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The Manichaeans of the Roman East: Manichaeism in Greek anti-Manichaica & Roman Imperial legislation

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Chapter 7: Manichaean Communities, Churches, and Individuals

Because the name of the church is applied to different things [...] I mean the meetings of the heretics, the Marcionites and Manichaeans and the rest [...] if you ever visit another city, do not merely inquire where the congregation for the *kyriakon* (κυριακόν) takes place [...] nor simply where the church is, but, instead, seek out (for) the Catholic church, because this is the specific name of the true Church. (Cyril of Jerusalem)¹

Be careful! A Manichaean is coming ... (John Chrysostom).²

7.1 Introduction

This chapter will focus on specific cases of Manichaean communities and churches and on specific histories of Manichaean individuals—real or imagined. In particular, I will first examine the existence of a Manichaean community and a church in two cities in which a real Manichaean presence seems likely. These are Jerusalem and Antioch in the mid- and the late fourth century respectively. The primary sources on which the study of these two cases will be based belong to the literary genre of homilies. Homilies, when delivered at a specific time and place (i.e. oral speeches, as in our cases), unlike theological treatises, are the kind of sources from which much historical information can be obtained. In both cases, the homilies delivered by two outstanding clergymen of these two cities (Cyril and John Chrysostom) to their catechumens and flock abound in references to and warnings against Manichaeans, their beliefs, behaviours and practices. The works of these two pastors vividly records their concern and worries about a Manichaean influence upon their flock. Secondly, I will examine, case by case, a number of the references that I have been able to track down in Greek anti-Manichaean literature to specific individuals labelled as Manichaeans by the anti-Manichaean authors. This will be done to assess (where possible) whether they were real or imagined Manichaeans.

7.2 Manichaean Communities and Churches in Named Cities

7.2.1 Jerusalem³

Jerusalem's religious landscape

In a very fascinating study, J.W. Drijvers describes how Constantine's efforts transformed Jerusalem from an insignificant provincial town into the religious centre of Christianity in a short period of time. Churches were erected to identify landmarks of the life of Jesus, Christian monasteries mushroomed, and hostels were built for pilgrims. However, as Drijvers notes, despite the Christianized image highlighted by Christian sources, the religious landscape of Jerusalem, Palestine, and the rest of the empire throughout the fourth century remained culturally rich and religiously diverse.⁴ It was a transitional era, in which the passage from a

¹ Cyril, *Catech.* 18.26.1-16 (LFHCC 252, modified). For the original text in Greek see section 7.2.1.

² Chrysostom, *Hom. Gen.*¹⁻⁹, 1 (PG 54:583-584). For the original text in Greek see section 7.2.2.

³ Elements from section 7.2.1 have been published in a different context in Matsangou 2017a.

⁴ Drijvers 2004, 1-30. See also Drijvers 2015, 211-20.

dominant pagan culture to Christianity took place. Christianity had not yet been established as the official religion of the state and Christian dogma had not yet been fully formulated. In such an environment of religious diversity, freedom, and tolerance, various religious groups competed with each other for dominance. Amongst them were the Christians who, so it seems, were still a minority.

This religious pluralism of Jerusalem is amply recorded by Cyril, the bishop of the city (350-386), in his *Catecheses*. The *Catecheses* were the lectures that Cyril delivered daily during Lent for those Christian catechumens preparing to be baptized. According to a note in the manuscripts, *Catecheses* are the shorthand notes of Cyril's oral teachings.⁵ This is also shown by Cyril's vivid language. As Cyril underlines, the ultimate goal of his teaching was to protect the catechumens from heretics.⁶ To reach this goal, Cyril taught them what Christianity is, by explaining what it is not. For every Christian doctrine he developed, he mentioned heretic 'fallacies' in juxtaposition. For example, in his lecture on the Holy Spirit he explains: "... I will not analyse the precise meaning of his [Holy Spirit] hypostasis; this is ineffable; I will expose the seducing teachings of heretics on this topic, so that no one could be misled by ignorance".⁷ Thus, Cyril was 'forced' to expose the 'deluded' dogmas in order to educate his students on how to protect themselves from the other religious groups who lived and acted in the city: the pagans, the Jews, the Samaritans, and the heretics. In fact, Cyril's audience consisted of converts drawn from all these religious groups.

When it comes to heretics, it is clear that in Cyril's use of the word 'heretics' mainly refers to so-called 'Gnostic' and dualist groups such as Marcionites and Manichaeans. At that time, Arians were not always considered heretics since Christian doctrine had not yet been formulated; Arianism was supported by many bishops of the empire, as well as by some emperors of the Constantinian and Valentinian dynasties.⁸ Indeed, at the time of the composition of the *Catecheses* (348-350), the emperor was the Arian Constantius II.

Among the heretics, the Manichaeans were apparently the greatest threat to Cyril's disciples. Cyril's references to contemporary Manichaeans are more frequent than to any other religious group. Indeed, Cyril devoted almost the entire sixth lecture, the one against heretics, to the refutation of Manichaeism.

Cyril's presentation of Manichaeism is not a theoretical theological refutation. He had to inform his disciples about the teachings of the Manichaeans so that they would be prepared to deal with them at any time.⁹ The fact that he confronted a real problem is repeatedly stressed: "Even now, there are people who have seen Mani with their own eyes";¹⁰ "Even now, Manichaeans reject as a phantom Jesus' resurrection";¹¹ "Even now, Manichaeans invoke the daemons" during a mysterious ceremony.¹² From Cyril's records, the image of an active Manichaean community emerges. Firstly, intensive missionary activity is noted. Cyril gives the impression that there was systematic Manichaean propaganda in the area, supported by books that Manichaeans carried with them. During his time, Cyril notes, they

⁵ Drijvers 2004, 53.

⁶ Cyril, *Catech.* 4.2.14-19.

⁷ Cyril, *Catech.* 16.5.1-9.

⁸ Although condemned at the synod of Nicaea (325), Arianism prevailed throughout the period from Constantius II to Theodosius and was supported by emperors and the majority of the bishops of the eastern churches.

⁹ Cyril, *Catech.* 6.21.

¹⁰ Cyril, *Catech.* 6.20.3-5.

¹¹ Cyril, *Catech.* 14.21.5-7.

¹² Cyril, *Catech.* 6.23.9-11.

were carrying the *Thesaurus of Life*.¹³ Furthermore, as Cyril argues, Manichaeans performed some occult rituals (e.g. the ceremony of the dried fig), which threatened Christian mores.¹⁴ An additional threat was social interaction. It seems that some of Cyril's disciples were associating with Manichaeans. Some of them may well have been former, converted, Manichaeans. This latter group was the most precarious among Cyril's catechumens.¹⁵ Cyril admonished his disciples to stand apart from those who were suspected of belonging to the Manichaean heresy, at least until it was made sure that they had truly converted.¹⁶ The latter can be interpreted as a hint of the existence of Crypto-Manichaeans.

It becomes apparent from Cyril's account of Manichaeism that the Manichaean community in Jerusalem was strong and active. Through their mission, rites, and social interaction, it seems that Manichaeans exerted influence upon Cyril's new Christian proselytes.¹⁷

Testimonies for the existence of Manichaean churches

Along with the many other things Cyril says about Manichaeans, he warns his audience that in the cities, apart from the Catholic Christian churches, there were other heretical churches too. He specifically mentions those of the Marcionites and Manichaeans, which could mislead the Christian catechumens and neophytes who were possibly not able to distinguish them from the Catholic churches. For this reason, he advised his disciples,

Because the name of the church is applied to different things [...] I mean the meetings of the heretics, the Marcionites and Manichaeans and the rest [...] if you ever visit another city, do not merely inquire where the congregation for the *kyriakon* (κυριακόν) takes place (for other profane sects attempt to call their 'caves' *κυριακά*), nor simply where the church is, but, instead, seek out (for) the Catholic church, because this is the specific name of the true Church.¹⁸

Cyril is the only anti-Manichaean author who provides such concrete testimony for the existence of Manichaean churches—not only in Jerusalem, but in other cities too—and his testimony is of particular importance. The value of his *Catecheses* as a source is significant because, as mentioned, they were Cyril's lectures delivered to a live audience and reflected the historical reality in a specific time and place. Furthermore, Cyril's wording creates the impression that there was religious freedom in the mid-fourth century, that heretics such as

¹³ Cyril, *Catech.* 6.22.7-8.

¹⁴ Cyril, *Catech.* 6.33.1-17.

¹⁵ Cyril, *Catech.* 15.3.29-32.

¹⁶ Cyril, *Catech.* 6.36.3-4. Although Cyril does not mention it explicitly, I believe is referring to former Manichaeans since his admonition is just after an extensive presentation of the Manichaean heresy. Cf. Stroumsa 1985, 275; Lieu 1994, 205.

¹⁷ Especially for the presence of Manichaeans in Palestine, there are many testimonies (apart from Cyril's): (1) the Manichaeans with the icon of Mani (Eusebius, *Ep. Constantiam*); (2) the Palestinian Manichaeans for whom Libanius sought protection (*Ep.* 1253); (3) the Manichaean missionaries (Akua, etc.) who arrived at Eleutheroupolis (Epiphanius, *Pan.* 66.1.1); (4) the proto-Manichaeans who went to Palestine (AA 62.7); (5) the missionary Julia in Gaza (Mark the Deacon, *Vita* 85-91); (6) the converted Manichaeans of Zif (Cyril of Scythopolis, *Vit. Euth.* 22); (7) the Samaritans who converted to Manichaeism(?) (Procopius, *Hist. Arcana* 11); (8) the *μανιχαῖζοντες* monks of the monastery of New Laura (Cyril of Scythopolis, *Vit. Sab.* 124). Cf. Stroumsa 1985, 273-278; Klein 1991, 49.

¹⁸ Cyril, *Catech.* 18.26.1-16 (LFHCC 252, modified): Ἐπειδὴ δὲ τὸ τῆς ἐκκλησίας ὄνομα περὶ διαφόρων λέγεται πραγμάτων [...] κυρίως δὲ ἂν τις εἴποι καὶ ἀληθῶς ἐκκλησίαν εἶναι πονηρευομένων τὰ συστήματα τῶν αἰρετικῶν, μαρκιωνιστῶν λέγω καὶ μανιχαίων καὶ τῶν λοιπῶν [...] Κἂν ποτε ἐπιδημῆς ἐν πόλει, μὴ ἀπλῶς ἐξέταζε ποῦ τὸ κυριακὸν ἔστι (καὶ γὰρ αἱ λοιπαὶ τῶν ἀσεβῶν αἵρέσεις κυριακά τὰ ἑαυτῶν σπήλαια καλεῖν ἐπιχειροῦσι), μηδὲ ποῦ ἔστιν ἀπλῶς ἡ ἐκκλησία, ἀλλὰ ποῦ ἔστιν ἡ καθολικὴ ἐκκλησία.

the Manichaeans and the Marcionites could freely exercise their religion, and that they had places of worship which they called churches.

The above testimony of Cyril for the existence of Manichaean churches is confirmed by subsequent imperial legislation, which as discussed in ch.[3], finally prohibited the functioning of these churches.

The form of the Manichaean churches: House-churches or distinctive church buildings?

But what was the physical form of Manichaean churches? Were they recognizable and public or private and secret? Archaeological findings relating to Manichaean churches in the Roman Empire do not exist. Neither do any Manichaean sources known presently have specific information about this subject. However, what is once more illuminating, is the legislation against Manichaeans and, in addition, the Christian churches of the era. Judging by Cyril's warning to the catechumens against such a confusion, the Manichaean churches must have looked like Christian churches. It is more convenient to start from the latter.

The predominant view in New Testament and Early Christian studies is that the main type of early Christian churches was that of the house-church (κατ' οἶκον ἐκκλησία). Initially, these were the houses of wealthy Christians and later were houses that some Christian individuals offered to their community for religious purposes. Those places which did not differ in appearance from ordinary houses were called by Christians 'churches', or 'Kyriaka' (Κυριακά), or 'praying houses' (εὐκτήριοι οἶκοι). As Gehring states, "On one point nearly all NT scholars presently agree: early Christians met almost exclusively in the homes of individual members of the congregation. For nearly three hundred years—until the fourth century, when Constantine began building the first basilicas throughout the Roman Empire—Christians gathered in private houses built initially for domestic use, not in church buildings originally constructed for the sole purpose of public worship".¹⁹ Building on Krautheimer's scheme for the evolution of the Christian meeting places, White suggests three phases for the pre-Constantinian churches: (1) the 'house church phase', (2) the *domus ecclesiae* (renovated houses),²⁰ and (3) the *aula ecclesiae* (larger halls, which externally "resembled domestic architecture").²¹

¹⁹ Gehring 2004, 1-2, cited in Adams 2016, 1. Adams (2016) challenges the aspect that during the first two/three centuries the "Christian meeting places were 'almost exclusively' houses" (198). Arguing that the evidence for house-churches was less substantial than scholars have usually argued, he suggests "a number of other kinds of space that could plausibly have served as Christian meeting venues", such as: shops, workshops, barns, warehouses, hotels, inns, rented dining rooms, bathhouses, gardens, watersides, urban open spaces and burial sites.

²⁰ A characteristic example of a house renovated and transformed into *domus ecclesiae* is the Dura Europos building. Cf. White 1990, 120-22; Adams 2016, 89-95.

²¹ White 1990, 102-139 (esp. 129); White 1997; Krautheimer 1986. Cf. Adams, 2016, 3-4. Some literary evidence appears to indicate that there were large Christian churches (basilicas?) by the second half of the third century. Eusebius (*HE* 8.1.5, *LCL* 2: 253) describing the growth of the Christian Church over the last thirty years before Diocletian's persecution states: "And how could one fully describe those assemblies thronged with countless men, and the multitudes that gathered together in every city, and the famed concourses in the places of prayer; by reason of which they were no longer satisfied with the buildings of older time, and would erect from the foundations churches of spacious dimensions throughout all the cities?" (πῶς δ' ἂν τις διαγράψειεν τὰς μυριάνδρους ἐκεῖνας ἐπισυναγωγὰς καὶ τὰ πλήθη τῶν κατὰ πᾶσαν πόλιν ἀθροισμάτων τὰς τε ἐπισήμους ἐν τοῖς προσευκτηρίοις συνδρομάς; ὧν δὲ ἔνεκα μηδαμῶς ἔτι τοῖς πάλαι οἰκοδομήμασιν ἀρκούμενοι, εὐρείας εἰς πλάτος ἀνὰ πάσας τὰς πόλεις ἐκ θεμελίων ἀνίστων ἐκκλησίας.) According to the Neoplatonist philosopher Porphyrius (*Contra Christianos*, fr. 76, ca 268-270 CE), "the Christians, imitating the construction of temples, erect great buildings (μεγίστους οἴκους) in which they meet to pray, though there is nothing to prevent them from doing this in their own homes (ἐν ταῖς οἰκίαις) since, of course, their Lord hears them everywhere". (ἀλλὰ καὶ οἱ

This process “is widely recognized”.²²

However, the earlier forms did not disappear at once, but continued to exist alongside “monumental basilicas” for a long time.²³ First of all, it is reasonable to suggest that a transitional period of time was needed until the number of new church buildings was large enough to replace all the house-churches. Yet, this is not the only reason.

During the period under investigation, there was a constant tension in ecclesiastical and religious affairs. The formation of doctrine, as well as the debates on the Triadological and Christological question took place precisely during this time. The different interpretations of the dogma, which had not yet crystallized, caused confrontations: in terms of ecclesiastical power, things were still fluid. Those who disagreed with the interpretation of one party (the ‘others’), were labelled as heretics; thus, there were always some intra-Christian denominations (heresies for the group that prevailed each time) that were outlawed and therefore persecuted.

As a result of these intra-Christian conflicts, the buildings of the public churches changed hands according to the doctrine supported (each time) by the imperial and ecclesiastical authorities. The religious group that was displaced resorted to more private (mainly secret) home-based churches. The same practice was applied by all the persecuted parties, such as by the Arians when the Emperors were Catholics, and by the followers of Nicaea when the Emperors were Arians.²⁴

An example of the latter case is what occurred in 380 Constantinople, where for the previous 40 years the bishops had been Arians and Gregory of Nazianzus undertook a campaign to restore the Nicene orthodoxy in the city. For this purpose, according to Sozomenus’ depiction, Gregory had transformed much of his residence into a church, naming it Anastasia, because it was the place where the Nicene dogma was resurrected through the speeches of Gregory.²⁵

Respectively, during Cyril’s time, since the Emperor Constantius II (337-361) was an Arian, the Catholics assembled in house-churches. This was especially the case in cities where the bishop was also an exponent of the Arian party, such as Antioch, where the bishops were Arians or Homoian Arians. Therefore, when Cyril warns the catechumens of Jerusalem to be

Χριστιανοί μιμούμενοι τὰς κατασκευὰς τῶν ναῶν μεγίστους οἴκους οἰκοδομοῦσιν, εἰς οὓς συνιόντες εὐχονται, καίτοι μηδενὸς κωλύοντος ἐν ταῖς οἰκίαις τοῦτο πράττειν, τοῦ κυρίου δηλονότι πανταχόθεν ἀκούοντος). Cf. Adams 2016, 84 and White 1997, 104 for the translation in English. Grant (1977, 150) interpreting Eusebius text argues “it is clear that there were at least some church buildings, probably basilicas, before Constantine’s time.” Contra Grand, White (1990, 127-28) classifies the churches that Eusebius (*HE* 8.1.5) refers to in the category of *aula ecclesiae*, considering them as adapted and renovated *domus ecclesiae*, not with regard to their architectural style, but in terms of “numerical growth and social status”. “In his view”, *aula ecclesiae* “did not displace *domus ecclesiae* but overlapped with them” (Adams 2016, 80).

²² Adams 2016, 3.

²³ As White (1990, 23) remarks: “One must also begin to question the notion, often implicitly presupposed in recent architectural histories, that the church’s fortunes under Constantine brought about a universal transformation to basilical architecture virtually overnight. On the contrary, the archaeological evidence indicates that *domus ecclesiae* and *aula ecclesiae* forms continued well after that point when basilicas had supposedly become the norm. Thus we find that while monumental basilicas were springing up under the aegis of Constantine, other churches were still being founded following prebasilical patterns”. Cf. Adams 2016, 4.

²⁴ For “the different ways in which domestic space functioned” for several Christian groups during fourth- and fifth century (apart from official churches), see Maier 1995a. Cf. Gwynn 2010, 255.

²⁵ Sozomenus, *HE*, 7.5.3: τὸ δόγμα τῆς ἐν Νικαίᾳ συνόδου, πεπτωκὸς ἦδη ἐν Κωνσταντινουπόλει καὶ τεθνηκὸς, ὡς εἰπεῖν, διὰ τὴν δύναμιν τῶν ἑτεροδόξων, ἐνθάδε ἀνέστη τε καὶ ἀνέβη διὰ τῶν Γρηγορίου λόγων. Cf. Maier 1995a, 51. Anastasis (Ἀνάστασις) in Greek means resurrection.

on guard because the Manichaean churches in other cities resemble those of the Christians, he did not mean the newly built basilicas, but rather the house-form churches.

Something similar happened later with the Novatians in Rome. According to the church historian Socrates the Scholastic, when Novatians were persecuted by Pope Celestine (422-32) and “their meeting places confiscated, their bishop Rusticulus conducted worship in households”.²⁶ As Maier points out, alongside the splendour and the dignity of the basilicas, there was another *impressionistic* religious landscape composed by the dissidents, heretics, schismatics, etc.: in brief, by anyone who disagreed with the official Church. While a reconstructive project aiming to transform cities like Jerusalem and Rome into Christian metropolises was running, various movements were congregating on the fringes of the central religious scene.²⁷

By observing what happened when an intra-Christian party was deposed from its position of power, one could argue that the Manichaeans who never became a recognized religion in the empire could always be found in this marginal landscape. The Manichaean churches that apparently existed throughout the fourth century and later, whether they were legal or not, never ceased to be considered as churches of heretics, by both the state and all Christian parties. Moreover, whereas in the case of the intra-Christian heresies, the same church-buildings changed hands depending on the faith of the Emperor (or of the local bishop), in the case of the Manichaeans, who had never officially held political or ecclesiastical positions of power, it is reasonable to assume that they never erected (or used) separate churches, such as the official Christian churches that began to be built under Constantine. Instead, it is likely that their churches always had the form of house-churches.

That the Manichaean churches in the Roman Empire may have always had the form of house-churches can also be inferred by the legal sources. As we saw in ch.[3], one of the main goals of anti-Manichaean laws was to deprive Manichaeans of their assembly places, in order to make it impossible for them to assemble. The most effective measures to this end were the confiscation of such places and the property restrictions against Manichaean individuals. The impression created by the expressions used in these laws for the description of the Manichaean assembly places is that they had the form of private homes and not of “distinctive church buildings”. Thus, according to the first anti-Manichaean edict (372) of the code (*CTh*), Manichaeans assembled in “houses and habitations”.²⁸ As it appears from the following laws of Theodosius, such “houses and habitations”²⁹ that hosted Manichaean *conventicles* were found both in cities (small towns and in famous cities)³⁰ and in the country. The law continues to specify that they also looked like Christian churches: Manichaeans [and other heretics] “should not show walls of private houses after the likeness of churches”.³¹ The same impression is given by the wording of subsequent laws, where Manichaeans appear to assemble in “private buildings”,³² or “meet in private houses”,³³ which, according to the law, they “try boldly to call churches”.³⁴

²⁶ Socrates, *HE* 7.10-11: Καὶ οὗτος <ὁ> Κελεστίνος τὰς ἐν Ῥώμῃ Ναυατιανῶν ἐκκλησίας ἀφείλετο καὶ τὸν ἐπίσκοπον αὐτῶν Ῥουστικοῦλαν κατ’ οἰκίας ἐν παραβύσῳ συνάγειν ἠνάγκασεν. See also Maier 1995b, 234.

²⁷ Maier 1995b, 235.

²⁸ *CTh* 16.5.3 (372).

²⁹ *CTh* 16.5.11 (383): “to build private churches or use private homes as churches”.

³⁰ *CTh* 16.5.7 (381).

³¹ *CTh* 16.5.11 (383) (Coleman-Norton, 387).

³² *CTh* 16.5.65.

³³ *CJ* 1.5.5.

³⁴ *CJ* 1.5.5 (Coleman-Norton, 645).

Apart from the wording of the law describing Manichaean assembly places, the fact that the target of the law itself was the real estate of Manichaean individuals confirms the hypothesis that these places were indeed houses.³⁵

The domestic setting of Manichaean churches is also supported by Manichaean scholars. As BeDuhn argues, the “evidence unequivocally attests that Manichaeism within the Roman Empire operated as a cultic association largely confined to the domestic sphere, lacking any civic or public component”.³⁶ Some additional reasons in favour of the house-church scenario could be drawn from the broader context of the marginal religious groups. First, apart from a place of worship, the domestic environment ensured secrecy when the sect was being persecuted. In addition, meetings in private places were a means of protest. As in the case of displaced persons, the choice of humble places was a form of resistance to the opulence of the imperial basilicas. Far from the official public gathering places, there was a network of houses, of deviant worship and teaching, where propaganda and resistance to the political and ecclesiastical authorities took place.³⁷ Furthermore, the domestic space was also suitable for propaganda, promoting ideas, recruiting followers, and even for conducting debates. As we have seen in ch.[2], debates apart from public places or squares were also conducted in homes.³⁸ In this regard, a congregation based in the home of an individual from the upper social classes was of paramount importance. As highlighted in ch.[2], the interconnection with persons such as Marcellus could be very helpful for the successful dissemination of the ideas of a marginal or persecuted religious group.³⁹

Especially in the case of Manichaeans, the network of many houses served the cellular and flexible structure of the movement (with small numbers of followers in each community), its survival during persecution since “individual units could easily go underground when threatened”,⁴⁰ and the missionary spread of the sect, which was Manichaeism’s predominant goal.

Lastly, for the record, and for the sense of completeness, it is worth mentioning that both legal and ecclesiastical anti-Manichaean sources (in our case Cyril) often call the Manichaean assembly places caves (‘σπήλαια’/*sepulchrum*).⁴¹ Presumably this should not be interpreted literally, since it is well documented that this was a technical term of religious abuse. In the polemic literature of the era, the word σπήλαιον/*sepulchrum*, which also means a tomb/grave, is often used for the place of worship of religious opponents. Its intended meaning is to name such ‘heretical’ structures as a place where anyone who enters dies, instead of being reborn/resurrected, having the exact opposite meaning of the church Anastasia, Gregory’s church in Constantinople. The literary play with words relating to *life/life-bringing* versus *death/death-bringing* is not limited to *loci culti*, but also refers to the mysteries, the books of the opponents, and the opponents themselves (especially their mouths and souls).⁴² We cannot, of course, rule out the possibility that some of the

³⁵ See ch.[3], 3.4.2. *CTh* 16.5.7 (381); *CTh* 16.5.40 (407); *CTh* 16.5.65 (428). Cf. BeDuhn 2008b, 260.

³⁶ BeDuhn 2008b, 259-60. Cf. Lieu 1992, 202.

³⁷ Maier 1995b, 242; Cf. Maier 1995a, 49-63.

³⁸ Cf. Maier 1995a, 52; Maier 1995b, 243.

³⁹ Cf. Maier 1995a, 49-63; Maier 1995b, 237, 241, 244; Cf. Lieu 2015, 125.

⁴⁰ Lieu 1992, 202; BeDuhn 2008b, 260.

⁴¹ *CTh* 16.5.7 (*sepulcra constituent*); *CTh* 16.5.9 (‘secret and hidden assemblies’); *CTh* 16.7.3 (‘*sepulchrum/a*’, ‘nefarious retreats’). Cyril, *Catech.* 18.26.13 (κυριακὰ τὰ ἑαυτῶν σπήλαια καλεῖν ἐπιχειροῦσι).

⁴² For example, Ammianus Marcellinus (*Res Gestae*, 18.7.7) uses the term ‘tombs’ for “the famous martyrs’ churches” of Edessa, cf. Barnes (1993) and Woods (2001, 258). At another point Ammianus (*Res Gestae*, 22.11.7) states that the use of the term ‘tomb’ by George the bishop of Alexandria for the temple of Genius was the cause

Manichaean churches were actually caves (or cave-houses or cave-churches). This is especially the case in the areas examined, since the geography of the landscape makes the presence of churches, monasteries, and houses carved into the rocks very common.⁴³

Manichaean house-churches: recognizable and public or secret and private?

An additional question remains whether these Manichaean house-churches were known to local communities as Manichaean churches or places where Manichaeans used to gather, or whether Manichaeans instead met in secret. State religious policy towards the Manichaeans during the fourth century will be illuminating in order to answer this question. Based on the extant legal sources we can divide the investigated period into three phases that may correspond to different practices: (1) 302–313, (2) 313–372 (which includes the case of Jerusalem), and (3) 372/380s onwards (which includes the case of Antioch).

Regarding the first phase, after Diocletian's edict (302), it is reasonable to assume that the Manichaean congregations continued secretly until the (so-called) edicts of 'religious toleration' (in 311 and 313). These granted all religious groups the right to meet freely and practice their religion and cults in public.⁴⁴ The same applies to the third phase⁴⁵ during which the main target of all the decrees were the Manichaean assemblies and churches. The secrecy surrounding the meetings of the Manichaeans is illustrated in the language of the law by expressions such as conventicles,⁴⁶ secret and hidden assemblies,⁴⁷ nefarious retreats,⁴⁸ and wicked seclusions.⁴⁹ Thus, the only period during which it is likely that the Manichaeans had recognizable (or even distinctive) church-buildings and met freely in public remains the second phase (within which Cyril's episcopacy falls), when they were not persecuted, specifically from the edicts of 'religious toleration' until the first anti-Manichaean laws in the 370s–380s.⁵⁰ Yet, the fact that there are no laws against Manichaeans included in the codes from that period does not necessarily mean that such laws were never issued or that there was a tolerance towards the Manichaeans. As said, it is probable that some laws were deliberately omitted by the compilers of the codes. Such an example could have been Gratian's law in 378/79 which advanced a tolerant policy towards some heretics. The law, in specific, forbade Manichaeans to congregate in houses of worship and practice their religion, while other religious groups

of his murder by a pagan mob. Theodoret of Cyrrhus (*HE* 230) calls the Messalian monasteries *sepulchra*/dens of robbers (σπήλαια ληστρικά). About the 'death-bringing' mysteries: *CTh* 16.5.5: "If any person by a renewed death should corrupt bodies that have been redeemed by the venerable baptismal font". Theodoret of Cyrrhus, *HE* 232: οὕτως ὁ θεῖος Φλαβιανὸς τὴν δυσώδη διορύξας πηγὴν καὶ γυμνώσαι παρασκευάσας τὰ θανατικά νάματα (eucharistic wine). About persons: *AA* 48.3; Cyril, *Catech.* 6.27: λέγε, φησὶν, ὁ Ἀρχέλαος πρὸς τὸν Μάνην, ὃ κηρύσσεις. Ὁ δὲ [ὡς] τάφον ἀνεωγμένον ἔχων τὸ στόμα; Zacharias of Mytilene, *The Syriac Chronicle* 7: "the *Akoimetoι*, outwardly appeared to men honourable, and were adorned with the semblance of chastity, but were inwardly like whited sepulchres, full of all uncleanness"; Theodoret of Cyrrhus, *HE* 231.15–16 (about Messalians).

⁴³ About the various and varying functions that the caves in the broader area of Palestine could have had, see Zangenberg 2014, 195–209.

⁴⁴ Galerius' Edict (311) and the Edict of Milan (313), in Eusebius *HE* 8.17 and 10.5, respectively.

⁴⁵ This phase was examined in detail in ch.[3].

⁴⁶ *CTh* 16.5.7 (381): ne in conventiculis oppidorum.

⁴⁷ *CTh* 16.5.9 (382).

⁴⁸ *CTh* 16.7.3 (383): Eos vero, qui manichaeorum nefanda secreta et scelerosos aliquando sectari maluere secessus, ea iugiter atque perpetuo poena comitetur, quam vel divalis arbitrii genitor Valentinianus adscriptit vel nostra nihilo minus saepius decreta iusserunt.

⁴⁹ *CTh* 16.10.24 (423).

⁵⁰ BeDuhn (2008b, 260) holds also the same view (i.e. that this is the only possible period during which Manichaean meeting places could have had a more public character). As an example of such a place BeDuhn brings the *topos Mani*, a private estate near Kellis, mentioned in the Manichaean *KAB*. Cf. Brand 2019, 243–46.

were allowed to do so with special permission. Eusebius, in his *Life of Constantine*, records a law promulgated by Constantine against heretics which is not included in the *CTh*. In it, Constantine, as emperor, partly rescinded his policy of religious toleration and (probably sometime around 326–330) issued a decree against five specific heresies. These were: Novatians, Valentinians, Marcionites, Paulians, and those called Cataphrygians. The list of heretics concluded with the general wording “and against all heresies”.⁵¹ Manichaeans were not included among the five heresies. The decree forbade congregations and confiscated houses of worship of the above heretics. In any case, Constantine’s edict did not explicitly mention the Manichaeans, so we cannot be sure whether the above decree had any effect on Manichaeans and their churches.

So, under the precondition that there was religious tolerance and no edict was issued between 313 and 372 against the Manichaeans, the latter, logically, should have benefited and, as Cyril claims, practiced their religion openly in their own churches.

As far as the ownership status of these house-churches is concerned, these buildings were either for collective use or private habitations.⁵² In particular, they could have been houses that (1) either belonged to Manichaean individuals, (2) houses which Manichaean men and women had transferred as bequests to their community,⁵³ (3) or later (when Manichaean real estate had evaporated), houses of non-Manichaeans in which Manichaeans used to assemble.⁵⁴ Another case of houses that possibly could have been turned into gathering places were the houses confiscated by the state that were derelict (hovels). As Lieu argues, “the large number of houses which had been declared ‘derelict’ (*caducus*) as a result of imperial confiscations at the end of the third century, might have offered ideal shelter for Manichaean conventicles”.⁵⁵

Manichaean churches as congregations

The Greek word *ἐκκλησία* (‘church’/ecclesia), before it acquired the meaning of a specific building, signified an ‘assembly’ of people, which was its literal meaning. I have argued above that the target of all the decrees against Manichaeans was these congregations where the mysteries of the sect were celebrated. But why did Cyril worry about his catechumens, lest they be confused and be found watching the Manichaean mysteries? Was this possible? Could the Manichaean gatherings and mysteries exert any attraction over the converts to Christianity, forming likewise a disruptive factor for the Christianization of the empire?

As Drijvers points out, the biggest obstacle to the Christianization programme was the exclusivity required by the new religion. Even those who preferred Christianity, who at the time of Cyril were probably the minority, apparently had a problem with the strict Christian rule of monotheism. Conversion to Christianity meant a change of lifestyle; they had to get used to the one and unique worship, something difficult to achieve overnight. Therefore, for a long time, it is likely that Christians continued to visit other religious congregations too.⁵⁶ Something similar had happened with the early Jewish-Christians (Judeo-Christians), who continued to participate in traditional Jewish worship, such as continuing to go to the

⁵¹ Eusebius, *Vit. Const.* 3.63–66. Modern scholarship dates the edict to between 324 and 330. Eusebius places it after Nicaea (325) and the synod of Antioch (326), see Cameron and Hall 1999, 306f. Cf. Matsangou 2017a, 401.

⁵² *CTh* 16.5.9 (382).

⁵³ *CTh* 16.5.9 (382); *CTh* 16.5.65(428).

⁵⁴ *CTh* 16.5.40 (407); *CTh* 16.5.65 (428); *CJ* 1.5.5.

⁵⁵ Lieu 1992, 202; *CTh* 16.5.3, 16.5.40.7.

⁵⁶ Drijvers 2004, 115f. About Christians attending Hellenic cults, see Trombley 1993 and 1994, Fowden 1978 & 1998, Chuvin 1990, Bowersock 1990.

synagogue. At the same time, however, they participated in the new worship, meeting each other in the Christian house-churches for the Eucharistic meal.⁵⁷

It is quite probable then that one could meet Cyril's catechumens or even Christian neophytes in Manichaean churches. Some of them might have been former Manichaeans. This could be inferred from Cyril's instructions to his disciples. At the end of a long list of forbidden things that his students were supposed to avoid, including astrologers, diviners, Samaritans, Jews and their Sabbaths, Cyril underlines that above all they had to avoid going to heretic congregations.⁵⁸ Furthermore, in the lecture concerning the Manichaeans, and just after the description of the ceremony of the dried fig, Cyril wonders: "Are you receiving, oh man, the teaching of such a mouth? On meeting him, do you greet him with a kiss?"⁵⁹ "Let him who is in communion with them realize among whom he places himself".⁶⁰ The above could refer to social interaction. However, the combination of teachings, kissing, and communion suggests that it is a reference to a Manichaean congregation. What we learn about these congregations from researchers working on Manichaean sources is illuminating.

As said in ch.[5] the Manichaean ritual meal consisted of two parts: the alms-service, during which the catechumens brought the offerings to the Elect, and the central ritual, the holy meal, before which the catechumens had to depart. The same structure existed already from the second century in the Christian ritual meal (Holy Eucharist). For both ritual systems, the two parts were stages of the same ceremony. At the end of the first stage, before the withdrawal of catechumens, a prayer over them took place (*δέησις ὑπὲρ τῶν κατηχομένων*).⁶¹ Cyril 'reveals' some information about a petitionary prayer said by the Manichaean Elect over their catechumens, which, as he comments with sarcasm, is a curse rather than a blessing. As he claims, strengthening the reliability of his source, this was confessed to him by former Manichaeans.⁶² Cyril is referring to the Apology to the Bread, which is a testimony known to us at present only by anti-Manichaean writers.⁶³ However, in order to draw some conclusions, it would suffice to say that Cyril's disciples could probably stay during the first part of the Manichaean ritual: the teachings and the offerings. What they saw would definitely be confusing because it was something very similar to what they knew from the Christian churches.

Therefore, it was not only the names which were common (*Κυριακόν, Ἐκκλησία*) and the buildings which were similar, but the structure of the rites was also identical, and this was the problem. Because while the content (i.e. the theology of worship of the Manichaean and the Christian holy meal) differed radically, the similarity in form, structure, and terminology made this difference indiscernible for catechumens and simple Christians. As BeDuhn points out in commenting on the different theology of the Manichaean and Christian sacred meal, in

⁵⁷ About Christians in Jewish synagogues, see Judith Lieu 2004. See also Judith Lieu 1998, 71-82 and 2016, esp. 52, 62, 95, 142, 243. Smith 1984, 8.

⁵⁸ Cyril, *Catech.* 4.37.16-17.

⁵⁹ Cyril, *Catech.* 6.33.14-15: Παρὰ τοιοῦτου στόματος, ἄνθρωπε, δέχη διδασκαλίαν; Τοῦτον ὅλως ἀπαντήσας ἀσπάζη φιλήματι;

⁶⁰ Cyril, *Catech.* 6.25.4-5: Ὁ ἐκείνοις κοινωνῶν, βλέπῃ μετὰ τίνων ἑαυτὸν ἐντάσσει.

⁶¹ For the Manichaean holy meal, see BeDuhn 2000b, 144-148. For the structure of the Christian Eucharist see Justinus Martyr, *Apol.* A: 65-67, and the text of the Divine Liturgy—attributed to Chrysostom—which is still in use in Eastern Christian worship. Cf. Dix 1949, 36-47, esp. 36-38, 41; Bradshaw 1996, 2002 and 2012. See also ch.[5], 5.2.3.

⁶² Cyril, *Catech.* 6.32.6-7.

⁶³ PRylands 3, Gr. 469, (Roberts 1938, 12-42); AA 10.6; Epiphanius, *Pan.* 66.28.65; Cyril *Catech.* 6.32. See also Vermes 2001, 54, fn. 69.

the Christian Eucharist, holiness enters the cosmos, consecrates matter (bread and wine) and saves the participant by his divinization. In Manichaeism, on the contrary, it is the participants (Elect) who liberate and save the divine elements already present in the material food.⁶⁴

7.2.2 Antioch

Antioch's religious landscape

I have already highlighted in previous chapters that much of John Chrysostom's [hereafter Chrysostom] work consists of oral homilies, which he delivered, like Cyril, to his students and flock.⁶⁵ In Chrysostom's speeches too, the concerns, the worries and the warnings about Manichaeans abound.⁶⁶ Chrysostom delivered his lectures both at the congregations in Antioch, when he was a presbyter (386-398), and in Constantinople where he was a bishop (398-404). In the Antiochene homilies, the references to Manichaeans are much more numerous than those in Constantinople. This is to be expected because Chrysostom served the Antiochene church as a cleric for many more years (380-398: twelve as a presbyter and six as a deacon) than Constantinople.⁶⁷ Additionally, although Christianity was the official religion of the state (since 380), and anyone who deviated, even slightly, from the official doctrine was considered a heretic and was persecuted, Antioch still remained a strongly multi-religious city in comparison to Constantinople.⁶⁸ Antioch was a Hellenistic city, and one of the largest and most important cities of the era; it was a city of merchants, administrators, yet, a city from which many known 'heresiarchs' arose.⁶⁹ Apart from heretics, the pagan and the Jewish communities of the city were still very large and active. The exponents of the official church had, therefore, to confront many opponents.⁷⁰ As Maxwell remarks,

the diversity of the population in Antioch intensified the danger, from the preacher's point of view, of blurring the lines between Christian and non-Christian, or, perhaps worse, between orthodoxy and heresy. Every social interaction, every conversation in the marketplace could lead people astray. So Chrysostom made it his mission to explain carefully exactly what was and was not proper Christian belief and behavior.⁷¹

As one can notice, the religious landscape of Antioch at the end of the fourth century had many analogies to that of Jerusalem in the mid-fourth century, something that makes the comparison of the two cases stimulating. Manichaeans, as depicted in Chrysostom's writings, had an especially strong base in Antioch.⁷² Apart from Chrysostom, other testimonies confirming this situation are those of Libanius and the account of the Manichaean missionary

⁶⁴ BeDuhn 2000a, 14-36, esp. 20-21.

⁶⁵ Liebeschuetz 2011, 133: "The writings of Chrysostom are of two kinds: sermons, and what might be called 'literary works', treatises". In his work he has a lot of references to the Manichaeans, however he had not written any treatise about them (cf. Chris L. de Wet, 2020, 218-45).

⁶⁶ In Chrysostom's writings the fighting against Manichaeans is vital, cf. ch.[5], 5.2.2 & 5.3.3 about fasting, marriage and the idea of consubstantiality of creatures/creation with God; about the Manichaean belief that evil is steadfast and that man's change for the better is impossible, see ch.[5] 5.3.2. Chrysostom warned his fellow citizens that the Manichaeans, for all issues related to marriage, fasting, etc., gave the most destructive advices, see ch.[5] 5.3.3 & ch.[6], 6.3.1.

⁶⁷ Maxwell 2006, 3; Liebeschuetz 2011, 119.

⁶⁸ Maxwell 2006, 3; Liebeschuetz 2011, 115; Kelly 1995, 134.

⁶⁹ For instance: Nicolaus, Tatian, Paul of Samosata, Nestorius, Eutyches, etc. Cf. Young, 2006, 235-251, esp. 244-45.

⁷⁰ Maxwell 2006, 4.

⁷¹ Maxwell 2006, 4.

⁷² Gardner and Lieu 2004, 110.

Julia. Libanius, at whose school of rhetoric Chrysostom studied before embarking on his Christian career,⁷³ composed his orations and letters at about the same time.⁷⁴ In one of his letters Libanius asked Priscianus, the governor of Palaestina Prima, to protect the Manichaeans of his region from the ill-treatment they suffered from Christians.⁷⁵

The sources

Sermons as historical sources are of great importance, especially if the particular context in which they were delivered (time, city, church) is known.⁷⁶ Chrysostom's sermons were delivered in the church, most likely during the service and usually commented on a passage from the Bible.⁷⁷ Some of them were delivered at the new cathedral of Antioch (Golden Church), while others at the Old Church (or elsewhere).⁷⁸ The whole style and spontaneity of their language reveals that they were intended for oral use, regardless of whether later on, in their published form, they would have been polished.⁷⁹

In one of his homilies, for example, Chrysostom, after apologizing for his absence from the previous assembly, urges the faithful to attend the preaching of the day very carefully.

[...] Please manifest for my sake willingness and seriousness during the teaching, [...] this is the favour I am asking you also today. [...] For this reason, I need to see around me insightful eyes, awakened minds, elevated way of thinking, tight and precise arguments, alert and fully awake souls.⁸⁰

On another occasion, he points out that hearing requires training. This training will enable his listeners to distinguish the heretical teachings. So, Chrysostom prompts them to pay attention daily during the preaching for, as he stresses, “even if you should not comprehend today, you will comprehend tomorrow” (*κἂν σήμερον μὴ καταλάβῃς, αὔριον καταλήψῃ*).⁸¹ Sometimes Chrysostom explains that he will go in-depth on a subject which in his previous preaching he had failed to develop sufficiently due to the lack of time.⁸² Occasionally, he interrupts his speech in order to make sure that his audience understood him; if not, he repeats the point he was making. However, as it seems, sometimes his listeners turn out to be hopeless. Although Chrysostom repeats the same things over and over again, and his audience ought to have become teachers by then, they look like careless students who have not learned anything. So, Chrysostom explains that he cannot proceed to preaching, because then it would be as if he would be more interested in receiving applause rather than in caring for his

⁷³ Liebeschuetz 2011, 117, 118: “Palladius tells us that the young Chrysostom studied rhetoric under a sophist whose name he does not give. [...] Socrates confirms that the sophist under whom Chrysostom studied rhetoric was Libanius”. Socrates, *HE* 6.3: Ἰωάννης Ἀντιοχεὺς μὲν ἦν τῆς Κοίλης Συρίας, υἱὸς δὲ Σεκούδου καὶ μητρὸς Ἀνθούσης, ἐξ εὐπατριδῶν τῶν ἐκεῖ, μαθητὴς δὲ ἐγένετο Λιβανίου τοῦ σοφιστοῦ καὶ ἀκροατῆς Ἀνδραγαθίου τοῦ φιλοσόφου. See also Cameron 1998, 668-69.

⁷⁴ Maxwell 2006, 3-4.

⁷⁵ Libanius, *Ep.* 1253.

⁷⁶ Sandwell 2008, 99.

⁷⁷ Liebeschuetz 2011, 133.

⁷⁸ Chrysostom, *Hom. Gal.* 2:11 (PG 51:371.25-26): Τῇ προτέρᾳ συνάξει ἐν τῇ ἐκκλησίᾳ τῇ καινῇ συναχθεὶς μετὰ τοῦ ἐπισκόπου, ταύτην ἐν τῇ παλαιᾷ εἶπεν εἰς τὴν περικοπὴν τοῦ Ἀποστόλου. See also Mayer 1997, 72-73.

⁷⁹ Maxwell 2006, 6-7.

⁸⁰ Chrysostom, *Hom. Gal.* 2:11 (PG 51:371).

⁸¹ Chrysostom, *Hom. Heb.* 8. The homilies were issued by the presbyter of Antioch Constantine from the notes of the tachographs. The majority of researchers argue in favour of a Constantinopolitan provenance of all the homilies except for Opelt who supports an Antiochene derivation. Allen and Mayer (1995) are in-between, see esp. 336-348.

⁸² Chrysostom, *Hom. 2 Cor.* 4:13 (homiliae 1-3), 2.

students. This being the case, he considers it more important that his listeners learn the doctrines of their faith, rather than talking to them about pagans, Manichaeans and Marcionites about whom, as he argues, he could say a lot.⁸³

Thus, there is broad scholarly agreement that Chrysostom's homilies were live lectures, delivered in a specific time and place. It is not easy, however, to settle the question of which lectures were preached in Antioch and which in Constantinople. Initially, scholars considered that homilies which belonged to a cohesive series according to the manuscript tradition were preached as a group in one of the two cities. This assumption has been challenged as problematic by Mayer and Allen, who support the view that the individual sermons in each series could have been delivered in different cities. So, as they argue, some series of speeches (Col., Phil. and Heb.) "contain material of both Antiochene and Constantinopolitan derivation".⁸⁴ According to Mayer, the only secure criterion of provenance is when the text itself certifies that Chrysostom was either presbyter or bishop; yet, such references are rare. Likewise, the dating and provenance of some sermons remain uncertain.⁸⁵

Chrysostom's main target: Greeks, Jews, and Manichaeans

The main target of Chrysostom's polemic was the Jews and the Greeks. References to pagans amount to hundreds and to Jews up to thousands. However, as Chrysostom warns in one of his sermons:

And if you hear that somebody is not a Greek or a Jew, do not rush to conclude that he is a Christian, [...] because this is the disguise the Manichaeans and all heresies use, in order to inveigle the naïve.⁸⁶

In *De sacerdotio* (one of his treatises, ca. 388-390) Chrysostom likens the Church to a city in danger of being besieged by its enemies. He identifies those enemies as Greeks, Jews, and Manichaeans.⁸⁷ Regarding Chrysostom's references to heretics, there are many more against Manichaeans and Arians than against other 'heretics'. Yet, Arianism for Chrysostom, as well as for many Catholics at that time, was considered another kind of heresy, if one at all. Presenting briefly the heretics until his time Chrysostom says:

[...] the first heresy of all was that of Marcion; [...] After this that of Sabellius [...] Next that of Marcellus and Photinus [...] Moreover that of Paul of Samosata [...] Afterwards that of the Manichaeans; for this is the most modern of all. After these the heresy of Arius. And there are others too.⁸⁸

The Manichaeans are the last, as the most recent, in the list of the old heresies. After this group, another class of heretics follows, starting with Arius.

The Manichaeans in Chrysostom's sermons are classified and compared either with the Greeks and Jews or with the Marcionites and Valentinians. Indeed, as it seems, for Chrysostom (the same applies for Cyril) the above religious groups comprised mainly the heretics. "When

⁸³ Chrysostom, *Hom. Heb.* 9 (PG 63).

⁸⁴ Allen and Mayer 1995a, 271; Allen 2013, xii.

⁸⁵ Mayer 2005; Allen 2013, xi-xv; Allen and Mayer 1995a, 270-289; About *In epistulam ad Hebraeos* (homiliae 1-34) see Allen and Mayer 1995b, 309-348. Allen and Mayer 1994, 21-39; Sandwell 2008, 99-100; Maxwell 2006, 6-7; Malingrey and Zincone in *EAC* 2014, 2:431.

⁸⁶ Chrysostom, *Hom. Heb.* 8 (PG 63:73).

⁸⁷ Chrysostom, *Sac.* 1-6.

⁸⁸ Chrysostom, *Hom. Heb.* 8 (PG 63:73): Οἶον, πρώτη μὲν πάντων αἵρεσις ἡ Μαρκίωνος· [...] Μετ' ἐκείνην ἡ Σαβελλίου, [...] Εἴτα ἡ Μαρκέλλου καὶ Φωτεινοῦ, [...] Εἴτα ἡ Παύλου τοῦ Σαμοσατέως, [...] Εἴτα ἡ Μανιχαίων· αὕτη γὰρ πασῶν νεωτέρα. Μετ' ἐκείνας, ἡ Ἀρείου. Εἰσὶ δὲ καὶ ἕτεροι.

Peter came to Antioch”, Chrysostom points out, there were only Greeks and Jews, and not any Manichaeans, Marcionites or Valentinians; “but why should I number all the heresies?”⁸⁹ Something similar is repeated in *De sacerdotio*:

For to what purpose does a man contend earnestly with the Greeks, if at the same time he becomes a prey to the Jews? or get the better of both these and then fall into the clutches of the Manichaeans? [...] But not to enumerate all the heresies of the devil [...].⁹⁰

The classic exemplar of heretic: Be careful! A Manichaean is coming!

The Manichaeans were the classic example that Chrysostom used in order to instruct his audience about how to deal with heretics, their false teachings, and practices. Many times, Chrysostom gives the impression that his listeners will encounter Manichaeans at every turn of Antioch's streets and will have to debate with them. Was Julia among them? Indeed, in some of his speeches, Chrysostom prepares the faithful on how to refute Manichaeans in these confrontations by ‘setting up’ potential dialogues. Such dialogues, for example, exist in his homilies on Genesis (386 and 388),⁹¹ where Chrysostom defends the *ex-nihilo* (out of nothing) model of creation by combating the Manichaean claim that matter is a pre-existent first principle, eternal and antagonistic to God. In his first homily on *Genesis* which he delivered at the beginning of the Lent in Antioch in 386, Chrysostom cautions:

Be careful! A Manichaean is coming saying, Matter is ingenerated; answer to him, *In the beginning God created the heavens, and the earth*, and you immediately debunked all his vain delusion. Yet, they say they do not believe the sayings of the Scriptures. So then, for this reason evade and avert him as a maniac. [...] And, they say, how could something possibly have come into being out of nothing?⁹²

A little further on, Chrysostom sets up a new dialogue on the same subject:

And say; *In the beginning God created the heavens, and the earth*. And if a Manichaean will come forward to speak, or a Marcionite, or those who are infected with the doctrines of Valentinus, or any other person, say to him this; and if you see him laughing, weep, as if he were a maniac.⁹³

A similar dialogue (again on the pre-existence of matter) also appears in his second series of speeches on *Genesis* in 388:

⁸⁹ Chrysostom, *Hom. Gal. 2:11* (PG 51:379): Τότε τοίνυν, [...] Ἡ γὰρ Ἑλλήνες, ἡ Ἰουδαῖοι, οἱ τὴν γῆν οἰκοῦντες ἅπαντες ἦσαν· οὔτε δὲ Μανιχαῖος, οὔτε Μαρκίων, οὔτε δὲ Οὐαλεντίνος, οὐκ ἄλλος οὐδεὶς ἀπλῶς· τί γὰρ δεῖ πάσας καταλέγειν τὰς αἱρέσεις;

⁹⁰ Chrysostom, *Sac. 4.4* (NPNF¹ 9): Τί γάρ, ὅταν πρὸς Ἑλλήνας μὲν ἀγωνίζεται καλῶς, συλῶσι δὲ αὐτὸν Ἰουδαῖοι; ἢ τούτων μὲν ἀμφοτέρων κρατῇ, ἀρπάξωσι δὲ Μανιχαῖοι [...] καὶ τί δεῖ πάσας καταλέγειν τοῦ διαβόλου τὰς αἱρέσεις.

⁹¹ The first series of homilies, consisting of nine speeches on the first three chapters of *Genesis*, were delivered in Antioch in 386, at the beginning of Lent, in the metropolitan church. The second series of homilies, consisting of 67 speeches commenting on the entire book of *Genesis*, were “probably preached partially during Lent 388”, cf. Malingrey and Zincone in *EAC* 2014, 2:431.

⁹² Chrysostom, *Hom. Gen.¹⁻⁹ 1* (PG 54:583-584): Σκόπει δέ. Προσέρχεται Μανιχαῖος λέγων, Ἀγέννητός ἐστιν ἡ ὕλη· εἰπὲ πρὸς αὐτὸν, Ἐν ἀρχῇ ἐποίησεν ὁ Θεὸς τὸν οὐρανὸν, καὶ τὴν γῆν, καὶ πάντα τὸν τῦφον αὐτοῦ κατέστρεψας εὐθέως. Ἀλλ’ οὐ πιστεύει τῷ ῥήματι τῆς Γραφῆς, φησίν. Οὐκοῦν διὰ τοῦτο αὐτὸν ὡς μαινόμενον διάκρουσον καὶ ἀποστράφηθι [...] Καὶ πῶς ἐξ οὐκ ὄντων γένοιτ’ ἂν τι, φησί;

⁹³ Chrysostom, *Hom. Gen.¹⁻⁹ 1*, (PG 54:584-585): καὶ λέγε· Ἐν ἀρχῇ ἐποίησεν ὁ Θεὸς τὸν οὐρανὸν καὶ τὴν γῆν. Κἂν Μανιχαῖος προσέλθῃ, κἂν Μαρκίων, κἂν οἱ τὰ Οὐαλεντίνου νοσοῦντες, κἂν ὅστισοῦν ἕτερος, τοῦτο προβάλλου τὸ ῥῆμα· κἂν ἴδῃς γελῶντα, σὺ δάκρυσον αὐτὸν ὡς μαινόμενον.

For if a Manichaean will come saying that matter was pre-existent, or a Marcionite, or a Valentinian, or a Greek, say to them; *in the beginning God created the heavens, and the earth*. But he does not believe in the Scriptures. So then, avert him as a maniac and confused.⁹⁴

Elsewhere, discussing the same topic, Chrysostom stresses: “and you see again how the Manichaeans”, explaining all things with their own reasoning and taking examples from earthly things, dare to say “It was impossible, [...] for God to create the world without matter”.⁹⁵ As Chrysostom points out, the Manichaeans alienate creation from God (*τὴν κτίσιν ἀλλοτριούντων*)⁹⁶ and “very foolishly”, “introduce another creator of the world besides the true one”.⁹⁷

However, despite Chrysostom’s talent in instructing his flock, as it seems, some among them were convinced by the Manichaean argumentation. Interpreting Christ’s saying to the robber “today you will be with me in paradise” (Luke 23:43), Chrysostom interrupts his speech in order to present in detail the Manichaean reasoning and argumentation and asks his audience repeatedly to ensure they had understood him: “Here be careful; because the Manichaeans, interpreting this passage, claim” that there will be no resurrection of the bodies because it is unnecessary. Chrysostom continues: “I wonder whether you understood what I said, or do I have to say it again? [...] They say, therefore, the robber entered Paradise without his body; how could this happen, since his body was not yet buried”.⁹⁸ The Christian belief in the resurrection of bodies was indeed a thorny issue, provocative to common sense, and was a difficult issue that required delicate handling. The following interpretation of the words ‘death’ and ‘resurrection’ that Chrysostom identified as Manichaean in origin should have been more convincing:

But first it is worth while to hear what those who are infected with the Manichaean doctrines say here, who are both enemies to the truth and war against their own salvation. What then do these allege? By death here, they say, Paul means nothing else than our being in sin; and by resurrection, our being delivered from our sins.⁹⁹

Were any Manichaeans among Chrysostom’s listeners?

Examining Chrysostom’s speeches, even the earlier ones (380s), one gets the impression that the Manichaeans during his preaching did not attend the congregation, at least overtly. Preaching usually took place after the readings and before the second part of the mass, when catechumens and non-believers had to depart. Nevertheless, Chrysostom seems sure that whatever he says will reach the ears of the Manichaeans. Therefore, sometimes he addressed

⁹⁴ Chrysostom, *Hom. Gen.*¹⁻⁶⁷ (PG 53:29.54): *Κἂν γὰρ Μανιχαῖος προσέλθῃ λέγων τὴν ὕλην προϋπάρχειν, κἂν Μαρκίων, κἂν Οὐαλεντίνος, κἂν Ἑλλήνων παῖδες, λέγε πρὸς αὐτούς: Ἐν ἀρχῇ ἐποίησεν ὁ Θεὸς τὸν οὐρανὸν καὶ τὴν γῆν. Ἀλλ’ οὐ πιστεύει τῇ Γραφῇ. Ἀποστράφηθι λοιπὸν αὐτὸν ὡς μαινόμενον καὶ ἐξεστηκότα.*

⁹⁵ Chrysostom, *Hom. Eph.* (hom. 1-24), *Hom. 23* (PG 62:165): *β’. Μανιχαῖους δὲ ὁρᾷς πάλιν, πῶς πάντα ἀπὸ τῶν οἰκείων λογισμῶν τολμῶσι φθέγγεσθαι; Οὐκ ἡδύνατο, φησὶν, ὁ Θεὸς ἄνευ ὕλης ποιῆσαι τὸν κόσμον. Πόθεν τοῦτο δῆλον; Χαμόθεν ταῦτα λέγουσι καὶ ἀπὸ τῆς γῆς καὶ ἀπὸ τῶν παρ’ ἡμῖν. Ὅτι ἄνθρωπος, φησὶν, οὐ δύναται ἐτέρως ποιῆσαι.* Kelly 1995, 58.

⁹⁶ Chrysostom, *Hom. Matt.* (hom. 1-90), *Hom. 49*, (PG 58:498).

⁹⁷ Chrysostom, *Hom. 2 Cor.* (hom. 1-30), *Hom. 8*. Cf. Kelly 1995, 96.

⁹⁸ Chrysostom, *Hom. Gen.* (PG 54:613,39-44, 54.613.51-52): *Ἄρα ἐνοήσατε τὸ λεχθὲν, ἡ δεῦτερον αὐτὸ πάλιν εἰπεῖν ἀνάγκη; [...] Εἰσῆλθεν οὖν, φησὶν, εἰς τὸν παράδεισον ὁ ληστής οὐ μετὰ τοῦ σώματος· πῶς γὰρ, ὁπότε οὐκ ἐτάφη τὸ σῶμα αὐτοῦ.*

⁹⁹ Chrysostom, *Hom. 1 Cor.* (hom. 1-44), *hom. 38 & 39* (PG 61:324) (*NPNF*¹, 12:228): *Πρῶτον δὲ ἄξιον ἀκοῦσαι τί λέγουσιν ἐνταῦθα οἱ τὰ Μανιχαίων νοσοῦντες, καὶ τῆς ἀληθείας ἐχθροὶ, καὶ τῇ οἰκείᾳ πολεμοῦντες σωτηρίᾳ. Τί οὖν οὗτοι λέγουσι; Θάνατον ἐνταῦθα, φησὶν, οὐδὲν ἄλλο λέγει ὁ Παῦλος, ἢ τὸ ἐν ἁμαρτίᾳ γενέσθαι, καὶ ἀνάστασιν τὸ τῶν ἁμαρτιῶν ἀπαλλαγῆναι.*

them as if they were present and intended to provoke a confrontation with them through the faithful. In some of his later speeches (390s) it is clear that the Manichaeans were certainly absent, although Chrysostom would prefer them to have been present for a direct confrontation: “I would wish they were present, the Manichaeans who most deride all this, and those diseased in Marcion’s way, so that I might fully stop their mouths”.¹⁰⁰ Elsewhere he asks: “Where are those foul-mouthed Manichaeans who say that by the resurrection here [Paul] means the liberation from sin?”¹⁰¹

It would be reasonable to assume that, after a series of laws against Manichaeans during the 380s, their public appearances (especially inside churches) and their public debates were scarce. This would certainly be supported by the absence of representations of such debates in Chrysostom’s works of the next decade (390s). Probably, some Manichaeans may even have abandoned Antioch because of Chrysostom’s persistent and continuous polemic. One of them might have been the Manichaean missionary Julia, who departed for Gaza at about that time.¹⁰² However, the Manichaean danger does not seem to have faded out. The homilies in *Matthaeum* have more references to the Manichaeans than any other work, giving the impression that the Manichaean danger in Antioch had increased during the last ten years of the fourth century. The latter is compatible with the hypothesis I made in chapter [3], that for a period of 40 years (383-423) in the Eastern part of the Empire, the Manichaean threat was underestimated. At this time, the authorities had their attention focused on the Eunomians, who were the main target of contemporary anti-heretical legislation. Chrysostom seems to fill the gap of the law in his own way.

Thus, the Manichaeans of Antioch may not have been present in the church, and would have been more discreet in public life. Yet, they still constituted a threat for the faithful who, in the context of social life, met them, discussed with them, or even befriended them. The Manichaean ideas, practices, and negative influence they had upon his audience (i.e. causing apostasies) must have been a real problem, engaging Chrysostom until the end of his career as a presbyter.¹⁰³

¹⁰⁰ Chrysostom, *Hom. Matt.* (hom. 26) (PG 57.247): ἐβουλόμην παρῆναι καὶ Μανιχαίους τοὺς μάλιστα ταῦτα κωμωδοῦντας, καὶ τοὺς τὰ Μαρκίωνος νοσοῦντας, ἵνα ἐκ περισυίας αὐτῶν ἐμφράξω τὰ στόματα.

¹⁰¹ Chrysostom, *Hom. 1 Cor.* 39 (PG 61:335) (*NPNF*¹, 12:409): Ποῦ νῦν εἰσι τὰ πονηρὰ τῶν Μανιχαίων στόματα, τῶν λεγόντων ἀνάστασιν αὐτὸν ἐνταῦθα λέγειν τῆς ἁμαρτίας τὴν ἀπαλλαγὴν; And elsewhere (*Hom. 2 Cor.* 4:13 2 (PG 51:282.28) he wonders: Ποῦ νῦν εἰσιν οἱ τὴν Παλαιὰν διαβάλλοντες; *Hom. 2 Cor.* 4:13 (PG 51.281.16t): Εἰς τὴν ἀποστολικὴν ῥῆσιν τὴν λέγουσαν, «ἔχοντες δὲ τὸ αὐτὸ Πνεῦμα τῆς πίστεως, κατὰ τὸ γεγραμμένον» καὶ πρὸς Μανιχαίους, καὶ πάντας τοὺς διαβάλλοντας τὴν Παλαιὰν καὶ διαιροῦντας αὐτὴν ἀπὸ τῆς Καινῆς, καὶ περὶ ἐλεημοσύνης.

¹⁰² Mark the Deacon, *Vit. Porph.*, 85.1-7.

¹⁰³ Apart from the aforementioned issues, Chrysostom often attacks: (1) the Manichaean tenet of consubstantiality (see indicatively: *Natal.*: PG 49:359-360, *Hom. 1 Cor.* 7, *Hom. Gen.*¹⁻⁹ 1); (2) their claim that Christ did not assume human flesh (see indicatively: *Natal.*: PG 49:359; *Anom.* 7 PG 48:759 & 766; *Hom. Matt.* 82; *Hom. 2 Tim.* 1-10:2). Discussing on the nativity of Christ on Christmas Day of 386 (*Natal.* PG 49:359-360), Chrysostom observes that impiety is not the incarnation of God, but the Manichaean idea that the creatures share God’s substance: “τί λέγεις, εἰπέ μοι, ὦ ἄνθρωπε; [...] Οὐχ ὁρᾶτε τουτονὶ τὸν ἥλιον, οὗ τὸ σῶμά ἐστιν αἰσθητὸν καὶ φθαρτὸν καὶ ἐπίκηρον, κἂν μυριάκις ἀποπνίγωνται Ἕλληνες καὶ Μανιχαῖοι ταῦτα ἀκούοντες; Further, Chrysostom many times during his speeches defends OT against the Manichaean attacks and blames them for mangling the NT. The Manichaeans, as Chrysostom argues, curse the NT in two ways: (1) cutting it off from the Old, and (2) cutting off passages from it, which, as they claim, blame the OT. However, in order to outargue the Manichaeans, Chrysostom says that he would present a passage from NT that testifies the unity with the OT, and which, as he emphasizes, is still used today by the Manichaeans (*τὴν καὶ παρὰ τοῖς Μανιχαίοις σωζομένην ἔτι καὶ νῦν*). See indicatively: *Hom. Matt.* (1-90): 16 & 51; *Hom. Rom.* (1-32): 13; *Hom. 2 Cor.* 4:13 (PG

For our preacher, Manichaean dualism created a chain of side effects at all levels, especially in terms of anthropology and ethics of social life. Chrysostom was particularly concerned about the appeal that the Manichaean view of free will had upon his flock. As he says, the Manichaeans, invoking the saying “No one can come to me, unless the Father who sent me draws him (John 6:44)”, argue “that nothing lies in our own power” and will.¹⁰⁴ And they insisted that “evil is steadfast”, although everyday life and scriptures are full of examples of sinners who were sanctified. With such ideas, Chrysostom observes, no one cares about virtue (*ἐπιμελήσεται τις ἀρετῆς*).¹⁰⁵ In fact, as Chrysostom points out, those who attribute sin to nature and to the members of the body find pretexts to sin fearlessly.¹⁰⁶ Chrysostom admonished the faithful not to search for the cause of their miseries, as the Manichaeans do, concluding that evil is a first principle.¹⁰⁷ Instead, they have to thank God even for their misfortunes and not just for the good things he gives them, in contrast to Manichaeans who blaspheme God although he “bestow[s] blessings on them every day”.¹⁰⁸ Believers, by thanking God even for the lesser things, put the Manichaeans to shame for affirming that our present life is evil.¹⁰⁹ On the contrary, eunuchs and those who circumcise themselves, “cutting off their member as being hostile” “open the mouths of the Manichaeans”, who “call the body a treacherous thing, and from the evil principle”.¹¹⁰

Chrysostom condemns the Manichaean hyperbole in asceticism¹¹¹ and never ceases to warn his audience about the show of asceticism that Manichaeans perform, pointing out that they are pretending in order to appeal and deceive the faithful, and create apostates from faith, especially in the ascetic milieu.¹¹² For this reason, Chrysostom’s attitude, especially towards extra-urban ascetics and hermits, is very cautious and sometimes ambivalent. On the one hand, he urges his flock to visit the monks, while on the other he points out the danger of the distorted Manichaean asceticism, and encourages urban asceticism which he considers more social and safer. “But inconsistency”, as Liebeschuetz remarks, “is indeed found to some degree in all the ascetic writers, who are enthusiastic for the ascetic life, but must also emphasize that they do not adhere to the dualism of the Manichaeans”.¹¹³

7.3 ‘Manichaean’ Individuals: Real or Imagined?

In some cases, patristic literature does allude that there were some latent alliances between Manichaeans and other *noble* heretics. In specific, there are in total twenty-eight references to certain individuals (six anonymous) who are designated as Manichaeans. Seventeen out of these individuals will be discussed, case by case, in the next section of this chapter in a chronological order.¹¹⁴ The rest are discussed, to a lesser or greater extent in other

51:281); *Hom. Gal.* 4.21-22 & 4.24; *Hom. Heb.* (1-34): 9; *Hom. 2 Cor.* (1-30): 21; *Hom. Eph.* 23; *Hom. 2 Cor.* 4:13, 1-3: 2.

¹⁰⁴ Chrysostom, *Hom. Jo.* (*hom.* 1-88) *hom.* 46 (PG 59:257).

¹⁰⁵ Chrysostom, *Hom. Matt.* (*hom.* 1-90) *hom.* 26 (PG 57:340.15-24).

¹⁰⁶ Chrysostom, *Hom. Matt.*, *hom.* 58 (PG 58:600). Liebeschuetz 2011, 194. Kelly 1995, 96.

¹⁰⁷ Chrysostom, *Oppugn.* (PG 47:365).

¹⁰⁸ Chrysostom, *Hom. Eph.* (*hom.* 1-24), *Hom.* 19.

¹⁰⁹ Chrysostom, *Hom. Matt.* (*hom.* 1-90), *Hom.* 55 (PG 58:546-48).

¹¹⁰ Chrysostom, *Hom. Gal.* Ch. E’ (PG 61:668-669); Chrysostom, *Hom. Matt.*, *Hom.* 62.

¹¹¹ Chrysostom, *Hom. Matt.*, *hom.* 55; *Hom. 1 Tim.* (1-18): 12.

¹¹² Chrysostom, *Hom. Gen.*¹⁻⁹ (PG 54:584-585 & 54.613.39-44); *Hom. Gen.*¹⁻⁶⁷ (PG 53:29.54); *Hom. 1 Tim.* (1-18): 12. Cf. Kelly 1995, 59.

¹¹³ Liebeschuetz 2011, 153, cf. pp. 21, 134, 137, 194.

¹¹⁴ About Sebastian, Anastasius and Erythrius’ wife, cf. Matsangou 2017b, 165-167.

chapters.¹¹⁵ The aim of this investigation is to assess whether they were real or labelled Manichaeans. It is important to note from the outset, that the supposed Manichaeans were not first-generation Manichaean missionaries, but Roman citizens who, among a range of choices in the religious landscape of their time, possibly, opted in favour of Manichaeism.

Sebastian

According to Athanasius of Alexandria, Sebastian—a high-ranking commissioner in the army—was a merciless Manichaean who tortured Catholics to death and collaborated with Arians. Athanasius, who himself was persecuted by Sebastian, records extensively the maltreatment the catholic clergy and laity suffered by him in his *Apologia de fuga sua* and in *Historia Arianorum ad Monachos*.¹¹⁶

According to Athanasius' *Apologia*, when Sebastian was the *dux of Egypt* he acted as the right-hand man of George, the Arian bishop of Alexandria.¹¹⁷ Athanasius recounts in detail one of the operations against the Catholics that George entrusted to Sebastian:

[...] in the week after the holy Pentecost, the people, having fasted, went forth to the cemetery to pray, because all were averse to communion with George: that wickedest of men being informed of this, instigated against them Sebastian, an officer who was a Manichaean. He, accordingly, at the head of a body of troops armed with drawn swords, bows, and darts, marched out to attack the people, although it was the Lord's day: finding but few at prayers,—as the most part had retired because of the lateness of the hour,—he performed such exploits as might be expected from them. Having kindled a fire, he set the virgins near it, in order to compel them to say that they were of the Arian faith: but seeing they stood their ground and despised the fire, he then stripped them, and so beat them on the face, that for a long time afterwards they could scarcely be recognized. Seizing also about forty men, he flogged them in an extraordinary manner: for he so lacerated their backs with rods fresh cut from the palm-tree, which still had their thorns on, that some were obliged to resort repeatedly to surgical aid in order to have the thorns extracted from their flesh, and others, unable to bear the agony, died under its infliction. All the survivors with virgins they banished to the Great Oasis. The bodies of the dead they did not so much as give up to their relatives, but denying them the rites of sepulture they concealed them as they thought fit, that the evidences of their cruelty might not appear.¹¹⁸

Both Socrates and Theodoret in their *HE* reproduce verbatim the above incidents from Athanasius' *Apologia*, highlighting that “all these facts will be best told in the words of him [Athanasius] who so suffered”.¹¹⁹

In his *Apologia*, Athanasius explains that he was forced to flee his episcopal see- in Alexandria in 356, because he and his presbyters were persecuted by the Arians who intended to convict them with capital punishment.¹²⁰ In the words of Theodoret, the emperor

¹¹⁵ See a table including all the cases at the end of the chapter.

¹¹⁶ Athanasius, *Fug.*, 6-7; Athanasius, *H. Ar.* §59-63, pp. 216-18 and §70.3-73.2, pp. 221-23.

¹¹⁷ Sebastian started his military career as a *dux of Egypt* (356-58), soon he was promoted to *Comes Rei Militaris* (363-78) and finally in 378 he was appointed by Valens *Magister Peditum Orientis* – which was the highest military rank. See Jones et al. 1971, 812-13. See also Lieu 1992, 127.

¹¹⁸ Athanasius, *Fug.* 6-7. The translation is from Socrates' text, *HE* 2.28 (*NPNF*² 2: 150-51).

¹¹⁹ Theodoret, *HE* 11. Socrates, *HE* 2.28 (*NPNF*² 2): “such are the words of Athanasius in regard to the atrocities perpetrated by George at Alexandria”. The same text from *apologia* is also found in *Menologia Imperialia* (eleventh cent.), “Vita sancti Athanasii Alexandrini”.

¹²⁰ Athanasius, *Fug.* 3.21-24: καὶ ἡμᾶς, καὶ πρεσβυτέρους ἡμετέρους, οὕτως ἐποίησαν ζητηθῆναι, ὥστε, εἰ εὐρεθίμεν, κεφαλῆς ὑποστῆναι τιμωρίαν. Another similar episode where Athanasius stars, but with a good

Constantius II wished “not only to expel, but also to condemn the holy Athanasius to death”. To this end, he “dispatched Sebastian, a military commander, with a very large body of soldiery to slay him as if he had been a criminal”.¹²¹ Sebastian did not act alone: there was a human network in the army and administration connected to him that supported him. As a *dux* he exerted power over the Prefects (*πραιποσίτοις*) and the leaders of the army (*στρατιωτικαῖς ἐξουσίαις*).

In the *Historia Arianorum ad Monachos* Athanasius describes how Sebastian delivered the Catholic churches into Arian hands. The Arians, Athanasius says, had as assistants in their plans the *dux* Sebastian, who was an immoral young Manichaean man, the Prefect (Cataphorius), the *count/comes* (Heraclius), and the *Catholicos* (Faustinus) who acted as the master-mind.¹²² When the Arian emperor Constantius II commanded that the Catholic bishops should be expelled from the churches and be replaced by the Arians, the command was executed by the general Sebastian who organized and co-ordinated the whole enterprise in collaboration with the magistrates.¹²³

And the General Sebastian wrote to the governors (*πραιποσίτοις*) and military authorities (*στρατιωτικαῖς ἐξουσίαις*) in every place; and the true Bishops [the Catholic clergy of Egypt and Libya] were persecuted, and those who professed impious doctrines [Arians] were brought in their stead.¹²⁴

From among the deposed Catholic bishops and presbyters some were banished, others were sentenced to work in the stone-quarries, others were persecuted and tortured to death, “and many others they plundered thoroughly”.

Straightway Bishops were sent off in chains, and Presbyters and Monks bound with iron, after being almost beaten to death with stripes.¹²⁵ The soldiers and General Gorgonios drove away their relatives from their homes, knocking them and grabbing the bread of the dying.¹²⁶

Apart from the clerics, they “banished also forty of the laity, with certain virgins”, who after being beaten severely with palm rods some of them succumbed to their injuries. Moreover, they destroyed monasteries, and attempted to burn monks, plundered houses, seized and stole properties, and hindered the distribution of alms to the poor and to the widows.¹²⁷ When Arian clerics realized that the poor and widows were supported by the Catholic priests, they persecuted the former and accused the Catholic priests before the *dux*. Sebastian, as Athanasius points out, being a Manichaean, was pleased, “for there is no mercy in the Manichaeans; nay, it is considered a hateful thing among them to show mercy to a poor man”.

end this time for his flock and which ended in the flight of Athanasius, is the one that narrates Athanasius in *Fug.* 4.

¹²¹ Theodoret, *HE* 10 (Third exile and flight of Athanasius).

¹²² Athanasius, *H. Ar.* 59.1-3. About the names of the officers, see Tardieu 1988, 497. Sebastian stars in chs. 59-73.

¹²³ Athanasius, *H. Ar.* 63, 70 (*NPNF*² 4): “For behold, he has now again thrown into disorder all the Churches of Alexandria and of Egypt and Libya, and has publicly given orders, that the Bishops of the Catholic Church and faith be cast out of their churches, and that they be all given up to the professors of the Arian doctrines. The General began to carry this order into execution”.

¹²⁴ Athanasius, *H. Ar.* 72 (*NPNF*² 4): ὁ μὲν στρατηλάτης Σεβαστιανὸς ἔγραψε τοῖς κατὰ τόπον πραιποσίτοις (a military title) καὶ στρατιωτικαῖς ἐξουσίαις, καὶ οἱ μὲν ἀληθῶς ἐπίσκοποι ἐδιώχθησαν, οἱ δὲ τὰ τῆς ἀσεβείας φρονούντες ἀντ’ ἐκείνων εἰσῆχθησαν. καὶ ἐξώρισαν μὲν ἐπισκόπους γηράσαντας ἐν τῷ κλήρῳ καὶ πολυετεῖς ἐν τῇ ἐπισκοπῇ.

¹²⁵ Athanasius, *H. Ar.* 70 (*NPNF*² 4).

¹²⁶ Athanasius, *H. Ar.* 63 (*NPNF*² 4).

¹²⁷ Athanasius, *H. Ar.* 72 (*NPNF*² 4).

They also devised a “new kind of court” where “he who had showed mercy was accused” and brought to trial “and he who had received a benefit was beaten”.¹²⁸

As Athanasius constantly emphasizes, for all their cruelties against the Catholics, the Arians relied on the authority of the Manichaean *dux* Sebastian.¹²⁹ Indeed, in case Sebastian did not mistreat enough the Catholics, they did not hesitate even to threaten him that they would denounce him before the Emperor.¹³⁰ Athanasius concludes his narrative alluding, once more, that there was an alliance between the Arians and Manichaeans. As he states, the new Arian bishops were young licentious pagans; although they were not even catechumens, being rich and from well-known families, they obtained their episcopal seats by bribery. Anyone who rejected these ‘mercenary’ bishops was “locked up in prison by Sebastian (who did all this readily, being a Manichaean)”.¹³¹

It has been argued that Sebastian possibly was labelled as a Manichaean by Athanasius so that the Arians, on whose behalf Sebastian acted, would be correlated to Manichaeans.¹³² The argument is that: (1) pagan authors (e.g. Ammianus Marcellinus, Libanius, Eunapius and Zosimus), who *à propos* appreciated Sebastian, do not report that Sebastian was a Manichaean,¹³³ and (2) it is unlikely for a doctrine that was against the taking of life, even that

¹²⁸ Athanasius, *H. Ar.* 61 (*NPNF*² 4). Cf. Lieu 1992, 127: “It may be that Manichaeans in Egypt, as they did elsewhere, had the reputation of being uncharitable because they would refuse alms to those who were not of their sect”; Lieu 1994, 103, fn. 333; Tardieu 1988, 498-99.

¹²⁹ Athanasius, *H. Ar.* 62 (*NPNF*² 4): “But these men have lost even the common sentiments of humanity; and that kindness which they would have desired to meet with at the hands of others, had themselves been sufferers, they would not permit others to receive, but employed against them the severity and authority of the magistrates, and especially of the Duke”.

¹³⁰ Athanasius, *H. Ar.* 60 (*NPNF*² 4): “when they had seen that they did not die from the stripes they had received, complained of the Duke and threatened, saying, ‘We will write and tell the eunuchs, that he does not flog as we wish.’ Hearing this he was afraid, and was obliged to beat the men a second time”.

¹³¹ Athanasius, *H. Ar.* 73: ἀποστρεφόμενοι γὰρ τοὺς μισθωτοὺς ἐκείνων καὶ ἀλλοτρίους ἑαυτῶν ἐμαστιζοντο, ἐδημεύοντο, εἰς τὰ δεσμητήρια κατεκλείοντο παρὰ τοῦ στρατηλάτου. ἐποίει γὰρ τοῦτο προθύμως Μανιχαῖος ὢν, ἵνα τοὺς μὲν ἰδίους μὴ ἐπιζητῶσιν, οὓς δὲ ἀπεστρέφοντο δέχωνται ἀνθρώπους τοιαῦτα πράττοντας, οἷα καὶ πρὸ τούτου ἐν τοῖς εἰδώλοις ἔπαιζον.

¹³² Cf. Lieu 1994, 102-03; Lieu 1992, 127; Tardieu (1988, 498) referring to the issue concludes: “Telle est la pièce-maîtresse du dossier sur le manichéisme de Sebastianus. Elle est totalement inconsistante. Ce n’est que de la polémique de bas étage. L’évêque d’Alexandrie met dans le même sac ariens, manichéens, juifs, autorités civiles”. Whereas Sundermann (2009) seems cautious arguing: “We can only state that by that time [330 CE] Manichaeism was already present there, more or less tolerated until the end of the 4th century and even supported by adherents and sympathizers in the ruling class, such as the *dux*, *comes*, and *magister peditum* Sebastianus (d. 378) who was supposed to be a Manichean *auditor* (which was, however, sheer calumny, according to Tardieu, 1988, pp. 494-500)”, <http://www.iranicaonline.org/articles/manicheism-iv-missionary-activity-and-technique>. Cf. Matsangou 2017b, 166. In any case, the fact that, according to Cyril’s of Jerusalem testimony (*Catechesis* 18), Manichaeans during the reign of the Arian emperor Constantius II had churches which they called *Kyriaka*, reflects some kind of tolerance.

¹³³ Lieu 1992, 127; Cf. Tardieu 1988, 494-95. Lieu (1994, 102-03, fn. 334) noting that “Sebastianus is labelled as a Manichaean only in Christian sources” remarks: “According to Ammianus he was later nearly declared Emperor by his troops [...] However, he was not called a Manichaean in pagan sources and it is just possible that we are here witnessing a derogatory use of the title of the sect by Athanasius in return for the wrongs he endured at the hands of Sebastianus and his troops”. The pagan authors Eunapius and Libanius also praised highly Sebastian for his military qualifications/skills and his incorruptibility (contempt for wealth); indeed, Sebastian and Libanius were friends, cf. Libanius, *Epistles* (318, 350, 454, 520, 596 & 912), Eunapius, *Fragmenta historica* 1:243-244. About Sebastian’s military enterprises/campaigns, see also: Zosimus, *Historia nova* (3.12.5-13.1, 4.4.2 & 4.22.4); Magnus Hist., *Fragmentum* 1.16 (apud Malalas *Chronographia*, ch. 3); Ammianus Marcellinus, *Res Gestae* 31.11.2-5. See also Jones et al. 1971, PLRE 1:812-13.

of animals, to have appealed to military officers.¹³⁴

Regarding the former, it is known that Ammianus Marcellinus had a rather negative view of Christianity, and a confused idea about its variant dogmas and parties.¹³⁵ It seems probable therefore, that either the issue did not interest him, or that he did not want to reveal the personal religious beliefs of Sebastian as he thought highly of him. The same can be said for Libanius, who, in addition to his friendly relationship with Sebastian, was the one who pleaded with the authorities for religious tolerance towards Palestinian Manichaeans.¹³⁶ Regarding the latter, it seems reasonable to guess that a Roman citizen, who became a Manichaean hearer, would not have any reservation for serving in the army, regardless of how high-ranked he was. In addition, the view that there were indeed Manichaeans in the imperial military service is further supported by Roman imperial legislation. According to the *CJ*, officials in the army were asked “to investigate whether anyone among them” was a Manichaean, “and to reveal him when found” to the authorities.¹³⁷

Hierax (or Hieracas)

A person with the name Hierax appears in the anti-Manichaean *AFs* and in the later sources which reproduce the *AFs* (Peter of Sicily and Photius). According to the *SC*, the converted Manichaeans had to anathematize (after Mani’s first disciples and parents) a certain Hierax, as “the author of the Manichaean atheism”.¹³⁸ In the rest of the sources, Hierax is anathematized alongside with Heracleides and Aphthonius as “commentators and exegetes” of Mani’s works.

In addition to this, I anathematize and curse together with all those stated above, Hierax and Heracleides and Aphthonius, the expositors and commentators of this lawless and profane Mani [...].¹³⁹

Both Photius and Peter, in addition, include all three in the list of the twelve first disciples of Mani.¹⁴⁰ Hierax of the *AFs* has been identified by many researchers with the famous Egyptian ascetic of the fourth century, Hierax of Leontopolis, a city located in the Nile Delta.¹⁴¹ Epiphanius provides us with a detailed report about him in his *Panarion*.¹⁴² As he begins his chapter on the Hieracites which follows the chapter on Manichaeans, “After the savage onset of this rotten, poisonous teaching of Mani, the worst of all heresies and like that of a snake, there arose a man named Hieracas, the founder of the Hieracites”.¹⁴³ According to Epiphanius, Hierax was a very talented and learned person.

¹³⁴ Lieu 1994, 102-03: “It strikes one as odd that a cult which strictly forbade the taking of any form of animal life should find a follower in a commanding officer”; However, on other occasions Lieu seems more open to accept Athanasius’ claim that Sebastian was a Manichaean. See for example, Lieu 1992, 127: “The official tolerance of the sect may also be deduced from the high rank of one of its better known converts, Sebastianus”.

¹³⁵ Cf. Woods 2001, 258-59, 264.

¹³⁶ Libanius, *Ep.* 1253.

¹³⁷ *CJ* 1.5.16.1.

¹³⁸ See ch.[2], 2.5.3. *SC*, ch. 2 (Lieu 1994, 236, 238, 252 & 2010, 118): Ἀναθεματίζω τοὺς Μανιχαίου μαθητάς, [...] καὶ Πατρίκιον τὸν πατέρα [...] καὶ Καρῶσαν τὴν αὐτοῦ μητέρα καὶ τὸν συγγραφέα τῆς μανιχαϊκῆς ἀθεΐας Ἱέρακα.

¹³⁹ *SAF* 36.8 (Goar: 696, Barb. 148.17) (Lieu 2010, 132-133). *LAF* (PG 1:1468b, Lieu 2010, 141).

¹⁴⁰ Photius, *c. Manichaeos* 50: Ἐξηγηταὶ δὲ αὐτοῦ καὶ οἷον ὑπομνηματισταὶ γεγόνασιν Ἱέραξ τε καὶ Ἡρακλείδης καὶ Ἀφθόνιος. Peter of Sicily, *Hist. ref. Man.* 67. As Lieu (1994, 267-8) comments: “the claim by Peter of Sicily and Photius that he was a disciple of Mani must be disregarded unless they have a different Hierax in mind”.

¹⁴¹ Lieu 1994, 267-68; cf. Stroumsa 1986b, 310-11.

¹⁴² Epiphanius, *Pan.* 67.1.1-8.3.

¹⁴³ Epiphanius, *Pan.* 67.1.1 (Williams, 316). As Lieu (1994, 267-8) points out, the same order is also followed by Augustine.

[...] he was proficient in Greek and other literary studies, and well acquainted with medicine and the other subjects of Greek and Egyptian learning, and perhaps he had dabbled in astrology and magic. For he was very well versed in many subjects and, as his works show, < an extremely scholarly > expositor of scripture. He knew Coptic very well—the man was Egyptian—and was also quite clear in Greek, for he was quick in every way. [...] He wrote in Greek and in Coptic, expositions he had composed < of > the six days of creation, fabricating some legends and pompous allegories. But he wrote on any number of other scriptural subjects and composed many latter-day psalms [...] He practiced calligraphy.¹⁴⁴

Another basic characteristic of Hierax was his extreme asceticism. As Epiphanius remarks, “he was awesome in his asceticism, and able to win souls to himself; for example, many Egyptian ascetics were convinced by him”. Hierax, like the Manichaeans, abstained from meat and “all sorts of foods” and “denied himself wine as well”. He also did not “countenance matrimony” because as he said, “since Christ’s coming marriage is no longer accept< able >, and cannot inherit the kingdom of heaven”. His main ‘heretical’ belief, as Epiphanius highlights, was the denial of the resurrection of the bodies. He claimed: “the flesh never rises, only the soul [...] And he collected whatever texts he could < find > in the sacred scripture to support his position.” Hierax died at a very old age (over 90).¹⁴⁵

What seems to worry primarily Epiphanius was the influence that Hierax exerted on the Christian ascetic milieu, “for Hieracas [...] mimics the church’s virginity but without a clear conscience”.¹⁴⁶ Epiphanius highlights the dissemination of the extreme ascetic practices of the Hieracites to the ascetics of Egypt and Thebaid (and not only) also in his *Ancoratus*.¹⁴⁷ In addition, in the same work he correlates the fact that Hieracites did not believe in the resurrection with the docetic perceptions of the Manichaeans.¹⁴⁸ Chrysostom too, as we have seen, considered that the rejection of the resurrection of the bodies was of Manichaean origin.¹⁴⁹

The appeal that Hierax had in the ascetic milieu is also illustrated in the work *Vita Epiphanii* (fifth-sixth cent.). According to the account, Epiphanius, attracted by the fame of Hierax, decided to visit him. “Entering in his monastery” he was impressed as he “found many crowds of people taught by him” (ch. 27).

Another author referring to Hierax of Leontopolis is the author of the *Sermo contra omnes haereses*, which is falsely attributed to Athanasius. Klein dates the work around 360 and argues that its “similarities to the work of Didymus” and the “dependencies on the writings of Athanasios” “suggests Egypt, perhaps even Alexandria, as the place of origin”.¹⁵⁰ The author (Pseudo-Athanasius) appears well aware of the basic tenets of the Manichaeans, whom he calls “dregs of evils and of heresies” (τρυγίους τῶν κακῶν). In his work he discusses the issues of dualism, Docetism, and the rejection of the OT. He also combats Marcion, Valentinus, Basilides, and a certain Hierax who, as he comments, was against marriage and supported virginity.¹⁵¹

¹⁴⁴ Epiphanius, *Pan.* 67.1.2-3; 3.7, 9 (Williams 316, 319).

¹⁴⁵ Epiphanius, *Pan.* 67.1.5-9, 67.3.8 (Williams 316-19).

¹⁴⁶ Epiphanius, *Pan.* 67.8.1 (Williams 323): “For Hieracas is a winged snake and scorpion which has wings of many kinds, and flies, and mimics the church’s virginity but without a clear conscience”; 67.3.8 (Williams 319): “many of those who believe in his doctrines abstain from meat”.

¹⁴⁷ Epiphanius, *Ancoratus* 82.3.4.

¹⁴⁸ Epiphanius, *Ancoratus* 86.1.

¹⁴⁹ Chrysostom, *Hom.* 1 *Cor.* 38 & 39.

¹⁵⁰ Klein 1991, 33-34. Cf. Pedersen 2004, 134.

¹⁵¹ Pseudo-Athanasius, *Sermo contra omnes haereses* (PG 28:516).

From what has been said above, it stands to reason that Hierax the ascetic might well have been the same one as in the *AFs*. The skills of Hierax as described by Epiphanius fit perfectly with the status of authorship and commentator attributed to the Hierax of the *AFs*. Furthermore, as Lieu remarks, “a person with his qualifications would have been ideal as a translator and copyist of the Manichaean texts”. If this was the case, it is not improbable, as Wisse suggested, that he could have used the Manichaean books he translated in order to support his extreme asceticism, since during his day, orthopraxy was more important than orthodoxy.¹⁵² The latter explains why he could have later been labelled as Manichaean.

Aphthonius and Heracleides

As noted above, in both the short and long *AFs*, as well as in the writings of Photius and Peter of Sicily, two other persons in addition to Hierax, namely Aphthonius and Heracleides, are anathematized as expositors and commentators of Mani’s writings.

We first hear about Aphthonius from the church historian Philostorgius. Philostorgius portrays Aphthonius as a leader (*προεστώς*) of the Manichaeans and very famous for his wisdom and eloquence. According to the account, the famous Arian theologian and orator Aetius, drawn by the fame of Aphthonius, went from Antioch to Alexandria in order to compete against him in a debate. The debate took place during the reign of Constantius II. The victory of Aetius was so great that, as Philostorgius says, Aphthonius after a few days died of his deep grief.

Shortly thereafter, in fact, one Aphthonius, a leader of the Manichaeans (Manichaean madness) who was held in high renown by many for his wisdom and prowess in speech, debated with him in Alexandria in Egypt, for Aetius, drawn by his reputation, came from Antioch to meet him. When they came to grips with each other, no lengthy debate ensued, for Aetius reduced Aphthonius to silence and brought him down from great fame to great shame. So dejected was he by his unexpected defeat that he fell gravely ill and in the end died; his body did not survive the blow more than seven days. Aetius for his part defeated his opponents in debate thoroughly wherever he went and won a brilliant victory.¹⁵³

The title ‘leader’ (*προεστώς*) in the quotation above most likely means a Manichaean teacher or a bishop, rather than the one at the top of the hierarchical pyramid, the *archegos*. According to later sources (*SAF*, *LAF*, Peter of Sicily and Photius), Aphthonius was a commentator and expositor of Mani’s writings, a task which looks more like the work of a teacher.¹⁵⁴ It is important to keep in mind that the office of the teacher in the Manichaean church was very important and different from that of an ordinary teacher. There were only twelve teachers who held the second position in the pyramid of the hierarchy after the Manichaean *archegos*.¹⁵⁵

¹⁵² Lieu 1994, 90, 94, fn. 302. As Wisse (1978, 438-440) argues, by considering encratism as the essence of Christianity, Hierax became indiscriminately open to outside influences.

¹⁵³ Philostorgius, *HE* 3.15.50-60 (Amidon 2007, 54, modified): μετ’ οὐ πολὺ γοῦν Ἀφθόνιος τις, τῆς Μανιχαίων λύσεως προεστὼς καὶ μεγάλην παρὰ πολλοῖς ἐπὶ σοφίᾳ καὶ δεινότητι λόγων φέρων τὴν δόξαν, ἐν τῇ κατ’ Αἰγυπτὸν αὐτῷ Ἀλεξανδρείᾳ συμπλέκεται. καὶ γὰρ ἦκε πρὸς αὐτὸν ἐξ Ἀντιοχείας ὁ Ἀέτιος, ὑπὸ τῆς περὶ αὐτὸν φήμης ἐλκόμενος. ὡς δ’ εἰς ἀμύλλαν ἀλλήλοις κατέστησαν, οὐδὲ πολλῆς καταναλωθείσης διελέγξεως, εἰς ἀφωνίαν συνελάσας ὁ Ἀέτιος τὸν Ἀφθόνιον ἐκ μεγάλης δόξης εἰς μεγάλην αἰσχύνην κατήνεγκεν. διὸ καὶ τῷ ἀπροσδοκῆτῳ βαρυθυμήσας τῆς ἥττης, νόσον τε ἐπεσπάσατο χαλεπὴν καὶ τῇ νόσῳ πέρας ὁ θάνατος ἦν οὐδὲ περαιτέρω τῶν ἐπτά ἡμερῶν διαρκέσαντος τοῦ σώματος ἀπὸ τῆς πληγῆς.

¹⁵⁴ *LAF*, ch. 3 (PG 1:1461/1472A).

¹⁵⁵ The office of the Teacher, as well as its significance for the Manichaean community, is recorded in the Manichaean letters from Kellis. Cf. Gardner 2006, 317-23 and Brand 2019, 141-42.

Regarding the identity of Heracleides we do not know anything. According to Lieu “he may have been the author of the “Psalms of Heracleides” in the Coptic Manichaean *Psalm-Book*”.¹⁵⁶

A converted Manichaean woman in Alexandria

Socrates the Scholastic narrates an incident which he dates to the mid-380s, when Theophilus was bishop of Alexandria, and Damasus I was bishop of Rome.¹⁵⁷ Theophilus, as he states, being irritated with Petrus, the arch-presbyter of the Alexandrian church, invented the following way in order to expel him from the church. He accused him of having admitted a Manichaean woman “to participate in the sacred mysteries before she had abjured her former heresy”.¹⁵⁸

Although during the inquisitional procedure it appeared that “the woman was received by consent of the bishop”, moreover, that the bishop “himself had administered the sacrament to her”, the presbyter Peter was expelled from the Alexandrian church.

The historicity of the specific incident, obviously, cannot be supported, since the author himself presents it as a plot in the context of inter-ecclesiastical disputes and confrontations. The value of this piece of information, however, rests first on that it reflects the demonization of Manichaeism, and second on that it confirms the presence of Manichaeans in Alexandria. Indeed, it indicates that there were Manichaeans who wished to convert to Christianity, since it was just after the first wave of laws against Manichaeans that were promulgated by Theodosius I. The same story is reproduced by Sozomenus.¹⁵⁹

Anonymous Manichaean presbyter converted to Christianity

A testimony for the rank of Manichaean presbyter is preserved in one of the *sayings* of the fathers (*Apophthegmata partum*, “regarding hospitality”). According to the scenery that this text captures from the ascetic milieu (fourth cent.), apart from the wandering Christian ascetics, Manichaean presbyters also travelled across the Egyptian desert to visit with each other.

An old man in Egypt lived in a desert place. And far away lived a Manichaean who was a presbyter, at least was one of those whom Manichaeans call presbyters. While the Manichaean was on a journey to visit another of that erroneous sect [...].¹⁶⁰

Agapius

Agapius and his book the *Heptalogue* (*Ἑπτάλογον Ἀγαπίου*) appear only in the Byzantine sources written after the fifth-sixth centuries and are both “unattested in extant genuine Manichaean sources”.¹⁶¹ The SC, SAF, and Timothy the Presbyter refer to him as the author of the *Heptalogue*, without any further comment. While, according to Photius, Peter of Sicily and the LAF, Agapius was one of Mani’s disciples and author of the *Heptalogue*.

¹⁵⁶ Lieu 1994, 268.

¹⁵⁷ Socrates, *HE* 6.1.

¹⁵⁸ Socrates, *HE* 6.9: γυναῖκά τινα Μανιχαῖαν τὴν θρησκείαν εἰς τὰ ἱερὰ μυστήρια προσδεξάμενος, μὴ πρότερον τῆς Μανιχαϊκῆς αἵρέσεως ἀποστήσας αὐτήν.

¹⁵⁹ Sozomenus, *HE*, 8.12.

¹⁶⁰ *Apophthegmata patrum (collectio systematica)* 13 (trans. by Gardner and Lieu 2004, 120): Ἦν τις γέρων οἰκῶν ἐν ἐρήμῳ τόπῳ. Ἦν δὲ ἄλλος μικρόθεν αὐτοῦ μανιχαῖος καὶ αὐτὸς πρεσβύτερος, ἐκ τῶν λεγομένων παρ’ αὐτοῖς πρεσβυτέρων. Καὶ ὡς ἤλθεν παραβαλεῖν τι τῶν ὁμοδόξων αὐτοῦ.

¹⁶¹ Lieu 1994, 270-1.

I anathematize [...] and the so-called *Heptalogue* of Agapius and Agapius himself.¹⁶²

I anathematize [...] and the book of Agapius which is called the *Heptalogue* [...] (I anathematize) all his remaining disciples, Sisinnios the successor of his madness, Thomas [...] Agapius, [...].¹⁶³

All that we know about Agapius (who may have been a mid-fourth century figure)¹⁶⁴ and his book derives from Photius' *Bibliotheca*.¹⁶⁵ There, Photius speaks of a work, which he does not name, of a certain Agapius, composed of twenty-three short speeches (*λογύδρια*) and 102 other chapters; it was addressed to a 'fellow-philosopher' of Agapius, a woman named Urania. According to Photius, Agapius pretended to be a Christian, but his work proves that he hated Christ more than any other man (*μισόχριστος*). From the summary of his work provided by Photius, it becomes evident that he shared many common positions with Manichaeism. This enables us to assume that this is the same Agapius condemned by the abjuration formulas and that the work to which Photius is referring is the *Heptalogue*.¹⁶⁶ The main tenets of Agapius as presented by Photius are the following:

- (1) He supports the existence of an evil first principle opposing God, which is self-subsisting and eternal; he calls it sometimes 'nature', sometimes 'matter', sometimes 'Satan', or 'devil', or 'master of the world', or 'god of the age', and he gives it various other names.
- (2) "He speaks [...] of the sun and the moon as divinities (gods), which he proclaims as consubstantial with God".
- (3) He worships and hymns the air (as god), calling it a column and a man, recalling the Manichaean *Column of Glory* which was also called the *Perfect Man or Air*.
- (4) He places fire and earth in the domain of evil.
- (5) He adopts the Manichaean thesis that Christ was the tree of Paradise (see AA 11.1). Agapius claims that he honours Christ, but according to Photius [only] with his lips. This is because although he speaks about Christ's incarnation, baptism, crucifixion, and his resurrection, as Photius comments, he means it differently than what Christians believe.
- (6) He maintains that the body belongs to the evil portion, but the soul to the divine, the latter being consubstantial with God.
- (7) He claims "that men sin" "by necessity, and in spite of themselves".
- (8) He preaches strict asceticism: to abstain from meat, wine and sexual relationships.
- (9) He supports the transmigration of souls: Virtuous men are dissolved in God, vicious persons are brought down to fire and darkness, while those in-between had to reincarnate.
- (10) He rejects the OT while he uses selectively the Holy Gospel and the letters of Paul, which he perverts. He also relies upon apocryphal works, like the so-called *Acts of the Twelve Apostles*, especially those of Andrew.
- (11) He has many loans from pagan superstition. He calls Plato (and other pagan philosophers) divine and holy just like Christ.

¹⁶² SC, ch. 2: Ἀναθεματίζω [...] καὶ τὴν λεγομένην Ἑπτάλογον Ἀγαπίου καὶ αὐτὸν Ἀγάπιον. SAF 36.8 (Goar): "I anathematize [...] and the so-called Heptalogus of Agapios and Agapios himself".

¹⁶³ LAF (PG 1:1468, Lieu 2010, 139, 141); Photius, c. *Manichaeos* 50: Ἡριθμοῦντο δὲ τῷ χορῷ τῶν μαθητευθέντων αὐτῷ καὶ Ἀγάπιος ὁ τὴν Ἑπτάλογον καλουμένην συντάξας καὶ Ζαρούας καὶ Γαυριάβιος. Peter of Sicily, *Hist. ref. Man* 67-68: Ὑπῆρχον δὲ αὐτῷ καὶ ἕτεροι μαθηταὶ τρεῖς Ἀγάπιος ὁ τὴν Ἑπτάλογον συντάξας, καὶ Ζαρούας καὶ Γαβριάβιος. Μηδεὶς ἀναγινωσκέτω τὸ κατὰ Θωμᾶν εὐαγγέλιον [...] μῆτε τὴν Ἑπτάλογον Ἀγαπίου.

¹⁶⁴ Lieu (1994, 270-71) says that if Eunomius whom Agapius attacked was the "famous Arian leader and the Bishop of Cyzicus, Agapius would have been a mid-fourth century figure". Cf. Lieu 1992, 138-40.

¹⁶⁵ Photius, *Bibl.* 179 (124a.17-125a.28)-180.

¹⁶⁶ Lieu 1994, 270-71.

In contrast to *Contra Manichaeos*, where Photius says that Agapius was a disciple of Mani, in his *Bibliotheca* he nowhere explicitly says that Agapius was a Manichaean. Indeed, stating that his work could be used for both the refutation of the Manichaeans and of Agapius' disciples, he seems to distinguish the former from the latter, giving the impression that they were two different movements, although he does recognize a strong spiritual affinity, and many shared practices. This strikes one as odd, since ten out of the eleven tenets are typically Manichaean theses. Especially the view that the air is a god, which he calls a column and a man, is exclusively a Manichaean idea. So, if we rely on what Photius says, Agapius' Manichaeanness is unquestionable.¹⁶⁷

Simplicius the City Prefect of Constantinople (403/6)

Theophanes records that sometime in 403, when Chrysostom was archbishop of Constantinople, the City's Prefect Simplicius, "a Manichaean and a supporter of paganism", erected a silver statue on a pillar of porphyry in honour of the empress Eudoxia. "In front of" this statue, which was located "near St Eirene" (or near St Sophia, according to Socrates), Simplicius "organized noisy choirs and dancing" and raised "a commotion, which distressed John since it did not allow him to celebrate the holy liturgy in peace. For it frequently interrupted the psalm-singing".¹⁶⁸

Presbyter Philip

As recorded in Cyril of Alexandria's *Memorandum* (one of the documents of the Acts of the Ecumenical Synod at Ephesus in 431), Nestorius accused the catholic presbyter Philip of Manichaeism, and condemned him as such in a synod he convened, because he was fighting his (Nestorius') heresy.¹⁶⁹

Anastasius et al.

Anastasius and his mother

As Theodorus Anagnostes and Theophanes report, during the reign of the Monophysite Emperor Anastasius (491-518), Manichaeans rejoiced and had a lot of *παρρησία* (impudence), because they were supported by his mother, Anastasia-Constantina, who was "a zealous devotee of theirs".¹⁷⁰ It was also said that Anastasius himself was a supporter of the Manichaeans.¹⁷¹ According to Evagrius, when Anastasius was proclaimed emperor, Ephemius, the bishop of Constantinople, forced him to take an oath, together with a written confession, that he would remain faithful to the faith of the Catholic Church. This was because many

¹⁶⁷ This interpretation differs from that of Lieu (1994, 270-71) who argues: "However, it is just as possible that Agapius was a Christian whose belief in a strong dichotomy between flesh and spirit led to a dualistic theology which was labelled 'Manichaean' by more orthodox-minded churchmen", see also p. 288. Cf. Lieu 1992, 138-40.

¹⁶⁸ Theophanes, *Chron.* 79.4-14.

¹⁶⁹ ACO (*Ephesenum anno 431*), 1.1.7, 171-72.

¹⁷⁰ Theodorus Anagnostes, *HE* 4.448, 454a: Οἱ Μανιχαῖοι πολλὴν ἐν Κωνσταντινουπόλει παρρησίαν ἔσχον. Theophanes, *Chron.* 136 (Mango and Scott, 209): Μανιχαῖοι δὲ καὶ Ἀρειανοὶ ἔχαιρον ἐπὶ Ἀναστασίῳ, Μανιχαῖοι μὲν ὡς τῆς μητρὸς τοῦ βασιλέως ζηλωτρίας οὔσης καὶ προσφιλοῦς αὐτῶν, Ἀρειανοὶ δὲ ὡς Κλέαρχον, τὸν θεῖον αὐτοῦ ἀδελφὸν τῆς αὐτῆς κακόφρονος μητρὸς, ὁμόδοξον ἔχοντες. The work of Theodorus is lost (except for few fragments), but this loss is replaced by an epitome (composed mid. 8th cent.) which was used thoroughly by Theophanes and by other byzantine historians. Georgius Monachus (9th cent.) *Chronicon breve*, reproduces the same text.

¹⁷¹ Theodorus Anagnostes, *HE* 4.467: τοῦ βασιλέως χαίροντος τοῖς Μανιχαίοις; Theophanes *Chron.* 149-50 (Mango and Scott, 229-230): τοῦ βασιλέως χαίροντος τοῖς Μανιχαίοις. Theodorus Anagnostes, *HE* 4.511a: ταῦτα ὁ παρانونώτατος μανιχαϊόφρων.

people maintained that Anastasius was Manichaean-minded.¹⁷² The oath finally was taken before the successor of Ephemius, Macedonius, and Anastasius kept his promise until 507. Afterwards, he changed his stance and followed a Monophysite religious policy. During the episodes that followed the Monophysite Synod of Sidon (510/11) the furious populace, “including women and children and the abbots of the monks, gathered and [...] abused the emperor for being a Manichaean and unworthy of power”. Anastasius out of fear “pretended for the time being to be at one with Macedonius”.¹⁷³

Apart from the accusations against the emperor and his mother, Anastasius is presented by the sources as having relationships with persons who were also accused of being Manichaeans.

The Manichaean painter

According to the testimony of Theodorus Anagnostes and Theophanes, sometime in 507, Anastasius commissioned a Syro-Persian Manichaean painter, whom he brought from Cyzicus “in the guise of a presbyter”, to decorate one of the imperial palaces and the church of St. Stephen in the district of Aurelianae. His paintings were so provocative that they caused a rebellion in Constantinople.

Anastasios brought a Syro-Persian Manichaean painter from Cyzicus, in the guise of a presbyter, who dared to depict certain fantastic subjects, quite different from the holy images of churches, in the palace of Helenianai and in St Stephen of Aurelianai, on the instruction of the emperor who applauded the Manichaeans. This led to a great uprising among the people.¹⁷⁴

Xenaias or Philoxenos of Hierapolis

As some sources also report, Anastasius also had a close relationship and collaboration with another Syro-Persian ‘Manichaean’ named Xenaias, who taught aniconic worship.¹⁷⁵ Finally, the text reveals that he was none other than the active leader of the Monophysite faction and bishop of Hierapolis, Philoxenos.¹⁷⁶ In 507 Anastasius invited Xenaias/Philoxenos to

¹⁷² Evagrius the Scholastic, *HE* 130.32: Ἐδεδράκει δὲ ταῦτα διότι γε ὁ Ἀναστάσιος δόξαν μανιχαϊκῆς νομίσεως παρὰ τοῖς πολλοῖς εἶχεν.

¹⁷³ Theodorus Anagnostes, *HE* 4.485: Ὁ λαὸς σὺν γυναιξὶ καὶ τέκνοις πλήθος ὑπάρχων ἄπειρον σὺν τοῖς ἡγουμένοις τῶν μοναχῶν συναθροισθεὶς [...] ὕβριζον δὲ τὸν βασιλέα Μανιχαῖον καλοῦντες καὶ τῆς βασιλείας ἀνάξιον; Theophanes, *Chron.* 154 (Mango and Scott, 235): τὰ δὲ πλήθη σὺν γυναιξὶ καὶ τέκνοις ἡγουμένοις τε τῶν ὀρθοδόξων μοναχῶν ἔκραζον ἀθροισθέντα [...] ὕβριζοντες τὸν βασιλέα Μανιχαῖον καὶ τοῦ κράτους ἀνάξιον. ὁ δὲ φοβηθεὶς τὰ πλήθη [...] ὑπεκρίθη πρὸς τὴν ὥραν ἐνοῦσθαι αὐτῷ.

¹⁷⁴ Theophanes, *Chron.* 149 (Mango and Scott, 229). Theodorus Anagnostes, *HE* 4.467: Μανιχαῖον δὲ τινα ζωγράφον Συροπέρεσιν ἀπὸ Κυζίκου Ἀναστάσιος ἤγαγεν ἐν σχήματι πρεσβυτέρου, ὃς ἀλλότρια τῶν ἐκκλησιαστικῶν ἁγίων εἰκόνων ἐτόλμησε γράψαι φασματώδη ἐν τῷ παλατίῳ Ἐλενιανῶν καὶ ἐν τῷ ἁγίῳ Στεφάνῳ Αὐρηλιανῶν γνῶμη τοῦ βασιλέως χαίροντος τοῖς Μανιχαίοις, ὅθεν καὶ στάσις τοῦ λαοῦ γέγονε μεγάλη. Cf. Charanis 1974, 60.

¹⁷⁵ Joannes Diacrinomenus, *HE* 7: Ξεναΐας ὁ Φιλόξενος οὔτε Χριστοῦ τοῦ θεοῦ οὔτε ἀγγέλου εἰκόνας ἐν ἐκκλησίᾳ συνεχώρει ἀνατίθεσθαι (set up as objects of worship). Theodorus Anagnostes, *HE* 3.444: Ξεναΐας δὲ ὁ δοῦλος τοῦ σατανᾶ τὴν δεσποτικὴν εἰκόνα καὶ τῶν ἀγγέλων ἐδίδασκε μὴ δέχεσθαι.

¹⁷⁶ See ch.[6], 6.5.1. About the activities (uprisings etc.) of Philoxenos of Hierapolis (Maggub) see: the Monophysite church historian Joannes Diacrinomenus, *HE* 7; Theodorus Anagnostes, *HE* 3.444, 4.470-472a, 497a; Theophanes, *Chron.* 149-167; Cyril of Scythopolis, *Vit. Sab.* 141; Evagrius the Scholastic, *HE* 127-130. The story that Xenaias feigned the priest while he was not even baptized, and that the Monophysite bishop of Antioch Peter Knafes when ordained him as a bishop of Hierapolis declared that the ordination sufficed, instead of baptism, are considered by researchers a mere slander. Theodorus Anagnostes, *HE* 3.444: Ξεναΐας δὲ [...] Πέρσης μὲν γὰρ ἦν τῷ γένει, ἐπὶ Καλανδίωνος τὰς περὶ Ἀντιόχειαν κώμας ἀνεστάτου ἀπὸ τῆς πίστεως, ἀβάπτιστος ὢν καὶ κληρικὸν ἑαυτὸν λέγων. τοῦτον Καλανδίων ἀπήλασεν, Πέτρος δὲ ὁ Κναφεὺς ἐπίσκοπον Ἱεραιπόλεως αὐτὸν

Constantinople “as someone of his own persuasion”. The crowd together with the clergy and monks, already unsettled by the innovations of the Syro-Persian painter, when they were informed of his arrival protested so violently against him, that Anastasius “was forced to slip him out of the capital secretly”.¹⁷⁷ However, the friendly relationship between the two men did not end. Three years later, the Synod at Sidon was convened at the request of Xenaïas/Philoxenos and Soterichos of Caesarea and both of them were appointed by the Emperor as presidents of the Synod.¹⁷⁸ Xenaïas/Philoxenos was finally exiled by Justin in 518/19.¹⁷⁹

Apart from Xenaïas/Philoxenos, at least three other cases of well-known bishops of the Monophysite faction were labelled as Manichaeans, namely, Peter the Fuller/Cnapheus, Julian of Halicarnassus, and Severus of Antioch. The fact that both Severus and Zacharias, who was his biographer and author of the *SC*, seem to have “had a first-hand knowledge of Manichaean Literature” is worth investigating.¹⁸⁰

John the archdeacon

The next case associated to Anastasius and characterized by the sources as a Manichaean is John, who was the archdeacon of the bishop of Constantinople Timothy. Timothy is presented by the sources as having a weak character, willing to be in line with Anastasius’ anti-Chalcedonian church policy. However, finding himself in a difficult situation under pressure, he anathematized those who rejected the Synod of Chalcedon in the presence of his archdeacon John (512/13). “But,” as the sources record, “John, being a Manichee, insulted Timothy and reported the matter to the emperor [Anastasius]”.¹⁸¹

We note that apart from Anastasius, there was a circle of people around him who the aforementioned authors accused of being Manichaeans. Taking into account that among them were known Monophysites, for whom the term ‘Manichaean’ was not used in its literal sense, one could argue that the same might have been the case for the unknown ‘Manichaeans’ presented above (i.e. the Syro-Persian painter/presbyter and the archdeacon John). Since it was the era of disputes over the Christological issue the use of the term ‘Manichaean’ as a religious abuse was at its peak. The term was “applied to anyone whose Christological doctrines or ascetic practices met with disapproval”.¹⁸² Monophysites, however, were labelled

χειροτονήσας Φιλόξενον μετωνόμασεν. μαθὼν δὲ ὕστερον ἀβάπτιστον αὐτὸν εἶναι ἀρκεῖν αὐτῷ τὴν χειροτονίαν ἀντὶ βαπτίσματος ἔφησεν.

¹⁷⁷ Theophanes, *Chron.* 150 (Mango and Scott, 230). Theodorus Anagnostes, *HE* 4.470: Ξεναῖαν τὸν μανιχαϊόφρονα ἤγαγεν Ἀναστάσιος εἰς τὸ Βυζάντιον, τὸν καὶ Φιλόξενον, ὡς ὁμόφρονα. Μακεδόνιος δὲ οὕτω κοινωνίας οὔτε λόγου αὐτὸν ἤξιωσεν, τοῦ κλήρου καὶ τῶν μοναχῶν καὶ τοῦ λαοῦ κατ’ αὐτοῦ ταραπτομένων. ὅθεν καὶ λάθρα τῆς πόλεως αὐτὸν ἐξήγαγεν Ἀναστάσιος. Charanis 1974, 60.

¹⁷⁸ Theophanes, *Chron.* 153 (Mango and Scott, 234). Theodorus Anagnostes, *HE* 4.472a, 497a. Cyril of Scythopolis, *Vit. Sab.* 141.

¹⁷⁹ Theophanes, *Chron.* 165: Ξεναῖαν δὲ τὸν Φιλόξενον, ἐπίσκοπον Ἱεραπόλεως, μανιχαϊόφρονα ὄντα, καὶ Πέτρον Ἀπαμείας ἐξώρισεν ὁ εὐσεβὴς βασιλεὺς Ἰουστίνος σὺν πᾶσι τοῖς μετέχουσι τῆς λώβης αὐτῶν.

¹⁸⁰ Cf. Lieu 1994, 110.

¹⁸¹ Theodorus Anagnostes, *HE* 4.507: Ἰωάννης δέ, ὁ ἀρχιδιάκονος Τιμοθέου, Μανιχαῖος ὢν, ὑβρίσας Τιμόθεον τῷ βασιλεῖ ἐμήνυσεν. Theophanes, *Chron.* 158 (Mango and Scott, 239-240): “When the abbot of the monastery of Dios died, Timothy came to appoint the new abbot. But the one who was about to be appointed said that he would not accept benediction from a man who rejected the Synod of Chalcedon. Timothy said, ‘Anathema to anyone who does not accept the Synod of Chalcedon.’ And so the abbot consented to being appointed by him. But Timothy’s archdeacon, John, being a Manichee, insulted Timothy and reported the matter to the emperor”.

¹⁸² Whitby 2000, 173.

as Manichaeans more than any other group, indeed by all the other groups, because Monophysite Christology was often associated with Manichaean Docetism.

During the first years of his reign, Anastasius exercised a moderate and neutral religious policy. From 507 onwards he openly supported the Monophysite party and he was in constant conflict with Macedonius, the Catholic bishop of Constantinople. That same year he invited both the Manichaean painter and Xenaïas/Philoxenos to Constantinople. Both of them were Syro-Persians in origin and, according to the sources, Manichaeans. Their coming caused riots and uprising.

In current research, the 'Manichaean painter' has been treated sometimes as a Manichaean literally, and sometimes as a Monophysite.¹⁸³ Indeed, Gulácsi supports the former interpretation and argues, based on Theophanes' wording (i.e. "in the guise of a presbyter"), that he was "a leading Manichaean elect, one of the 360 presbyters of the Manichaean Church".¹⁸⁴ However, the above expression (*ἐν σχήματι πρεσβυτέρου*) could also mean that he was a presbyter only in appearance (i.e. in pretence). In any case, what is certain is that his paintings did not follow the established tradition of the Catholic Church (*ἀλλότρια τῶν ἐκκλησιαστικῶν ἀγίων εἰκόνων ἐτόλμησε γράψαι φασματώδη*) and that was the reason that "led to a great uprising among the people". What kind of illustrations could have triggered such riots?

Gulácsi, who supports the view that he was a Manichaean, says that his "paintings most likely included" "icons of Jesus or narratives scenes from his life" because these were the common themes in the Byzantine and Manichaean iconographic repertoire. Further, she assumes that what provoked the uprising might have been either some unorthodox iconographic details or the prejudice towards the artist's religious identity.¹⁸⁵ In the case he was a Monophysite, he may have introduced novelties consistent with contemporary Monophysite theses (e.g. depictions of the Triad denoting theopaschist beliefs),¹⁸⁶ or aniconic representations (Monophysites seem to have considered it offensive to depict the divine persons of the Godhead). The latter scenario is reinforced by the testimony that Xenaïas/Philoxenos also taught not to accept icons of Christ and angels in the churches.¹⁸⁷ It is worth noting that as Monophysitism and Iconoclasm were associated in the minds of the Catholics,¹⁸⁸ later on Xenaïas, along with Severus and Peter the Fuller, were considered to be pioneers of iconoclasm. At the iconophile ecumenical synod of Nicaea in 787, all three were "included in a list of anti-Chalcedonians as iconoclasts".¹⁸⁹ In any case, the word *φασματώδη* (like a vision/phantalasmal) points to painting techniques expressing the immateriality of the subjects.

Concerning Anastasius himself and whether he was a Manichaean or *μανιχαϊόφρων/μανιχαῖζων*, probably what we witness here is the use of the term as an epithet of opprobrium, since the writers (who accused him as such) were Catholics, and therefore hostile to him. Zacharias, the then-Monophysite church historian and later Catholic bishop of

¹⁸³ Charanis 1974, 60. Xatziantoniou 2009, 69.

¹⁸⁴ Gulácsi 2015, 42-44.

¹⁸⁵ Gulácsi, 2015, 43.

¹⁸⁶ Xatziantoniou 2009, 69-70.

¹⁸⁷ Joannes Diacrinomenus, *HE* 7: οὔτε Χριστοῦ τοῦ Θεοῦ οὔτε ἀγγέλου εἰκόνας ἐν ἐκκλησίᾳ συνεχώρει ἀνατίθεσθαι; Theodorus Anagnostes, *HE* 3.444: Ξεναΐας [...] τὴν δεσποτικὴν εἰκόνα καὶ τῶν ἀγγέλων ἐδίδασκε μὴ δέχεσθαι.

¹⁸⁸ Parry 2016, 138.

¹⁸⁹ Parry 2016, 151: "We have seen that at Nicaea II Philoxenos, bishop of Mabbug in northern Syria, was included in a list of anti-Chalcedonians as iconoclasts along with Severus and Peter the Fuller".

Mytilene, instead claims that these stories about Anastasius' Manichaeism were a plot of the Catholic bishop of Constantinople, Macedonius.

And when he [Macedonius] saw the mind of the king [Anastasius] he formed a plan for actually raising a rebellion against him; and he was in the habit of calling him a heretic and a Manichaean.¹⁹⁰

However, the fact that a wave of polemics against Manichaeans took place after Anastasius' reign, either through legislation or through a series of anti-Manichaean texts, supports the hypothesis that Manichaeans indeed had a good deal of social latitude during his reign.¹⁹¹ Moreover, it should not be a coincidence that the anti-Manichaean edict attributed to Anastasius (which imposed the death penalty on Manichaeans for the first time) was issued in 510: this was the same year that the riots of Sidon took place, where the mob abused and accused Anastasius as a Manichaean.¹⁹² The fact that the above edict remained inactive until Justinian's time supports the case that his main purpose was to dissociate his name from Manichaeism.¹⁹³

Lastly, for Anastasius' mother, several opinions have been supported by scholars.¹⁹⁴ If, however, she was indeed "a zealous devotee" of Manichaeans, as our authors maintain, it would be reasonable to assume that she could have influenced positively Anastasius' stance towards Manichaeans.¹⁹⁵

Photinus

Photinus is the second case of a Manichaean teacher (Aphthonius being the first)¹⁹⁶ recorded in Byzantine literature.

Indeed, Photinus too, as Aphthonius, is presented as participating in a debate, this time in Constantinople in 527. However now, things have changed for the Manichaeans. The Manichaean and Christian contestants do not compete on equal terms (as equals). Unlike Aphthonius, Photinus is not given the opportunity to show off his wisdom and eloquence, since he is presented as a captive. The office of Photinus is declared right from the outset.

¹⁹⁰ *The Syriac Chronicle Known as that of Zacharia of Mytilene*, 7.7: "[...] And he [Anastasius] held a Council; and in the presence of his patricians he told of the insult which had been offered to him by Macedonius; and he was distressed, and wept, and adjured them not to be influenced by fear; but if, in truth, their king was displeasing to them, or if they knew that he was infected with the deceit of heresy, they should take his dominion from him, and he should be cast out as an unbeliever. And they fell upon their faces before him, weeping". <http://www.tertullian.org/fathers/zachariah07.htm>. Greatrex 2011, 258-59. On the antipode of Zacharia's aspect about Anastasius' and Macedonius' debate lies Cyril's of Scythopolis in his *Vit. Sab.* 140-41: ἦν τοίνυν ὁμόνοια Μακεδονίου καὶ Ἡλία, Φλαβιανοῦ δὲ μετὰ τελευταίην Παλλαδίου τῆς Ἀντιοχείων κρατήσαντος καὶ τοῦτοις ἐνωθέντος οὐκ ἦνεγκεν ὁ κατὰ μόνης τῆς εὐσεβείας θρασὺς βασιλεὺς τὴν τούτων συμφωνίαν, ἀλλ' ἐμάνη ὑπερορίσαι αὐτούς. καὶ πρῶτον μὲν τὸν Μακεδόνιον συκοφανταίαις διαφόροις περιβαλὼν καὶ τῆς ἐπισκοπῆς ἐξέώσας καὶ Τιμόθεον εἰς αὐτὴν προαγαγὼν Φλαβιανὸν καὶ Ἡλίαν ἀπῆλτει συνθέσθαι.

¹⁹¹ Cf. Stroumsa and Stroumsa 1988, 56.

¹⁹² Theodorus Anagnostes, *HE* 4.485; Theophanes, *Chron.* 154: εἰσελθὼν [Μακεδόνης] δὲ πρὸς Ἀναστάσιον ἤλεγξεν αὐτὸν ὡς πολέμιον τῆς ἐκκλησίας. ὁ δὲ ὑπεκρίθη πρὸς τὴν ὥραν ἐνοῦσθαι αὐτῷ.

¹⁹³ See also Charanis 1974, 41.

¹⁹⁴ Jarry (1968) and Charanis (1974, 39, 41) support the view that Anastasius mother was a Manichaean. Cf. Capizzi 1969.

¹⁹⁵ Cf. Charanis 1974, 41.

¹⁹⁶ Apart from the above two cases of Manichaean teachers, there is also a testimony of Simplicius (*Comm. Man. Epict.* 35.90-92), that he himself held a discussion with a Manichaean teacher in Athens, see ch.[4], 4.3.

On the command of the two emperors, Justin and Justinian, a debate was held between the Manichaean Photinus and the Christian Paul the Persian, when Theodorus was prefect of the city. [...] Leader (*προϊστάμενος*) of the Manichaean doctrine was a teacher of that religion.¹⁹⁷

Photinus, from the beginning of the debate, declares that he is a loyal exponent of his tradition; that he knows by heart and preserves what was bestowed upon him from his ancestors. When, during the first day of the debate, Paul questioned whether Photinus was a Manichaean teacher, Photinus defended his title by stating “I am [a Manichaean teacher] and I confess that I am”.¹⁹⁸

The debate unfolded in three sessions, each on a different day. The subjects discussed during these sessions were respectively, the origin of the souls, the two first principles, and the two Testaments. Though at every stage of the discussion the Christian arguments bested the Manichaean, the debate ends abruptly without informing us of its final outcome and whether Photinus was finally forced to anathematize his doctrines.¹⁹⁹ More details on Photinus’ attitude during the debate will be given in the next chapter [8].

Peter Barsymes

A Manichaean (or one labelled as such) on whom Justinian’s harsh measures and laws against Manichaeans do not seem to have had an effect, was a man “named Peter, who was Syrian by birth, surnamed Barsymes”.²⁰⁰ According to Procopius, this was because Justinian’s wife, the empress Theodora, liked and favoured this man. Barsymes assumed a very high position in the palatine administration (first officer of the State), and was involved in every kind of corruption, cruelty, and illegality. It is also said that he was a magician, “a devotee of sorcerers and demons”, domains that interested Theodora since her childhood, “and was admittedly a member of the Manichaeans”.²⁰¹

Erythrius’ wife

According to Malalas (fifth-sixth cent.), among the Manichaeans who were punished during Justinian’s time was the wife of Senator Erythrius (Andronica?) amongst others: “At that time many Manichaeans were punished in every city. Among those punished was the wife of the senator Erythrios and other women as well”.²⁰²

It has been argued that because Erythrius was an adherent of Mazdakism his wife must have belonged to the same religious group.²⁰³ It is questionable why it would not be equally

¹⁹⁷ *Disputationes Photini Manichaei cum Paulo Christiano* (PG 88:529A-578D, 529). Cf. Lieu 1994, 113-16. It is noteworthy that both Aphthonius and Photinus are characterized as leaders (*προεστώς, προϊστάμενος*). About the identity of this Paul, see Lieu 1994, 113-114. Since my focus is on historical information provided by the text rather than on theological accounts the theological argumentation of the two adversaries is not presented here. Further research of the content of the debate that will trace parallel Manichaean theses in other Manichaean or anti-Manichaean literature, is required.

¹⁹⁸ *Disputationes Photini Manichaei cum Paulo Christiano* (PG 88:532, 536).

¹⁹⁹ A text entitled “Proposition of the Manichaean Photinus. Response of Paul the Persian” is recorded just after the debate. Its content is partly identical to Zacharias of Mytilene’s work *Adv. Manichaeos*. Cf. Lieu 1994, 220.

²⁰⁰ Lieu 1994, 117.

²⁰¹ Procopius, *Hist. Arcana* 22.25-26: ὁ Βαρσύμης οὗτος, καὶ τοὺς καλουμένους Μανιχαίους ἐτεθήπει τε καὶ αὐτῶν προστατεῖν ἐκ τοῦ ἐμφανοῦς οὐδαμῇ ἀπηξίου. On Barsymes see also ch.[6], 6.5.2.

²⁰² Malalas, *Chron.* 17.21 (Jeffreys and Scott, 243): Ἐν δὲ τῷ αὐτῷ καιρῷ κατὰ πόλιν πολλοὶ ἐτιμωρήθησαν Μανιχαῖοι, ἐν οἷς ἐτιμωρήθη καὶ ἡ γυνὴ Ἐρυθρίου τοῦ συγκλητικοῦ καὶ ἄλλαι ἅμα αὐτῇ. According to the Slavonic version of the text, among the victims of the persecution was “the wife of a patrician, whose name may have been Andronica”. See Martindale 1980, (PLRE) 2:402.

²⁰³ Lieu 1994, 116-18.

plausible that there was a club of Manichaean women in Byzantine aristocracy. They could have been under the patronage of Empress Theodora, given the close relationship she had with the very powerful man in the state’s administration, Barsymes, who according to Procopius, admired, favoured and supported the Manichaeans openly.²⁰⁴ Moreover, according to the testimony, Erythrius’ wife was not the only one. The attraction Manichaeism held for women is testified to elsewhere and seems probable, given the honourable position of female Elect in the Manichaean hierarchy.²⁰⁵

7.4 Conclusions

Jerusalem and Antioch compared

The sources for both cases belong to the genre of oral homilies, which could reflect the historical reality in specific times and places. The religious landscape of both Jerusalem and Antioch, despite the chronological distance, is characterized by religious diversity. In both cases, the Manichaeans constituted a major and a real problem that Cyril and Chrysostom had to confront. The references to Manichaeans constitute a significant part of their lectures. Manichaeans’ misconceptions, practices, and negative influence on their listeners during social interactions, causing apostasies, are common concerns for the two pastors. Their advice on how to deal with the Manichaeans, and whether they should speak or not with and about Manichaeans are similar. The basic target of both Cyril and Chrysostom was the good preparation of their listeners for the (inevitable) encounter with the Manichaeans in their everyday lives.

However, while in Cyril's speeches one gets the impression that there were Manichaeans among his listeners, this is not true for Chrysostom’s speeches. At least, they did not attend the congregation openly. The Manichaeans of Antioch, during the last two decades of the fourth century, do not seem to have had the religious freedom of their coreligionists of Jerusalem in the middle of the century. More importantly, Chrysostom makes no reference to Manichaean churches. This reinforces the view that since ca. 380 the Manichaean meetings were generally held in secret.

Table 4: Alleged ‘Manichaean’ Individuals: Real or Imagined?

Person		Century	Identity	Discussed in other chapters
1.	Sebastian	4 th	Military officeholder: <i>dux</i> of Egypt & <i>Magister Peditum Orientis</i> . A Manichaean?	
2.	Hierax	"	Ascetic in Egypt	
3.	Aphthonius	"	Manichaean teacher	
4.	Heracleides	"	Ascetic philosopher?	
5.	Anonymous Manichaean woman	"	A convert to Christianity in Alexandria, Egypt	
6.	Anonymous Manichaean discussing with Didymus	"	Elect?	Ch.[5]
7.	Bassa	"	A Manichaean missionary (?) Elect (?) in Asia Minor & Illyria	Ch.[6], 6.2.3

²⁰⁴ Procopius, *Hist. Arcana* 22.22-29. However, according to Lieu (1994, 117), “we cannot be certain how precisely Procopius [...] used the term ‘Manichaeism’”.

²⁰⁵ PRylands 3, Gr. 469 (Roberts 1938, 42).

8.	Anonymous Manichaean presbyter converted to Christianity	"	A Manichaean presbyter wandering in the Egyptian desert	
9.	Anonymous Manichaean in a debate with Corpes (a Christian holy man)	"	A Manichaean missionary in Hermopolis Magna, Egypt	Ch.[2], 2.7.3
10.	Anonymous Manichaean from Sparta converted to Christianity		A leading citizen of Sparta converted by Serapion the Sindonite	Ch.[2], 2.7.3
11.	Agapius	"	Ascetic philosopher? A Manichaean?	
12.	Julia of Antioch	4 th – 5 th	A Manichaean missionary, Elect? (Antioch & Gaza)	Ch.[6], 6.2.3
13.	Dositheus of Cilicia	"	Ascetic in Asia Minor	Ch.[5], 5.3.3 Ch.[6], 6.3.1
14.	Presbyter Philon	"	Clergymen: Catholic (?) presbyter near the border of the Empire	Ch.[4], 4.2.2 Ch.[8], 8.5
15.	Simplicius	5 th	Officeholder: the City Prefect of Constantinople (403/6)	
16.	Presbyter Philip	"	Clergymen: Catholic presbyter	
17.	Anastasius	5 th – 6 th	Emperor, Monophysite	
18.	Anastasia-Constantina	"	Emperor's mother. Supporter of Manichaeans	
19.	Manichaean painter	"	Syro-Persian in origin. A Manichaean presbyter or a Monophysite?	
20.	Xenaïas	"	Clergymen: the Monophysite bishop of Hierapolis, Philoxenos. Syro-Persian in origin.	
21.	John the archdeacon	"	Archdeacon of Timothy, bishop of Constantinople. A Manichaean?	
22.	Peter the Fuller/Cnapheus	"	Clergymen: Monophysite	Ch.[4], 4.2.2
23.	Severus of Antioch	"	Clergymen: Monophysite	Ch.[4], 4.2.2
24.	Julian of Halicarnassus	"	Clergymen: Monophysite	
25.	Peter Barsymes	6 th	Officeholder: first officer of the State. Syrian in origin. Supporter of Manichaeans	
26.	Erythrius' wife	"	The wife of a senator/patrician. A Manichaean?	
27.	Photinus	"	Manichaean teacher	
28.	Anonymous Manichaean discussing with the philosopher Simplicius	"	Manichaean teacher	Ch.[4], 4.3

As depicted in the above table, these twenty-eight persons come from various social backgrounds. Among them we find both eminent and insignificant citizens, representatives of both sexes, ecclesiastical and secular leaders, intellectuals, artists, ascetics and ordinary people of everyday life. So, there is no correlation made by the authors between Manichaeans and a certain social group. What is stressed in three of our cases is their 'race', namely their Syrian/Syro-Persian origin (Manichaean painter, Xenaïas/Philoxenos, Barsymes).

Apart from the cases of the Manichaean missionaries and teachers (Aphthonius, Bassa, Julia, and Photinus), and the brief anonymous references, the other cases of the alleged 'Manichaeans', indeed, could have been slander. But even in this case, there are alternative scenarios: (1) either it was malicious slander aiming to discredit Arians, Catholics, or Monophysites, identifying them as Manichaeans, or (2) that the authors actually believed that

the followers of these 'sects' were more vulnerable to the threat of Manichaeism. This is because the religious pluralism that existed in the religious landscape in the eastern part of the Empire blurred the boundaries between various sects. Particularly for the simple and uneducated believers, who were the main pastoral concern of the Church Fathers, the danger grew if persons of authority such as many of the above were Manichaeans, *μανιχαιοφρονες*, or *μανιχαίζοντες*. But we cannot discount the possibility that the above persons, at some point in their life, were charmed by Manichaeism as part of a spiritual quest, as was Augustine.