic powers is likely to go back to similar concepts of the New Testament (Gr. *arkhai, exousiai*) which draw on the Jewish apocryphal literature, inter alia the *Henoch* books (Schlier). The word is attested as *cam* and *exousiai* in Coptic, as *zōr* (*zwr*) in MPers. and *zāwar* (*z’wr*) in Parthian.



Chiefs, *archōns*. The Greek title *archōn* “regent, commander” first denoted the members of the Athenian governing council. The secular, political meaning of the word is sometimes also preserved in Manichean texts (*Psalm-Book*, p. 18, l. 13; p. 23, l. 22). In Manicheism, however, *archōn* commonly means a leading figure of the demonic hosts. This is also the widespread use of the term in Gnostic interpretation. For the gnostics *archōns* were preferably the rulers of the planetary spheres and the demiurge (Rudolph, pp. 74, 77, 172-73).

In Manichean parlance the word is indirectly attested in Greek polemical works (*Acta Arkhelai*, Epiphanius e.a.) as *archōn* (*Dict.*, p. 31) and likewise indirectly by Syriac polemicists (Theodore bar Konai, Ephrem Syrus) as *ʾrkwn* (Pl.), fem. *ʾrkwnṭwt* (*Dict.*, p. 3). So there is sufficient reason to assume that Mani himself used this term. In Manichean primary sources, *archōn* is mainly attested in Coptic texts (*Dict.*, p. 63). In Ebn Nadim’s report on the creation of the first human couple *Ašqalūn* (and his consort *Nebrō’ēl*) and also the guardians of Adam and Eve are called *archāns* (Ar. Pl. *al-arākina*, Dual *arkūnān*), cf. *Fehrest*, ed. Flügel, p. 58, ll. 12, 14, pp. 90-91; tr. Dodge, p. 783).

The title *archōnis* not attested in Eastern Manichean texts. If there were an equivalent it should be a word meaning “ruler, commander.”

Monsters: *mazanān*, *āsarēštārān*. The MPers. terms *mazanān* and *āsarēštārān* often appear side by side or replace each other and should therefore be treated together: *hnmn ʾy mzn’n wd ʾsryštr’n* “the meeting of the m. and ā.” (Andreas and Henning, 1932, p. 200 /V/i/6-8/; repr. Henning, 1977, I, p. 26), *ʾwyšn mzn’n u ʾsršt’rn ʾc yzd’n tyrsynd* “those m. and ā. fear the gods” (Andreas and Henning, 1932, p. 200 /V/i/29-31/).

Mazanān and *āsarēštārān* mostly denote the demonic abortions which fell on earth and became instrumental in the creation of Adam and Eve by their leaders *Ašqalūn* and *Nebrō’ēl*). Their human procreation is called *h’n zhg ʾy mzn’n u ʾsryšt’r’n* “that progeny of the m. and the ā.” (Andreas and Henning, 1932, p. 195 /R/i/26-27/ repr. Henning, 1977 I, p. 21), also, taking *mazanān* for both designations: *h’n zhg ʾy mzn ghwdg’n* “that progeny, the misbegotten ones of the m.” (Andreas and Henning, 1932, p. 198 /V/ii/16-17/ repr. Henning, 1977 I, p. 24).

Once an *āsarēštārān sārār*, a “chief of the ā.,” is mentioned who is likely to be *Hylē* herself: *u ʾwy ʾsryštr’n s’r’r hnmn ʾy mzn’n ʾwd ʾsryšt’r’n qyrd* “And that chief of the ā. arranged a meeting of the m. and ā.” (Andreas and Henning,



1932, p. 199 /V/i/5/ – p. 200 /V/i/9/ repr. Henning, 1977 I, pp. 25-26).

Ās(a)rēštār has first been derived by Skjærvø from **ā-srēš-* “to attach to, mix into” (see [ĀSRĒŠTĀR](#)).

This explanation might find some confirmation in what the Middle Persian cosmogonic text of *Mitteliranische Manichaica* I says about the *mazanān* and *āsarēštārān* who are taught by *Ašqalūn* and *Nebrō’ēl* to permanently “mix” (*’gnyn h’m hn’m ’myxt hynd* “one another, with joined limbs they mixed”) in order to contribute to the creation of Adam and Eve (Andreas and Henning, 1932, p. 195; repr. Henning, 1977, I, p. 21). If it was this that led to the designation of the demons as *āsarēštārān*, the word would actually mean “(permanently) copulating.” On the other hand Zieme has it made clear that the Old Turkish equivalents of *mzn* and (’)sryšt’r are *bādük* “great, giant” and *bašdang* “leader” (Zieme, p. 403). Bearing this in mind, Skjærvø revised his etymology and explained (’)sryšt’r as “chief,” lit. “standing at the head,” reading *āsarēštār* with *sar* “head” just as *bašdang* contains *baš* “head” (1997, p. 165, n. 10). If the *sar* and the *baš* somehow render the Greek *arkhē* the words might even be the Eastern equivalents of the Western term *archōn* (which is Wilkens’ translation of *bašdang*, 2001/2002, pp. 85, 90).

Mazan and *āsarēštār* seem to have no equivalent in the Western Manichean literature.

Māzendarān (*m’zyndr’n*), a Middle Persian term taken from Zoroastrian or perhaps general Iranian mythology (cf. Molé, pp. 282-305), is used to designate the demons fettered to the skies and their demonic “watchers” in particular. It also covers those guardians who came down to earth to procreate the species of the giants. Cf. Sundermann, 1994, p. 42; repr. 2001a, p. 699.

Ill-shaped (demons), *uzdēsān*. The word is used in orthodox Zoroastrian texts to denote heathen idols (cf. Boyce, 1975b, pp. 93-111, esp. p. 96, n. 15). As far as the sources allow us to judge, the Manicheans understood and used the term also in its literal sense as “disfigured, ill-shaped (demon)” (cf. Nyberg 1974, p. 199, s.v. *uzdaēs-tacār*). The Parthian magical text M 1202/R/9/ mentions beside other demons *wzdys’n t’ryg’n* “dark u.” (ed. Henning, 1947; pp. 50-51; repr. Henning, 1977 II, pp. 284-85).

Dragons, *azdahāg*, *aždahāg* (see [AŽDAHĀ](#)). The Manicheans enriched their demonological inventory by adopting the Zoroastrian dragon word (MPers.



azdahāg, from Av. *aži dahāka*). The term could replace *mazan*, *zōr*, *dēw*, etc.

Wrath, *xēšm*, *išmag*. The demonic quality of “wrath, fury” (Av. *aēšma-*, MPers. *xēšm*) became in Zoroastrianism a most powerful demon, too (reflected in the figure of *Asmudeus* of the *Book of Tobit*). The Manicheans adopted the word in its double meaning. It served them to express the basic demonic quality of the aggressive will to attack, subdue and destroy, just as *āz*, *āwarzōg* and *āsarēštār* stand for greed and the lustful desire of the world of darkness in particular. They constitute, taken together, the spirituality of the body: *mynwgyh’ ý tn ý ’st xyšm u ’z u ’wrzwg* “the spirituality of the body which is wrath and greed and lust” (Andreas and Henning, 1933, p. 300, ll. 1-2; repr. Henning, 1977 I, p. 197). It is in this sense that one should understand the observation of Boyce that *išmag* is “the active spirit of Hyle” (Boyce, 1951, p. 912, n. 8) and explain as *Hylē* the *gryw xyšmyn*, the “Wrathful Self,” of MP. M 6120 /42-43/ (ed. Henning, 1943, pp. 67-68; repr. Henning, 1977 II, pp. 130-31). “Wrath” is not missing in the Coptic texts (cf. 2) but as a designation of demons it seems to be restricted to Parthian. The Manichean understanding of the word explains why “wrath” was not restricted to a single demonic figure but used in a collective sense.

Stars, *axtarān*, *abāxtarān*. The Manichean views on the celestial bodies were contradictory. On the one hand, stars were light particles of the World Soul fixed to the skies (Sundermann, 1973, p. 26), on the other hand the Manicheans shared the consequences of the Gnostic view (adopted also in Sasanian Zoroastrianism) that the planets (MPers. *abāxtarān*; see [BĀKTAR \[1\]](#)) were fatal powers hindering the soul from returning to its heavenly home. The Manicheans extended the negative view of the stars to the Zodiacal signs (MPers. *axtarān*; see [AXTAR](#)) too (*Keph.*, pp. 166-69; tr. Gardner, pp. 176-79; Andreas and Henning, 1932, p. 189; repr. Henning, 1977 I, p. 15. Cf. Stegemann, pp. 214-23). See also [PLANETS](#).

Aggressors, **āb(a)dāgān*. Among the great number of appellative names designating (groups of) demons, “aggressor” is an often-attested one. As an appellative name the word can also be used as an adjective. Unfortunately neither the name nor the function of these demons is quite clear.

Abortions. The female demons, fettered to the skies and seduced by the Third Messenger, gave birth to abortions which fell on the earth and became demons and animals. Their chiefs, *Ašqalūn* and *Nebrō’ēl*, were instrumental in the creation of Adam and Eve (Sundermann, 1993, p. 312a; repr. Sundermann, 2001a, p. 17). The source of the myth of the abortions is probably the Hebrew



tradition on the *nef̄ īlīm* which Mani understood as “abortions,” Pl. of *nef̄āl* (Henning, 1943, p. 53; repr. Henning, 1977 II, p. 116; Sundermann, 1994, p. 44, with n. 3; repr. Sundermann, 2001a, p. 701). The word is rendered in Greek as *ektrōma* (*Dict.*, p. 34), in Coptic as *houhe* (*Dict.*, p.171), Middle Persian *ʿbgʿng* (*abgānag*) (Boyce, 1977, p. 5), Sogdian *pšʿq* (*pašāk*) (Gharib, p. 300) and, for the children of the latter, *pjwq* (*pažūk*) (Gharib, p. 275).

Watchers. The term goes back to the Jewish *Book of Giants* of the Enoch literature where “watchers” (Aram. *ʿyr*, Gr. *egrēgoroi*, Copt. *egrēgoros*) designated those 200 commanders of the hosts of angels who, attracted by the beauty of women, descended on earth, established a tyrannical rule, copulated with the daughters of men and procreated a race of giants. This is an elaboration of Gen. 2. 1-4. It was adopted and retold in Mani’s *Book of the Giants*. For Mani the *egrēgoroi* were not seduced angels but demons, and as “watchers” they were commanders of those demons who had been imprisoned in the skies.

Mani himself must have used this word *ʿyr* since it was adopted in the Middle Persian translation of the *Book of the Giants*, as was shown by Henning (1934a, pp. 29-30; repr. Henning, 1977 I, pp. 343-44; *idem* 1943, p. 53; repr. Henning, 1977 II, p. 116; also Sundermann, 1973, p. 78, l. 1562).

Giants. “Giants” are the sons of the *egrēgoroi* and of earthly women. They took part in the tyrannical rule and the mutual onslaughts of their procreators. They ultimately suffered punishment at the hands of the angels who put an end to the chaos of the pre-diluvian time. They were only half-demons.

The Coptic *Kephalaia* use the Greek word *gigas* (*Dict.*, p. 64), as do Greek anti-Manichean texts (*Dict.*, p. 32). In the Middle Persian version of the *Book of the Giants* the word is *kʿw* and *qʿw*, pl. *kwʿn* (Boyce, 1975, pp. 51, 53), to be pronounced *kaw* with written plene *ʿ*. Sogdian has *kwyy*, *kwʿy* (*kawi*), see Gharib, 1995, p. 202 (only *qwyy* quoted). From the Parthian fragment M 5815 II we know that *k(ʿ)wʿn* was also the title of the Middle Persian version of Mani’s *Book of the Giants* (Andreas – Henning, 1934, p. 858, ll. 10 and 11; repr. Henning, 1977 I, p. 285).

The *kawān* were according to the Zoroastrian belief not demonic at all, and in their Parthian texts the Manicheans used *kawān* in *bonam partem* for those who forcefully combatted the demons, as e.g. Mār Zakū.



Further names of demons. Collective designations of demons are virtually numberless. Many of them are listed in enumerations of demonic evildoers in magical exorcisms and dogmatic expositions. A good part of those names is surely no more than ad hoc inventions without a real dogmatic background. What they do show is how easy it was to transform any negative ethical quality into names of demons.

In the Parthian magical text M 1202 /R/8-10/, which betrays strong Indian influence, the conjuration is directed against *hrwyn dyw'n yxš'n pryg'n drwj'n rx[šs'n]'wzdys'n t'ryg'n 'wd w'd'n bzg'n hrwyn z'dg'n [t'ryg]'wd šb'nyg* “all demons, *yakšas*, witches, *drujs*, *rākšasas*, idols of darkness and spirits of evil, all the sons of darkness and night” (Henning, 1947, pp. 50-51; repr. Henning, 1977 II, pp. 284-285).

Demons in the Manichean and in neighboring religions. The Manichean demonology has so obvious parallels in other religions of the Near Eastern region that it is hard to dismiss them as sheer coincidences. But even if the Manicheans borrowed some alien concepts and images from other religions this does not affect the essence of their own demon-lore which is a piece of speculation of its own.

The Gnostic part in Manichean belief and ethics is so obvious and omnipresent that Manicheism is mostly regarded as a Gnostic religion. The demonology confirms the general impression that Manicheism developed under a strong impact of Gnostic ideas and terminological assessments.

It is most likely that Mani learnt the concept of *Hylē* from Marcion (rather than from Bardaisan who had also used that term) and applied it to his own strictly dualistic system. Influence from the Manichean on the later Marcionite side is also envisaged by Beck (pp. 24, 28), but it is much more difficult to prove that and if so, it was very restricted.

Mani's dualism was confirmed and stimulated by a kind of “mitigated (i.e. Zurvanite) dualism” (Sundermann, 1997, p. 348) in third century Zoroastrianism (see [ZURVANISM](#)). But this does not mean that a remarkable influence of the Zoroastrian on the Manichean demon-lore can be stated. On the contrary, the character of the Manichean demonology distinguishes the Manichean idea of the world of evil markedly from the Zoroastrian one.

The existence of a prominent demon *Āz* both in Eastern Manicheism and in



Middle Iranian Zoroastrianism has led to the assumption that the promotion of the Zoroastrian demon was stimulated by the Manichean pattern (Sundermann, 1979, p. 124, n. 133; repr. Sundermann, 2001a, p. 150). H.-P. Schmidt has shown, however, that the rise of the Middle Iranian *Āz* in Zoroastrianism can largely be explained as an internal Zoroastrian development and that a possible Manichean influence should be restricted to the idea that *Āz* is also sexual desire and to the work of *Zādspram* (Schmidt, 2000, pp. 517-27, esp. p. 524).

Mani's Elkhasaite, i.e. Jewish-Christian background, mediated his knowledge of Jewish traditions which were acceptable to him as far as they concerned the antediluvian period. His main sources were *Gen.* 6.1-4 and the apocryphal Enoch literature, the "Book of the Giants" and the astronomical book in particular which supplied him with the material on the myth of the fallen abortions (Henning, 1943, p. 53; repr. Henning, 1977 II, p. 116; Stroumsa, pp. 158-61; Sundermann, 1994, p. 44, n. 30; repr. Sundermann, 2001a, p. 701) as well as the story of the "watchers" and the giants which became the subject of his *Book of the Giants*.

Manicheism and Mandeism share the description of the King of Darkness as a pentamorphe, composite creature. The similarity of both presentations is so striking that it cannot be fortuitous. H.-Ch. Puech has compared both demons in a detailed study. His convincing result is that the Mandaic version depends on the Manichean one (Puech, 1979, pp. 114-16). It is more difficult to judge of the relation between the Manichean *Hylē* and Satan on the one hand and the Mandaic *Rūḥā* and *Ur* on the other (Puech, 1979, pp. 136-37). But one is inclined to suppose independence of the Manichean from the Mandaic tradition.

Indian, i.e. Buddhist influence is restricted to the Eastern Manichean languages Parthian, Sogdian, Old Turkish and Chinese, and to a modest enrichment of terminology: the names of groups of demons, *rākṣasas* and *yakṣas*.



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