



## ŠĀBUHRAGĀN

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**ŠĀBUHRAGĀN** (Šāpurākān, Šāburākān, Šāburkān), one of the books written by Mani (216-274/7 CE), founder of the Manichean religion, in which he summarized his teaching systematically. The title is to be translated as “dedicated to Šābuhr” (Kessler, 1889, pp. 181-83). The historians in Arabic, [Ebn Nadim](#) (936-95) and [Biruni](#) (973-1048), cite this book in their lists of Mani’s canonical scriptures. According to them, this work is the only one Mani wrote in the Middle Persian language. However, W. Sundermann concluded from the analysis of the Middle Persian hymn cycle *Gōwišn i griw zindag* “Speech of/about the Living Soul” that Mani might have written this cycle and other works in Middle Persian (1985, p. 648). M. Boyce characterizes the style of the *Šābuhragān* as “remarkably awkward and heavy,” which results from the fact that Middle Persian written prose was still in its infancy in the 3rd century CE. On the other hand, M. Boyce (1983, pp. 1196-97) stated on the basis of the style that it would be doubtful whether Mani himself wrote the Middle Persian version of the work. She guessed that Mani wrote this book in Aramaic and translated it into Middle Persian.

Another discussion point is whether Mani wrote *Šābuhragān* in Manichean script or in Pahlavi. On the one side, one would suggest that he introduced not only his religious system but also his special script. Otherwise, if one accepts that the Manichean script was not invented by Mani himself but was in fact Palmyrene script (Durkin-Meisterernst, 2000, p. 161), then he had no reason to use this script, which was not familiar to the Sasanian court. Therefore the Pahlavi script must have been used.



*Arabic sources.* Ya‘q°ubi (second half of the 9th century), Šahrastāni (d. 1153), and Ebn al-Mortazā (d. 1139), in their essays on Mani and his teaching, summarized the explanation of the Realm of the Light and its sovereign and the succession of the prophets, of whom Mani regarded himself as the completion and the seal. According to the Arab historians, Mani dedicated this book to the Sasanian king Šābuhr I (r. 241-72), son of Ardašir I (r. 224-41). The hagiographic record of Ebn Nadim connects the first public appearance of Mani with the coronation of Šābuhr. Irrespective of the difficulties in determining the date of Šābuhr’s coronation, presumably on 12 April 240, it took place a few years before Mani wrote *Šābuhragān*, the text of the [Cologne Mani Codex](#), and the Middle Iranian texts reporting on his journeys to various countries of the Roman Empire and to India. A certain Firuz, brother of Šābuhr I, seems to have arranged Mani’s audience with Šābuhr I. According to the studies by W. Sundermann, this took place in 242, when Mani was 26 years old. Unfortunately one cannot find any indication that the *Šābuhragān* was presented to Šābuhr I at this event. We can assume that the purpose of the text was to introduce to the Sasanian ruler Mani, as the final prophet, and his religious system (Sundermann, 1990; 1993, pp. 44-45). Ya‘q°ubi (*Ta’rik* [repr., 1969] I, p. 181) reports on Mani’s missionary success with Šābuhr and gives a short survey on his writings. (Houtsma’s translation of the description of the world is corrected in Henning, 1936.)

The historians in Arabic excerpted or paraphrased whole passages from the *Šābuhragān*. Ebn Nadim mentions three chapters (*Fehrest*, tr. Dodge, II, pp. 797-98): “Al-Shāburqān, which includes a section called Dissolution of the Hearers, a second section called Dissolution of the Elect, and a third section called Dissolution of the Transgressors.” The chapter “What the State of Future Life Will Be after the Disappearance of the World, with a Description of Heaven and Hell” is regarded as a quotation from *Šābuhragān*, without being indicated as such. Biruni refers to *Šābuhragān* when he gives the dates of Mani’s early life: “Mani was born in a village called Mardinu on the upper canal of Kuthā, according to his own statement in his book Shāburqān, in the chapter on the coming of the prophet, in the year 527 of the era of the Babylonian astronomers, i.e., the *Æra Alexandri*, in the 4th year of the king Adharbān. He received the first divine revelation in his thirteenth year, *Anno Astronomorum Babyloniciæ* 539, in the 2nd year of Ardashir, the King of Kings” (*Ātār*, tr. Sachau [repr., Frankfurt am Main, 1984], p. 190).

Biruni continues: “Wisdom and deeds have always from time to time been

brought to mankind by the messengers of God. So in one age they have been brought by the messenger, called Buddha, to India, in another by Zarādusht to Persia, in another by Jesus to the West. Thereupon this revelation has come down, this prophecy in this last age through me, Mani, messenger of the God of truth of Babylonia.” The reading “wisdom and deeds” (*al-ḥekma wa’l- a’ṁāl*) was emended by M. Tardieu (1981) to “wisdom and knowledge” based on Šahrastāni: “the first person to whom God gave knowledge and wisdom (*al-’elm wa’l-ḥekma*) was Adam.” The difference in readings is explained as a manuscript error; Biruni has *a’ṁāl* (pl., metathesis from *’elm* to *’amal* and further to *a’ṁāl*) compared with *’elm* written by Šahrastāni. The formula “wisdom and knowledge” (Mid. Pers. xrd ’wd d’nyšn *xrad ud dānišn*) is used four times at the beginning of the *Šābuhragān* (MacKenzie, 1979, lines 18-21; MacKenzie, 1980, line 45). It is true that the formula “wisdom and deeds” (whyh° ’wd kyrdg’n *wihih ud kirdagān*) occurs at least once, in a text formerly regarded as belonging to the *Šābuhragān* (M 5794/I/c/2 + T II D 126; *Mir. Man.* II, pp. 295-97; Sundermann, 1996, p. 21); it also contains, some lines further on, the formula “wisdom and knowledge.”

*Fragments of the Middle Persian text.* Fragments from five different manuscripts with parts of the Middle Persian *Šābuhragān* are known at present. The first two can be identified with certainty by headers and parallel texts: (1) M 470, etc. (eschatology), (2) M 49, etc. (eschatology and the early appearance of Mani). The three following manuscripts have only been identified on the basis of common terminology: (3) M 98/I/, M 99/I/, (4) M 7980, and (5) M 506.

These fragments belong to the manuscripts unearthed in the Turfan oasis at the beginning of the 20th century (see [TURFAN EXPEDITIONS](#)), F. W. K. Müller identified them by their heading š’bwhrg’n *Šābuhragān*. Text identical to Ebn Nadim’s quotation of the eschatological part of *Šābuhragān* was identified by him in the Turfan manuscript fragment M 470 (1904, pp. 20-22). He published the first six fragments containing parts of *Šābuhragān* in Middle Persian. M 475, M 477, M 482, and M 472 show the complete title of *Šābuhragān* in their headlines: dw bwn ’y š’bwhrg’n (M 482/I/v/Ü/ + M 472/I/r/Ü/) “The two principles of the *Šābuhragān*.” Their sequence could be reconstructed by imprints in mirror script of the preceding and following pages. The original place of M 470 and M 473 could not be ascertained. Their text includes a quotation of Matt. 25:31-46 concerning the Last Judgement and also a description of the Final Fire that follows after it, as well as the text known



from Ebn Nadim's parallel. The description of the coming of the end of the world is taken from the apocalyptic prophecies in the Christian Gospels (Matthew 24, Mark 13, Luke 21; Boyce, 1975, pp. 76-77).

C. Salemann transcribed the six fragments (M 470, M 473a-c, M 475, M 477, M 482, M 472) in Hebrew script. M. Boyce published a running transliteration in the following order: M 473, M 475, M 477, M 482, M 472, M 470 (1975, text z). She moved M 473 from the end to the beginning of the text, and she took into account the new order of the joined fragments M 473a and M 473b, as discovered by A. Ghilain (1946).

A remarkable characteristic of *Šābuhragān* is that it uses an extraordinary nomenclature. Most representative is that Christ is not called Jesus but *Xradešahr* (*yazad*), which means "(God of the) Realm of Wisdom". His function in *Šābuhragān* as Jesus the Splendor, the origin of the Nous, is discussed several times. The function as deliverer of the redeeming wisdom and knowledge belongs to the tasks of the Nous, but the Judge is Jesus himself. It is the same case with Adam, the First Man, who has the name *nwxwyr Noxwir* (see also Colditz, 2005).

D. N. MacKenzie presented in two articles (1979, 1980) a comprehensive study of the fragments then known and some others, identified by M. Boyce and himself with the help of W. Sundermann. He reconstructed 426 legible lines on 8 folios (with 24 lines on each page), which formed one quire for binding. This is published in the first article as a nearly complete running text. The second article published one other sheet, which was the outer sheet of the same quire, plus a fragmentary sheet also belonging to that quire and some more fragments. The latter are edited in the order of the M-numbers, because it was not possible to reconstruct their original sequence: fa = M 470 b, fb = M 487, fc = M 497a, fd = M 510a, fe = 510b, fg = M 510c, fh = M 537c, fj = M 542a, fk = M 1502, fl = M 1508, fm = M 8256. The sheets A-H form the first part of the quire. The sheets J-Q form the second part. A, B, C, and E are double sheets; their second sides are called, M, O, P, and Q. K, L, and N are missing. This is the recent succession: A: M 519/I/ + M 473/I/, B: M 475a/I/, C: m 477, D: M 482 + M 477b, E: M 472/I/ + M 487b (1), F: M 535 + M 536 + M 487b (2), F: M 470a + M 497b, H: M 505a + M 542b/I/ + M 1745 + M 470c, J: M 505b + M 542b/II/ + M 475c, M: M472/II/, O: M 477/II/, P: M 475/II/ + M 475 b, Q: M 519/II + M 473/II/. The small remainder of the preceding quire consists of a: M 537a/I/ + M 473c, b: M 537b, and q: M 537a/II/. The small remnant of the text of this quire contains the end of the Great War with the final victory of the light forces. The following

quire contains the beginning of the Judgement of Christ.

W. Sundermann (1981, p. 92) identified the fragment M 805a + M 2070 + M 270b/r/1-16/ as a parallel to page J = M 505b + /r/21-v/11/ of the *Šābuhragān* published by MacKenzie. The fragments M 49, M 270b, M 464a, M 805a, M 2070, M 3414, M 6810, and M 6812 (all published in Sundermann, 1981, texts 5.1-5.6) also belong to this manuscript. Of these, M 49/I/ has a close relation to M 805a. Therefore one can affirm that these fragments are parts of a second manuscript of the *Šābuhragān*, containing parallel and unique text. Because of the usage of the first person singular, one could assume that Mani wrote this record himself. W. Sundermann surmises that such text may come from the chapter “Of the coming of the prophet” (*maji’ al-rasul*) quoted by Biruni (*Ātār*, pp. 118, 207-8; tr. Sachau p. 121). It contains mainly autobiographical records of the beginning of Mani’s career as a prophet. It corresponds to *Kephalaia* [*Keph.*] 1 “Concerning the Ad[vent] of the Apostle,” (Polotsky and Böhlig, 1940, p. 15.22-24) and the Cologne Mani Codex. It relates Mani’s first appearance in front of his family to teach them about the new knowledge he learned from the Light twin (nrjmyg *Narjamig*; M 49), his participation in the redeeming of Light and his origin in Babel (M 3414), and his travels through Babylonia, Bēt ‘Arbāyē, and the Roman Empire (M 464a). The fragments M 805a, M 2070 + M 270b, which have a text parallel to that in M 475c + (MacKenzie, 1979, text J) contain eschatological details referring to (1) the sinners, (2) those people who do not enter the circle of the Electi but will find salvation, and (3) the punishment of the devils and the evil forces of darkness. The comparison of both manuscripts shows great consistency, which proves the conscientious tradition of this text. M 6812 is very small, with traces of a few words, but one can read nq̄xwyr and reconstruct Ohrmezd and Ahrmen. M 6810 is also badly damaged. W. Sundermann supposes that the awakening instruction of Adam by Jesus took place in this text, which is mentioned in M 519 + M 473 I (MacKenzie, 1979, text A).

Although there is no indication in headlines or from quotations, several cosmogonic fragments belonging to one manuscript and published in *Mir. Man.* I (T III 260 = M 7980-M 7984) have a close connection to the identified *Šābuhragān* texts (Henning, 1933, p. 250; Schaefer, 1935, p. 579). According to Boyce (1960, p. 132) and Sundermann (1979, p. 97, n. 10), one can say there is a great probability that these fragments belong to the *Šābuhragān*. This is supported by the usage of the names quoted above for Jesus and Adam, and of those for other gods, and also by the style of the Middle Persian. W. B. Henning



pointed out that the fragments M 98/I/ and M 99/I/ (published in Müller, 1904, pp. 34-43) could also belong to the same book as the cosmogonic fragments quoted above. He stated that M 98/I/ and M 99/I/ precede the others. The pages M 98/I/ and M 99/II/ contain Parthian hymns. So we have here a manuscript collection of several different literary types of texts (the so-called *Sammelhandschriften*)—a usage which is very common in the Manichean Turfan materials. Possibly these books were arranged for liturgical use. The header of M 98/I/v-r/ and M 99/I/v-r/ forms a running text, which is interpreted as part of a benediction of the scribe, as sometimes occurs in colophons. There is a point of discussion in the reading of the beginning of M 99/I/v as (')w, where actually 'd is written (cf. Yoshida, 1993, p. 132.)

M. Hutter (1992) published a concise new edition of both groups of manuscripts, including M 506, which already was published by W. Sundermann (1973, pp. 68-69; see rev., Lieu, 1998, p. 107). M 98/I/ and M 99/I/ contain 100 lines of continuous, well-preserved text, which describes parts of the Second creation of the 10 skies and 8 earths by Mihryazad, who is the Living Spirit.

The fragments M 7980-M 7984 represent possibly a fourth manuscript of the *Šābuhragān*. M 506 contains parallel text which provides some lines of text missing between M 7980 II and M 7981 II in a fifth handwriting. M 7980-M 7984 consist of 4 double sheets and one single leaf (M 7982). It is in a very small script written in two columns with 34 lines. The headlines characterize the texts as a discourse (Mid. Pers. *gwyšn gōwišn*) on several topics. This was not the usual practice in the eschatological manuscripts, where the headlines quote the title of the whole book. The order of the fragments can be reconstructed as follows: M 7984 II/r/i-v/ii/4/ “discourse on the substantial” (presumably the text of M 98/I/ and M 99/I/ belongs to the same chapter); M 7984 II/v/ii/9-34/ + M 7981I + M 7980 I/r/i/1-v/i/14/ “discourse on god Narisah”; one page is missing after M 7984 II, containing the seduction of the male archons; M 7980 I/v/ii/ + M 7980 II/r/ + /v/ + M 506 + M 7981 II/r/ + /v/ “discourse on the [sun’s] \*stations the days”; M 7984 I/r/i/1-ii/28/ “discourse on the diminution of day night”; M 7984 I/r/ii/33-v/ii/ + M 7982/r/ + /v/ M 7983 I/r/ + /v/ “discourse on Gēhmurd and Murdiyānag”; and M 7983 II/r/ + /v/ “discourse on the soul and the body.” The double sheets belong to two following quires. The first consists of M 7984, M 7981, and M 7980. M 7984 was the outer sheet. Because usually more than four folios form one quire, one has to assume that more double sheets are missing between M 7980/I/ and M 7980/II/, except for

the double sheet after M 7984/II/. M 7982 belongs to the text quire, followed immediately by M 7983/I/. All three fragments M 7984/I/, M 7982, and M 7983 belong to the chapter on Gēhmurd and Murdiyānag without any break. That is why one can reconstruct their running order. Noteworthy is the condition of M 7982/r/, M 7983/I/v/ and M 7983/II/v/, where are preserved traces of imprints on the outer margin and also a fold mark. Unfortunately one cannot identify what text is preserved in mirror script. Such traces can be due to conditions after the destruction of the Manichean library.

This cosmological text concerns the final part of the creation of the cosmic world and the evocation of the Third Messenger = *Rōšnšahr* and Jesus/Nous = *Xradešahr*. The third divinity of the Third evocation, the Maiden of Light, is not mentioned in the preserved text. Next it shows how, through the seduction of the male demons, the plants begin to grow and, through the seduction of the female demons, animals appear on earth. Then comes the building of the prison for the demons and the New Paradise, and an account of how the five Light Elements will be redeemed. There follows a chapter on the cycle of the sun the days which explains the orbit of the sun and its function on earth. W. B. Henning demonstrated that this part was taken from an Aramaic version of the Book of Enoch, but one revised at the beginning of the 7th century in connection with the schism of the [Dināvariya](#) in Samarqand (*Mir. Man.* I, p. 189, n. 1; Henning, 1934, pp. 32-35; Sundermann, 1986b, p. 316; Tubach, 1988 and 1992). The next chapter deals with the creation of the first man and the first woman (Gēhmurd and Murdiyānag) by the demon Āz. The final chapter of the preserved manuscript concerns human life on earth. Between this last page and the preceding one there are some sheets lacking; the missing parts deal with the mission of Jesus, who wakes Adam, and the seduction of Adam by Eve, etc., as Henning noticed (*Mir. Man.* I, p. 201, n. 3). About the cosmogonic mythological tradition (see [COSMOGONY AND COSMOLOGY iii](#)) we are also informed by many sources, such as Augustine's *Epistula fundamenti*, Theodor bar Khonai's (see [BAR KŌNAY](#)) "On Māni's teachings concerning the beginning of the world," the *Fehrest* of Ebn Nadim, and hymns and sermons composed by the Manicheans themselves. So we can compare and complete the details. It is under discussion whether M 299a (Henning, 1934, pp. 27-28) is part of *Šābuhragān* (Sundermann, 1986b, p. 315). This fragment says that the Great Nous, here called Holy Spirit, from time to time sends prophets into various regions, mentioning Šēm, Sēm, Enōš, Nikotheos ... and Henoch. Certainly the *Šābuhragān* as known by quotations from Biruni mentions another chain of prophets: Zarathustra, Buddha, Jesus, and Mani.



*Translations into Parthian.* There are some Parthian texts which seem to be paraphrasing translations of the *Šābuhragān*: M 183 + M 3404 (Sundermann, 1973, pp. 61-64, text 11) describes the Realm of Light and the Realm of Darkness and the creation of sun and moon by the Living Spirit. This text shows clear agreements with M 98. According to W. Sundermann the headline should now be reconstructed as *dw bwn* “two principles” (Sundermann, 1986a, p. 84, n. 183, misprinted as M 182; Hutter, 1992, p. 144, n. 30). The parallel text M 354 fills some gaps and provides two more lines (Sundermann, 1973, pp. 62-64).

M 5651 contains a small part of an autobiographical account in which Mani refers to the Light Twin (Sundermann, 1981, pp. 98-99, text 6). But there is no headline (as mentioned in Hutter, 1992, p. 145). Rather, this headline is preserved in M 728/r/, a single sheet with some kind of index of contents, comprising items numbered from “ninth” to “thirty-seventh” and with the end of the preceding eighth part. W. Sundermann supposes cautiously that it could belong to a book with contents similar to those of *Šābuhragān* (Hutter, 1992, p. 145).

The fragments M 5794 (T II D 126), M 9, and M 8251 (T III D 278) cited by A. Adam as belonging to the contents, contain quotations of several works written by Mani but do not belong to *Šābuhragān*.

*The spread of the Šābuhragān in the Eastern world.* Recently a list of the holy scriptures by Mani was discovered by Y. Yoshida (2000, p. 91, letter B, l. 49). There the *Šābuhragān* (š'pwxrk'n, transliteration of the Mid. Pers. title in Sogdian script) is quoted together with other works which are to be read during the service. The *Šābuhragān* is known also from Turkish Manichean sources. In the Colophon to the Great Hymn to Mani it is mentioned as *šahbwhryan no[mu]y* (Clark, 1982, pp. 179.502, 190 (D 259, 1 = U 109/v)).

A. von Gabain (1964, p. 234) and W. B. Henning (Haloun and Henning, 1952, p. 210) connected a manuscript of two double sheets, plus the lost fragment \*T II D 173d, with *Šābuhragān*. Parts of this text also had been interpreted as independent sermons on topics which have parallels in several hymns—Wilkins, 2000, no.88 (U 168 I [T II D 173{a,1}]), no.319 (U 168 II = T II D 173a,2), no.185 (U 169 I = T II D 173b,1), no.89 (U 169 II = T II D 173b,2).

In a later addition to another text, MIK III 198 (T II D 171), also considered as remnant of a Turkish version of *Šābuhragān* by von Gabain and Henning, the

title of the book is mentioned as *I~ki Yiltiz Nom* “Book of the Two Principles.” J. Wilkens (2000, no. 124) calls it “Leserkolophone” made by people who recited this text. He confirms that there is a relationship in content between both texts. Besides these large remnants of texts, L. Clark mentions TM 282 (= U 35) as part of this book. J. Wilkens (2000, no. 136) proves that there is a relationship between U 35/v/ and U 168/r/, cited above. According to Wilkens (2000, no.188) U 246a and b belong also to the *I~ki Yiltiz Nom* because of their headline. U 33 contains a mythological detail comparable with the Middle Persian cosmogonic fragment M 7980 (Wilkens, 2000, no. 181, fn. 553).

The other book, published by Le Coq (1911) and identified with the Chinese *Traité* ([Chavannes](#) and Pelliot, 1913), has now been identified as a part of the Turkish version of the Parthian “Sermon of the Light-Nous” (Klimkeit and Schmidt-Glitzner, 1984). So one should be cautious in proposing that the header *dw bwn* was used only for *Šābuhragān*.

The title “Book of the Two Principles” is cited in Chinese sources as having been presented to the Empress Wu by a Mihr-Ormezd (Hutter, 1992, p. 146). But it is not known which book is meant. The title “Book of the Two Principles and the Three Epoches” could also mean the “Compendium of the doctrines and styles of the teaching of Mani, the Buddha of Light,” because both formulas are often mentioned in it. Also mentioned is a so-called “Table of the Great Two Principles,” presumably the *Ardahang* (see [ARZANG](#)), whatever it was. The *Šābuhragān* is not mentioned in the “Compendium of the doctrines and styles of the teaching of Mani.” The list there seems to be dependent on a Western source (Haloun and Henning, 1953, pp. 204-11).

The use of “two principles” in the Chinese title, which originally (as Middle Persian *dw bwn*) indicated the eschatological chapters of *Šābuhragān*, may show the further development of this term, It represents the name of the religion itself in the Eastern world. Thus one cannot conclude that every book bearing this title in later times contains translations from, or paraphrases of, *Šābuhragān*.

The Manichean mythos, as it was outlined in *Šābuhragān*, was treated in other books by Mani himself (e.g., the “Book of the Giants”; see [GIANTS, THE BOOK OF](#)) and by his disciples and later generations of believers in their tractates and hymns.

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in the Roman Empire cannot be taken for granted. As mentioned above, it is not named in the lists of canonical writings: introduction to the *Kephalaia* and *Keph.* 148 (Polotsky and Böhlig, 1940, p. 5; Funk, 1999, p. 355; Gardner, 1995, p. 15); the homilies (Polotsky, 1934, p. 25.2-6); Psalm 241 (Allberry, 1938, pp. 46-47; Wurst, 1996, p. 115). This omission was already noted by C. Schmidt and H. J. Polotsky (1933, p. 41); they confirmed this fact also with reference to the Greek and Latin sources for Manicheism.

The close relationship between the eschatological part of the *Šābuhragān* and the Coptic homily “The Sermon on the Great War” makes it likely that the author of the homily knew and used the *Šābuhragān*. But there remains the problem whether Kustaios used the Middle Persian version or a Syriac version of it, as P. Alfaric (1919, p. 49) and C. Colpe (1954, pp. 132-33) supposed, or another text of similar content. (Pedersen, 1993, pp. 149-52). Likewise there is no record and no proof for whether *Šābuhragān* was translated into Syriac later on or translated into Arabic directly from Middle Persian (Colpe, 1954, pp. 123-24, 132). L. Koenen (1986) relates the apocalyptic sources of the *Šābuhragān* to Jewish-Christian and Egyptian ideas. The biographical details in the introduction of *Kephalaia* and the Cologne Mani Codex do not necessarily derive from *Šābuhragān* (Sundermann, 1986a, pp. 83-85).

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