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**Part II.**  
**Individuals, Practices, and**  
**the Formation of a Local**  
**Community**



## Chapter 4. Makarios's Family and Pamour's Letters: Manichaean Affiliations and Village Relations in Kellis

Are (not) you yourself a catechumen? (Makarios to Maria, or her sister Kyria).<sup>1</sup>

### 4.1 Introduction

Sometime in the middle of the fourth century CE, a man named Makarios rebuked his wife (or his sister in law) for what he considered improper behavior. She "reached this place to make apparent some ungodliness and inhumanity," while Makarios himself had behaved correctly. Rhetorically, he asked, "are (not) you yourself a catechumen?"<sup>2</sup> Maria's (or Kyria's) answer to her husband's accusations has not been preserved, but it stands to reason that she would have understood the connection between her behavior and the norms of the Manichaean catechumate. She may not have agreed with her husband on the specific matter, but apparently, Manichaeanness mattered enough to be incorporated in the complaint.

The situation behind Makarios's remarks may have been defined by some type of religious maltreatment or violence. It seems that Makarios and Maria, if she was indeed addressed in this section of the letter, copied a book under difficult circumstances. Makarios states: "[W]e are not retaliating against anyone in this place for what they are doing to us" and suggests that something should be done so that the book (?) "would be saved from the hands of them pursuing it."<sup>3</sup> It is tempting to understand these lines as reflecting persecution. Manichaean books were forbidden and powerful individuals like Diocletian and Augustine ordered them to be burned.<sup>4</sup> Is this passage a local witness to the late antique policies of religious violence?

This chapter will pursue a microhistorical approach to the lives of two families. After having highlighted the social, economic, and cultural setting of Kellis in the previous chapter, we shift our focus to the inhabitants of Houses 1–3. Specifically, I will focus on some religious episodes, or passages that tend to be interpreted in relation to Manichaeism. These passages, however, will be treated with caution, as they hardly contain all the information we would like to hear. In the passage cited above, Makarios never identified "this place" or

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<sup>1</sup> ԵՆԵ ՌԵՕ ՕԿԱՈՆԿՈՒՄ[Ե]Ն ՉԳԵ P.Kell.Copt. 22.61. At line 45, the letter is addressed to Kyria, and it is unclear whether the author continues his conversation with Maria, or with Kyria, after line 60.

<sup>2</sup> See previous note, followed by չաթը ԳԱ Մ [Մ]Ջ ԱԽԵՐՈՎՈՒՆՔ ՕՐՈՒՄ[Ը]ՄՈՐԿԵ ԱՅԱԼ ՄԻՒ ՕՐՈՒՄԴԱԽՐՈՒՄԵ P.Kell.Copt. 22.62-63.

<sup>3</sup> Ե[Մ]ԱՆ ԵՆԻԳՅԱՎ ԻՃԱԿԵ ԵՆ ԻՄԱՆԱ ՈՒՆԵՐՈՎԵՐԵ ԻՄԱԿ ՆԵՆ P.Kell.Copt. 22.61-2 and in line 65: չԵԳ ՈՒՆՈՐՄԵ ԱՌԵԼՃ ՈՒՆԵՐՈՒՄԻ ՈՐԲԳ. The editors suggest Kyria may have been addressed in this section of the letter. Gardner, Alcock, and Funk, *CDT1*, 180.

<sup>4</sup> On the burning of Manichaean books, see D. Rohmann, *Christianity, Book-Burning and Censorship in Late Antiquity* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2016), 26, 28, 71, 76 and 101. More generally speaking, there are good reasons to question the prevalence of violent episodes in the religious narratives of late antique Egypt. J. H. F. Dijkstra, "Religious Violence in Late Antique Egypt Reconsidered: The Cases of Alexandria, Panopolis and Philae," *Journal of Early Christian History* 5, no. 2 (2015): 24-48.

the people against whom they should not retaliate. The connection between the book and the pursued object is, moreover, not crystal clear. Our careful minimalist approach prevents us from making sweeping statements on the basis of such tentative interpretations. This short vignette has already illustrated how difficult it is to understand religious episodes in the everyday correspondence of fourth-century Kellites. Our documents are fragmentary and lack, at times, the necessary background information. Written against the backdrop of situations known to author and recipient, the papyrus letters were never meant to describe all the specifics of situations, nor do they inform us about the religious backgrounds and/or motivation of those involved.

Despite these caveats, small and incidental references to Manichaeanness connect the lives of Makarios and his family to the history of Manichaeism. By triangulating material from various letters and accounts with the conventions of the genre and the sociohistorical situation, we can approach the range of possible interpretations. Fortunately, the papyrus letters from Kellis come in clusters, associated with specific authors and their family members. They inform us about the context of family and village relations, in which Manichaeanness came to play a role. This village context must be considered, and the multiplicity of social roles or identifications kept in mind, to prevent a treatment of the texts as treasure troves for Manichaeism only. In contrast, the letters contain traces of the everyday hopes and fears of individuals and families in highly specific circumstances. Their geographical setting in the western desert, for example, caused them headaches. Traveling in antiquity was, at times, a dangerous endeavor. This underlying anxiety about family health and safety sets the stage for many of the personal letters in our corpus. Following two families through different spheres of life intimates concerns that were important enough to be put into writing. Against this background, we can highlight the instances in which they worked on the basis of a Manichaean group-identification.

Based on the papyrus letters from Makarios, Pamour, and their families, it will be shown that Manichaeans had connections to members of the upper regimens of local and regional society. Together with the papyrological and archaeological evidence for the Roman military in the oasis, this leads us to believe that Manichaeans could live openly and peacefully in the Dakhleh Oasis.

## 4.2 Makarios and Maria

The Makarios archive has sparked considerable interest because of its Manichaean tone and content. It consists of eleven Coptic letters, with strong prosopographical connections to many other Kellites, either relatives, neighbors, or other acquaintances.<sup>5</sup> Some of the letters refer to books known from the Manichaean tradition and others employ uncommon phrases that connote intimate knowledge of Manichaean cosmology. More fundamentally, the social relations in the letters show that a family unit stood at the center of this network, connected to relatives, neighbors, and coworkers in the oasis and the Nile valley.

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<sup>5</sup> Gardner, Alcock, and Funk, *CDT1*, 4-5, *passim*. Archive is used in the sense of a collection of papers brought together in antiquity. The terminology and distinction with "dossiers" is contested. K. Vandorpe, "Archives and Dossiers," in *The Oxford Handbook of Papyrology*, ed. R. S. Bagnall (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 216-55.

Most of the eleven letters in this archive were written by Makarios and his sons Matthaïos and Piene (see Table 6). They provide the bare backbone of the family structure. Their letters all address one woman: Maria. She stayed in Kellis and kept in contact with those who left the oasis for longer or shorter periods. Maria was the wife of Makarios, and Matthaïos and Piene were their sons. Other family relations are more difficult to determine with certainty. Even this reconstruction "may not be as simple as it might at first appear," the editors of the papyri warned.<sup>6</sup>

Document	Author and recipient
<b>P.Kell.Copt.</b> <b>19</b>	Makarios to Matthaïos (and Maria)
<b>P.Kell.Copt.</b> <b>20</b>	Makarios to Pshempnoute, Maria, and Koure
<b>P.Kell.Copt.</b> <b>21</b>	Makarios to Pshempnoute, Kyria, and Maria
<b>P.Kell.Copt.</b> <b>22</b>	Makarios to Pshempnoute, Kyria, and Maria
<b>P.Kell.Copt.</b> <b>23</b>	Fragmentary appendix to 22 (?)
<b>P.Kell.Copt.</b> <b>24</b>	Makarios to Maria
<b>P.Kell.Copt.</b> <b>25</b>	Matthaïos to Maria
<b>P.Kell.Copt.</b> <b>26</b>	Matthaïos to Maria
<b>P.Kell.Copt.</b> <b>27</b>	Matthaïos (fragment)
<b>P.Kell.Copt.</b> <b>28</b>	Drousiane (?) (fragment)
<b>P.Kell.Copt.</b> <b>29</b>	Piene to Maria

Table 6: Documents in the Makarios Archive.

The reconstruction of this family unit is built on the assumption of a certain level of consistency in the way people addressed each other.<sup>7</sup> Makarios's letters addresses his "son" Matthaïos (P.Kell.Copt. 19) and Matthaïos writes to his "mother" Maria (P.Kell.Copt. 25, 26). Piene also addresses his "mother" Maria (P.Kell.Copt. 29) and is mentioned several times by the others as either "son" or "brother." Makarios writes to "my sister Maria" (P.Kell.Copt. 20,

<sup>6</sup> Gardner, Alcock, and Funk, *CDTI*, 154.

<sup>7</sup> On kinship terminology see E. Dickey, "Literal and Extended Use of Kinship Terms in Documentary Papyri," *Mnemosyne* 57, no. 2 (2004): 131-76; E. Dickey, "Forms of Address and Markers of Status," in *A Companion to the Ancient Greek Language*, ed. E.J. Bakker (Malden: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010), 327-37; I. Gardner, "Some Comments on Kinship Terms in the Coptic Documentary Papyri from Ismant el-Kharab," in *Oasis Papers* 2 ed. M. F. Wiseman (Oxford: Oxbow Books, 2008), 129-36.

21, 22, 24), a common way of addressing a spouse in Late Antiquity. Together, these references build a consistent picture from different angles, as Iain Gardner summarized: "Father writes to son (a) and greets wife; father writes to wife and mentions sons (a+b); son (a) writes to mother and mentions father and brother (=son b); son (b) writes to mother."<sup>8</sup> An alternative interpretation would be to consider Maria as Makarios's sister, with Makarios as the responsible uncle who was very much involved in the lives of his two nephews. In both cases, although the latter is less probable, actual kinship relations are the most likely interpretation of the kinship language.<sup>9</sup>

Kinship terminology was not exclusively used for family members. In Matthaïos's letter to his "mother" Maria, he greets six women as "my mother."<sup>10</sup> Not all of these women could have been core family. To base attempts to comprehend the complex distinction between kinship and fictive kinship structures on the way people are addressed in documentary letters is a dangerous endeavor, albeit a crucial one. As one of the general rules about kinship terminology, Gardner noticed that "brother" and "sister" are used for people on the same generational level, while "mother" and "father" generally referred to respected older individuals. In P.Kell.Copt. 19, Makarios writes to "sister" Maria, "sister" Charis, and "son" Matthaïos. At the end of the same letter, Gena, who is traveling with him, adds his own greetings to "mother" Maria, "mother" Charis, and "brother" Matthaïos. Even if nothing else is known about Gena's relations to them, his choice of words reveals he is on the same generational level as Matthaïos.<sup>11</sup> Matthaïos's six mothers, then, must have been aunts and respected women from the generation of his parents. By cross-examining other letters with similar tentative indications, the family tree in Figure 13 can be gleaned together, representing the most securely reconstructed relations with a solid line and the more speculative ones with dotted lines.

The majority of the documents stem from the second half of the fourth century. A Greek contract with a specific date placed Makarios and Maria in the late 350s.<sup>12</sup> The younger generation, among whom Pamour, Pegosh, and Psais, occasionally greeted "mother Maria" in letters from the 360s (P.Kell.Gr. 71) and was greeted as "son(s)" by Makarios (P.Kell.Copt. 24).<sup>13</sup> Contemporaries like Tehat and Hatre (P.Kell.Copt. 43, 50), Lysimachos (P.Kell.Copt. 30, P.Kell.Gr. 67), and Orion (P.Kell.Copt. 15–18) appear in several letters of this period. Some of

<sup>8</sup> Gardner, "Some Comments on Kinship Terms," 132. The variant spellings, Matheos, Mathaios, and Matthaïos, referred to one individual. Gardner, Alcock, and Funk, *CDT1*, 154n204.

<sup>9</sup> Gardner, "Some Comments on Kinship Terms," 132 adds the exceptional tone of the letters of Matthaïos to Maria as another indication of close kinship, but likewise warns for our "own cultural readings of the text." See also J. D. Dubois, "Vivre dans la communauté manichéenne de Kellis: une lettre de Makarios, le papyrus Kell. Copt. 22," in *Pensée grecque et sagesse d'Orient: Hommage à Michel Tardieu* ed. M. A. A. Moezzi, et al. (Turnhout: Brepols, 2009), 203–10.

<sup>10</sup> Gardner, "Some Comments on Kinship Terms," 134.

<sup>11</sup> Gardner has posed four propositions regarding the usage of family language (*immediate family, extended family, respected position, religious authority*) and concludes that little can be taken for certain. Gardner, "Some Comments on Kinship Terms," 134.

<sup>12</sup> Gardner, Alcock, and Funk, *CDT1*, 11 and 56.

<sup>13</sup> Gardner, Alcock, and Funk, *CDT1*, 11.



them remain active during the next decades. Pshempnoute and Kyria were addressed in Makarios's letters, but also appear in the correspondence of Tithoes to his son Shamoun in the early 360s.<sup>14</sup> The names of Pamour and Pegosh continue to come up until the late 380s (P.Kell.Gr. 44).

How exactly Makarios and Maria related to Pamour, Pegosh, and Psais is unknown, but Pamour's wife Maria frequently greets "my mother Maria" and mentions "my daughter Tsemnouthes" (P.Kell.Gr. 71 and P.Kell.Copt. 65, see the appendix). It has been suggested that Maria's daughter Tsemnouthes (or Jemnoute) may have stayed with her grandmother Maria in Kellis. If so, it is remarkable that "daughter" Maria is never mentioned in Makarios's letters.<sup>15</sup> If Pamour was Makarios's son-in-law, moreover, we would expect stronger expressions of connectedness. Despite the tentative nature of the connection to Tsemnouthes, I have visualized the relation between Makarios and Pamour in Figure 13. If anything, we know they must have known each other quite well, as they lived and worked in the same social circles and shared a Manichaean background—as became apparent in a number of their letters.

The twist in most of these interactions and relations is that the letters inform us about those outside the oasis. They were written by family members and their associates who were traveling and wrote to the home front about their well-being. Distress about the absence of family news or material support is frequently expressed at length and without restraint, as exemplified by Makarios's irritations at the outset of this chapter. Most voices in the letters, therefore, speak of the anxieties of itinerant life. These fears and hopes are strongly connected to the well-being of those in Kellis, which gives us glimpses into the situation in the oasis itself.

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<sup>14</sup> P.Kell.Gr. 8-12 and P.Kell.Copt. 12, one of which is firmly dated in the year 362 CE. Gardner, Alcock, and Funk, *CDT1*, 55.

<sup>15</sup> Gardner, Alcock, and Funk, *CDT2*, 52. If so, it is remarkable to see no connection to Makarios, who did greet his daughter Tsemnouthes at least once.

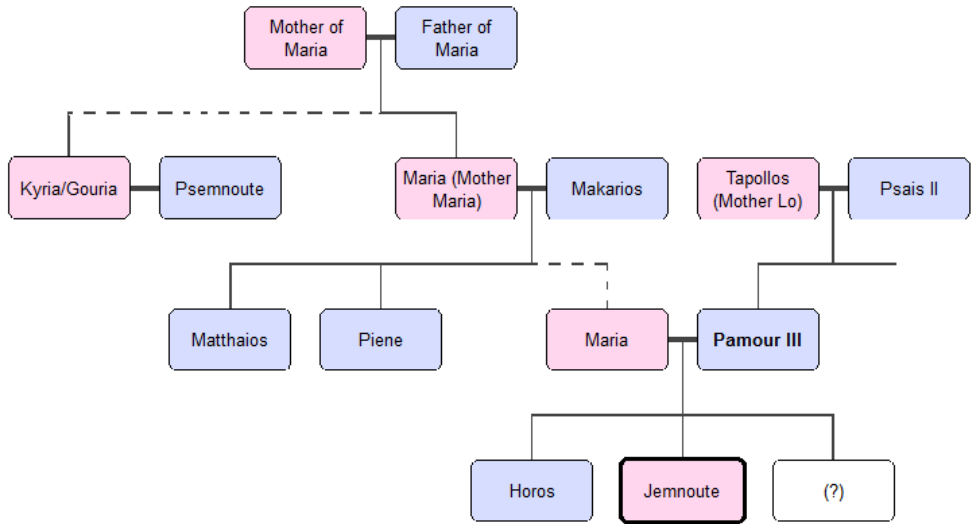


Figure 13: Reconstruction of the family relations of Makarios.

The papyrus correspondence also offers insights into the financial situation of the family. Interestingly, Maria played a central role in managing the finances. When Makarios was traveling in the Nile valley, Maria had to raise money for the journey of her son Matthaïos. She even has to sell her loom to be able to afford the cost.<sup>16</sup> It appears, moreover, that Makarios had suffered losses in one of the previous years and asked Maria (or Gena?) to “count the fare to me,” assuring her that he will pay the entire amount later after having received some other money.<sup>17</sup> In another letter, Makarios expressed his discontent about Ammon approaching Maria for his wages (P.Kell.Copt. 22.25–40); surely Makarios had tended to the matter himself in the Nile valley! Even though Makarios often complains about Maria’s failure to answer his letters and he hardly seems to receive the goods she sent, their financial position never seems at risk. On the contrary, the list of commodities sent from the oasis and back indicates they had a comfortable, wealthy position within the oasis’s society.<sup>18</sup>

The two main subjects that keep returning in Makarios’s letters, apart from family matters, are books and textiles. The books will be discussed in section 4.5.3, since many of

<sup>16</sup> εβαλ ειωχε τερχρια ιματι εν ιερογο τει[α] ατηνμα ιμαθεος...P.Kell.Copt. 19.31, I consider “if you have no more need of it” to refer to the remainder of the money instead of to the loom itself.

<sup>17</sup> [ειωπη] αν ερασνητς ιτηναι ειπ τηνμα αραι χε τες... εγωαντ νηι αν ιτημας τηνμα τηρς περερεπε ...P.Kell.Copt. 19.36–37 and 39. See observations in J. S. Moss, “Women in Late Antique Egypt,” in *A Companion to Women in the Ancient World*, ed. S. L. James and S. Dillon (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2012), 510–11.

<sup>18</sup> A position that is different from the individuals of House B2 at Trimithis described by Giovanni Ruffini. Their documents suggest they came from the lower social strata of Trimithis, mainly active as middle-men in transportation, manual labor and the production of clothing. G. Ruffini, “Transport and Trade in Trimithis. The Texts from Area 1,” in *A Late Romano-Egyptian House in the Dakhla Oasis / Amheida House B2*, ed. A. L. Boozer (New York: New York University Press / Ancient World Digital Library, 2015).

them have a Manichaean connotation. The textiles are never explicitly connected to Manichaeism. Apart from occasional references to clothing for himself and his boys, Makarios mentions threads, dye, and cushions frequently. On one occasion, he expressed his distress about moths affecting the threads and cushion (P.Kell.Copt. 24.6), which he presumably intended to sell in the valley. Makarios's son Matthaïos reported how he had received the cloth bag (χιλῶς) from Hatre and how Pamour sold the *sticharion*, a garment Matthaïos himself had not inspected for its quality (P.Kell.Copt. 26.14–16). From these indications, we learn that Makarios and his sons worked in the textile business, just as many other Kellites who profited from the agricultural wealth of the oasis. The trade in garments and semifinished products at the markets of the Nile valley was the profitable business background to many of the Kellis letters. This means that these letters offer a perspective on the everyday life of relatively well-off individuals and families.<sup>19</sup>

### 4.3 Pamour and Maria

A second set of Greek and Coptic letters allows us to trace a family of three to four generations. Most of these letters were written by, or addressed to, three brothers: the earlier mentioned Pamour, Pegosh, and Psais. The reconstruction of the social relations behind this archive is hampered by frequently returning names. Pamour and Psais were relatively common names in the oasis, and only some of these individuals were related. Following Klaas Worp and his reconstruction of the family's generations, I will discern the various individuals with Roman numbers. A large number of papyri relate to the lives of the descendants of Pamour I (early fourth century), among whom at least two other men were named after their father or grandfather.<sup>20</sup> Two volumes of Coptic documentary texts have added new information, complementing Worp's reconstruction. Built on the analysis of the editors of the Greek and Coptic letters, I have reconstructed some of the family relations of Pamour III, shown in Figure 14. The cluster of associated documents is listed in Table 7.

Document	Author and recipient <sup>21</sup>
P.Kell.Copt. 64	Pamour III to Psais III

<sup>19</sup> Onno van Nijf notes that "the craftsmen and traders who formed the core of the demos were, in an economic sense, spread across a broad band of society. Although many of them were poor in the eyes of the senatorial elite... they were often, in local terms, relatively well off." O. M. van Nijf, *The Civic World of Professional Associations in the Roman East* (Leiden: Brill, 1997), 21. Compare this with the position of Leonides in Oxyrhynchus, who was not only a member of a professional association, but its president, taking on compulsory services. A. Luijendijk, "A New Testament Papyrus and Its Owner: P.Oxy. II 209/P10, an Early Christian School Exercise from the Archive of Leonides," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 129, no. 3 (2010): 584.

<sup>20</sup> See the reconstructed family tree at Worp, *GPK1*, 51.

<sup>21</sup> This is a simplified list in which the individuals are identified with the name used in the visualization. In the letters, most names are spelled with variations. There is moreover, as will be explained below, considerable ambiguity in the identification of individuals with the same name. The list is, moreover, limited to letters written by, or addressing, members of Pamour's family. These individuals are mentioned in many other letters. I have included some legal documents in which they appeared.

<b>P.Kell.Copt. 65</b>	Pamour III to Pegosh, Psais III, Theognostos, Andreas
<b>P.Kell.Copt. 66</b>	Pamour III to Pegosh
<b>P.Kell.Copt. 67</b>	Pamour III to Pegosh
<b>P.Kell.Copt. 68</b>	(?) to P.... (Pamour III to Pegosh?)
<b>P.Kell.Copt. 69</b>	Pamour III to Pegosh
<b>P.Kell.Copt. 70</b>	Pamour III ? (or Pegosh) to Psais III
<b>P.Kell.Copt. 71</b>	Pamour III to Partheni, Andreas
<b>P.Kell.Copt. 72</b>	Pamour III to Psais III and Theognostos
<b>P.Kell.Copt. 73</b>	Pegosh to Psais III
<b>P.Kell.Copt. 74</b>	Pegosh to (?)
<b>P.Kell.Copt. 75</b>	Pegosh to Partheni
<b>P.Kell.Copt. 76</b>	Pegosh to Partheni (or Hor)
<b>P.Kell.Copt. 77</b>	Pegosh to Kapiton
<b>P.Kell.Copt. 78</b>	Pegosh to father Horos
<b>P.Kell.Copt. 79</b>	Pegosh to father Horos (copy?)
<b>P.Kell.Copt. 80</b>	Philammon to Theognostos
<b>P.Kell.Copt. 81</b>	Philammon to Theognostos
<b>P.Kell.Copt. 82</b>	Philammon to Theognostos
<b>P.Kell.Copt. 83</b>	Theognostos to Partheni (?) and Pegosh to (?) <sup>22</sup>
<b>P.Kell.Copt. 84</b>	Theognostos to Psais III
<b>P.Kell.Copt. 85</b>	Ploutogenes to Psais III
<b>P.Kell.Copt. 86</b>	Ploutogenes to Psais III
<b>P.Kell.Copt. 87</b>	Ploutogenes to father Soure/Syros
<b>P.Kell.Copt. 88</b>	Ploutogenes to Andreas
<b>P.Kell.Copt. 89</b>	Ploutogenes to Tabes
<b>P.Kell.Copt. 90</b>	Psekes to Ploutogenes
<b>P.Kell.Copt. 91</b>	(?) to Iena (Ploutogenes?) and Hor
<b>P.Kell.Copt. 95</b>	(?) to Partheni
<b>P.Kell.Copt. 102</b>	Psais III to Partheni
<b>P.Kell.Copt. 103</b>	(?) to Pegosh
<b>P.Kell.Copt. 105</b>	Psais III to Andreas
<b>P.Kell.Copt. 108</b>	Psais III to Pegosh
<b>P.Kell.Copt. 109</b>	Kapiton to Tegoshe (?)
<b>P.Kell.Copt. 110</b>	Psais II <sup>23</sup> to Pamour III (and Pegosh)
<b>P.Kell.Copt. 114</b>	(?) to Philammon
<b>P.Kell.Copt. 115</b>	Tegoshe to Psais III
<b>P.Kell.Copt. 116</b>	Tegoshe (?) to Psais III
<b>P.Kell.Copt. 120</b>	Pekos (Pegosh?) to Pamour III (?)

<sup>22</sup> See notes in Gardner, Alcock, and Funk, *CDT2*, 136-7.

<sup>23</sup> Tentative identification Gardner, Alcock, and Funk, *CDT2*, 221.

<b>P.Kell.Gr. 19b</b>	Ruling made by provincial governor to Pamour I and Philammon (298/9 CE)
<b>P.Kell.Gr. 20</b>	Petition to the provincial governor by Pamour I (300–320 CE) <sup>24</sup>
<b>P.Kell.Gr. 21</b>	Petition to former magistrate by Pamour I (321 CE)
<b>P.Kell.Gr. 30</b>	Exchange ownership rights Pamour III and son (363 CE)
<b>P.Kell.Gr. 31</b>	Lease of a house by Pamour I (?) (306 CE)
<b>P.Kell.Gr. 32</b>	Lease of a room in Psais II's (?) house (364 CE)
<b>P.Kell.Gr. 33</b>	Lease of Pamour III's (?) house (369 CE)
<b>P.Kell.Gr. 37</b>	Sale of part of a house by Takysis (320 CE)
<b>P.Kell.Gr. 38ab</b>	Gift of a plot of land to Psais II (333 CE)
<b>P.Kell.Gr. 41</b>	Loan to the daughter of Kapiton by Pamour I (?) (310 CE)
<b>P.Kell.Gr. 42</b>	Loan by Pamour II (364 CE)
<b>P.Kell.Gr. 44</b>	Loan by Pegosh (382 CE)
<b>P.Kell.Gr. 45</b>	Loan by Kapiton son of Kapiton (386 CE)
<b>P.Kell.Gr. 50</b>	Receipt of goods addressed to Psais II
<b>P.Kell.Gr. 65</b>	Philammon to Takysis
<b>P.Kell.Gr. 67</b>	Apa Lysimachos to Theognostos
<b>P.Kell.Gr. 68</b>	Psais III to Elias
<b>P.Kell.Gr. 71</b>	Pamour III (and Maria) to Psais III
<b>P.Kell.Gr. 72</b>	Pegosh to Pamour III
<b>P.Kell.Gr. 73</b>	Psais son of Tryphanes, to Pamour III (?)
<b>P.Kell.Gr. 76</b>	Pegosh to Sarapis
<b>P.Kell.Gr. 79</b>	Aniketos to Psais III (?)
<b>P.Kell.Gr. 80</b>	Psenamounis to Kapiton

*Table 7: List of documents directly related to the relatives of Pamour III.*

Our focus is on Pamour III, the husband of Maria, not to be confused with the spouse of Makarios. Pamour III was the brother of Pegosh/Pekysis and Psais III, all sons of Psais II and Tapollos. They had a sister, Tagoshe/Tekysis, who was married to Kapiton the son of Kapiton (P.Kell.Gr. 45 and 76). Due to the abundance of personal names in their letters, which sometimes seem to consist of greetings and minor family news only, a reconstruction of their personal networks can be established with some certainty. Not all names can be placed. The aim is not to present an exhaustive or definitive prosopography, but to discuss some of the individuals in more detail to introduce them as the historical actors within this network of entangled relations and interactions that formed the backbone of the local Manichaean community. A more complete prosopography is presented in Appendix 4.

<sup>24</sup> A petition to provincial governor by Pamour I (308 CE) is mentioned by Worp but not (yet) published. Worp, *GPKI*, 81.

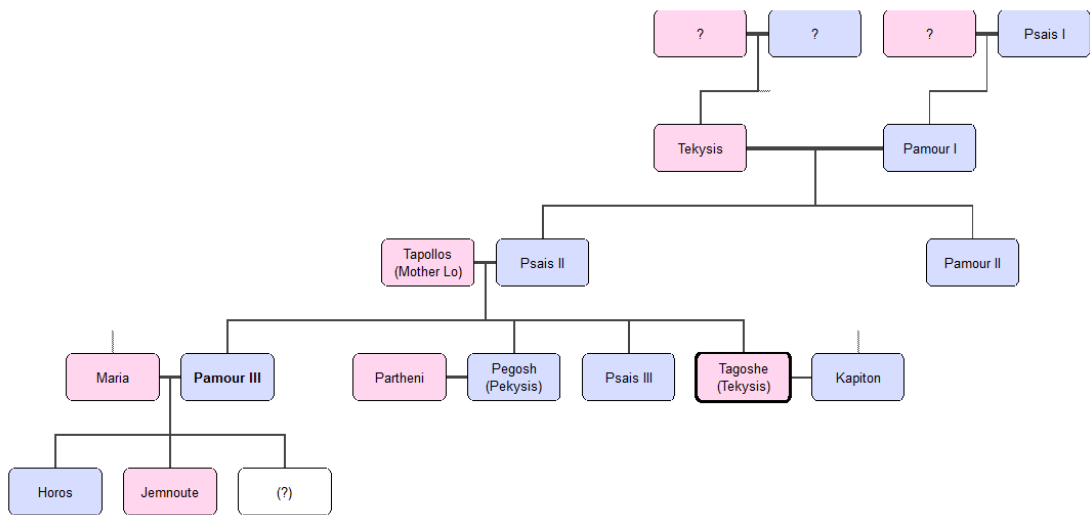


Figure 14: Section of the reconstructed family relations of Pamour III.

Financially, the brothers Pamour, Pegosh, and Psais belonged to the same affluent merchant network. Just like Makarios, they were involved in textile production and trade. Even though it is not always easy to distinguish between production for internal household purposes and for sale on the markets of the Nile valley, the latter seems to have taken place in abundance. A Greek letter by Psais son of Tryphanes, concerning his son Tryphanes, discussed some of the business agreements:

[L]ook now, I have sent you my son Tryphanes with (?) my goods in order that you make an effort and together with him bring together... and if you spend ten or twenty days together with him, while you are selling my goods, I am prepared to give you your salary in the meantime.<sup>25</sup>

To gain profit from the agricultural wealth of the oasis, these people traveled extensively to sell their commodities elsewhere in Egypt. Presumably, Pamour traveled with Tryphanes to sell the goods of his father Psais. These goods must have included garments, dye, and wool, as these are mentioned at the verso of the letter (P.Kell.Gr. 72). The other letters by Pamour and his brothers frequently concern these business arrangements. In a Greek letter, Pegosh asks his brother Pamour for “nicely colored wool” and questioned him about his failure to send the purple dye (P.Kell.Gr. 72). Kapiton, who was still traveling with Pegosh at the time, wrote to his wife, asking her to cut the wool that he has sent and make a *sticharion*, which

<sup>25</sup> ἰδοὺ οὖν, ἀπέστειλά σοι τὸν υἱόν μου Τρυφάνην μετὰ τὰ εἶδη μου, ἵνα ποιήσῃς τὴν σπουδὴν καὶ συνάγῃς μετ’ αὐτοῦ -----[ -ca.?- ]μου καὶ πρὸς [ . . . ]-κα μετ’ αὐτοῦ ἐν καλῇ [ . . . ] . μη καί, ἐὰν ποιήσῃς δέκα ἡμέρας ἢ εἴκοσι μετ’ αὐτοῦ ἕως πιπράσῃς τὰ εἶδη μου, ἐτοίμως ἔχω παρασχεῖν σοι τὸν μισθόν σου τέως. P.Kell.Gr. 73.8-20.

had to be sent together with the belongings of Pegosh (P.Kell.Copt. 75, wool was also sent to Kellis for the production of garments in P.Kell.Copt. 78 and 79).<sup>26</sup> Presumably, it was sent to the oasis, spun, dyed, and made into beautiful garments to be sold on the markets in the Nile valley.<sup>27</sup> The fabrics found in the village were mostly made locally, but a few seem to have been imported.<sup>28</sup> Without a doubt, there was reason for distress when their products were not accepted, for example when low-quality wool was used in the production of blankets (P.Kell.Copt. 76. Cf. the situation of Matthaïos in P.Kell.Copt. 26.14–16).

Not all the business associates mentioned in Pamour's letters were relatives, but Kapiton was. The web of interpersonal relations strongly suggests Kapiton was married to Tagoshe, the sister of Pamour, Psais, and Pegosh. His role in their business is visible, at various stages in time, in his postscripts to letters of Pegosh.<sup>29</sup> After a while, however, they went separate ways, as Pegosh declared in a Greek document that he did not know whether Kapiton was still alive and he had "nothing in common with him in any respect."<sup>30</sup> When exactly he broke away from his wife and his brothers-in-law is not known, but we have a loan of money on his name, or the name of his son, from 386 CE (P.Kell.Gr. 45).<sup>31</sup>

Several letters indicate how Pamour III, Psais III, and Pegosh collaborated with relatives and other associates under direct supervision of their father, even when the latter was of old age. Pamour III's relation to his father is characterized by a strong sense of obligation, which resulted in some tense situations. Many boys in late antique Egypt grew up fatherless, due to high mortality rates, and only a few children grew up with their parents and grandparents.<sup>32</sup> To see Psais II in action in the 360s, while he was probably well into his sixties, is therefore exceptional. As elderly figure in the household, he was frequently greeted

<sup>26</sup> Wool is not mentioned in the KAB and is absent from the bio-archaeological remains. C. S. Churcher, "Faunal Remains from Kellis," in *Dakhleh Oasis Project: Preliminary Reports on the 1994-1995 to 1998-1999 Field Seasons*, ed. C. A. Hope and G. E. Bowen (Oxford: Oxbow Books, 2002), 105-13. It may not appear in the KAB because it was primarily a list of agricultural transactions rather than products of animals.

<sup>27</sup> Bowen, "Texts and Textiles," 18-28 suggests that wool was produced in the oasis. Could P.Kell.Copt. 58.20 have contained a request for "local" wool? See the notes in Gardner, Alcock, and Funk, *CDT2*, 24.

<sup>28</sup> R. J. Livingstone, "Late Antique Household Textiles from the Village of Kellis in the Dakhleh Oasis," in *Clothing the House: Furnishing Textiles of the 1st Millennium from Egypt and Neighbouring Countries*, ed. A. de Moor and C. Fluck (Tiel: Lannoo Publishers, 2009), 84 mentions resist-dyed cottons and the taquete textiles.

<sup>29</sup> See his postscript in Pegosh's letter P.Kell.Copt. 75.37 to Tagoshe and his letter to her in P.Kell.Copt. 109.

<sup>30</sup> μηδὲν κοινὸν ἔχοντα πρὸς αὐτὸν ἐν οὐδένι. P.Kell.Gr. 76.29-30. Translation as given in the notes of Worp, *GPK1*, 199.

<sup>31</sup> I tend to follow the editors of the Coptic material in their interpretation of this loan as to the son of Kapiton, returned to the Dakhleh Oasis and residing in the hamlet Thio. See Gardner, Alcock, and Funk, *CDT2*, 100. Contra the family tree of Worp, *GPK1*, 52. The date in the 380s, on the other hand, would not require a new generation, since Pegosh's latest dated occurrence is in a document from 382 CE. For the hamlet Thio see P.Kell.Copt. 19.77, 50.38 and KAB 108, 584.

<sup>32</sup> Huebner, *Family in Roman Egypt*, 73 refers to 15.3 percent of the census returns belonging to three generation households. See also W. Scheidel, "The Demographic Background," in *Growing up Fatherless in Antiquity*, ed. S. R. Huebner and D. M. Ratzan (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 31-40 citing percentages of Roman urban areas with 28-37 percent of the individuals having lost their father at 15 and 49-61 by the age of 25.

by his younger relatives.<sup>33</sup> More importantly, from the letters of Pamour and Pegosh, we get the impression that they continue to seek his counsel and struggle with his role as paterfamilias. In a fascinating letter about the fate of two orphaned girls, Pegosh seeks counsel from his brother Psais and asks not only for his opinion but also for his intervention in the decision-making process of their father: “‘Will you persuade my father if you are content for me to do the thing?’ And I myself am wondering whether you are persuaded?”<sup>34</sup> Likewise, in P.Kell.Copt. 77, Pegosh indicates to Kapiton that “father Shai” had given specific instructions about the issue at hand (P.Kell.Copt. 77.22, likewise in P.Kell.Copt. 82.20 written by Philammon). Although in both instances the content of the request or issue is largely lost, it indicates the central position of Psais II in their lives and businesses.<sup>35</sup>

Their father’s continuing presence led to tension between the brothers. A good example, though hard to reconstruct in detail, is Pamour’s letter to his brother Psais, requesting particular items. The letter makes clear that Pamour had corresponded with their father about the issue at hand, but he ends up writing to his brother. It appears that some items, including a copper vessel (?), were sold and that Pamour was deliberately excluded, “so that I would receive nothing from him [i.e. Psais II]” (P.Kell.Copt. 64.7–9). Had Pamour lost the favor of his father? If so, he told his brother “do not let any complication occur among us,” stressed he was “only seeking what is ours” (P.Kell.Copt. 64.3–4, 8–9), and renounced all claims on the items from which he was allegedly excluded.<sup>36</sup> A related issue featured in a letter between Pamour and Pegosh, concerning a disagreement about property. The items were probably either given by Psais to Pegosh or taken out of his inheritance, but “every item we have, between us mutually on account of our father, whether of bronze or all that is ours, you are its owner.”<sup>37</sup> As in the previous example, Pamour did not seek conflict over the property, even though he might actually be in the possession of the goods, but confirms Pegosh’s ownership rights.

Since traveling belonged to the occupational practice of Pamour III and his relatives, it is unsurprising to see him taking up residence in Aphrodite in the Nile valley (Antaiopolite nome). Together with Maria, he continued to correspond with their relatives in the oasis. As a Greek document related to the inheritance of their son Horos was dated May

<sup>33</sup> References to “father Pshai,” by Pamour and Maria are found in P.Kell.Copt. 64, 65, 66, 67 (?), 70, 71 and 72.

<sup>34</sup> αἰσχεῖ νεϋ ἄε κημῶε ημᾶϊωτ ἰῶχε κῆκ νῆτ ταπῶβ ἀγῶ τῆμᾶζε εἰωτ: α[ε] κηῶε.. P.Kell.Copt. 73.14–16.

<sup>35</sup> N. J. Baker-Brian, “Mass and Elite in Late Antique Religion: The Case of Manichaeism,” in *Mass and Elite in the Greek and Roman Worlds: From Sparta to Late Antiquity*, ed. R. Evans (London: Routledge, 2017), 181 also attempts to interpret this passage in relation to the *Kephalaia* passage on child-donation. Unfortunately the “ambiguities of expression” hampers a full identification of the situation.

<sup>36</sup> ..ἡπορτε εἰλᾶν[λ]ην ὥπνε ἡν ἡερῆϋ ..ὡανετ ἄε νῆχῖ λαγε εἰραϋ: ζῆε τῆοϋητε [λ]ραϋ: εἰωῖνε ἡμετε ἡσα πετεῖωϋ: P.Kell.Copt. 64.3–4, 7–9.

<sup>37</sup> ..ἄε εἰο νῆν εἰωῖν’ νεϋ: εἰοῦτωδν ἡν η[ε]ηερῆϋ εἰ πῆϊωτ’ εἰτε ἡενο ἡεαντ’. εἰτε πετῆτεν τηρῆ. κο ἡπῆχαῖς. P.Kell.Copt. 69.5–8. Discussed at Gardner, Alcock, and Funk, *CDT2*, 64. Dubois understands this as the inheritance, but from my understanding of the text, Psais II is still alive. J. D. Dubois, “Greek and Coptic Documents from Kellis: A Contribution to the History of a Manichaean Community,” *Journal of Coptic Studies* 15 (2013): 21–28.



363 CE, all of these letters must have been sent before that time (P.Kell.Gr. 30).<sup>38</sup> During this period, but also afterward, a number of Kellites were registered in Greek contracts from Aphrodite (P.Kell.Gr. 30, 32, 42, 43, 44, all from the period 360–380). Pegosh, like his brother, wrote from Aphrodite (P.Kell.Copt. 77).<sup>39</sup> One of his contracts was signed in Aphrodite by a man who had also signed a contract of his uncle, Pamour II (P.Kell.Gr. 44, 382 CE, and P.Kell.Gr. 42, 364 CE).<sup>40</sup> Both times, it was recorded that this man also came from Kellis himself, but lived in Aphrodite. The strongest connection to Aphrodite is the document with ownership rights of a house at Aphrodite, found in Kellis. It was signed by grandfather Psais II on behalf of Pamour III and his son Horos (P.Kell.Gr. 30, May 363 CE). From this letter, we learn that Horos's mother, presumably Maria, owned about half of a farm house (ἐπαύλεως) in Aphrodite.<sup>41</sup> Since she passed away, the ownership rights were transferred to Horos.

This latter document is interesting for another reason. It records the nickname of Pamour and Horos, the "Egyptians."<sup>42</sup> Even though they came from Kellis, they acquired a nickname as outsiders, people from the Nile valley. Presumably, this nickname derived from their residency in Aphrodite. Just as his father, uncle, and grandfather, Pamour III divided his time between Kellis and Aphrodite. This evidence for the internal migration of three subsequent generations from the oasis to Aphrodite and back has led Worp to identify them as a camel-driver family with a pied-a-terre, which is not entirely implausible, despite few traces of camel driving in the papyri.<sup>43</sup>

Besides strong relations with relatives and coworkers, there are marked traces of interactions with Christians. The following example is set in Aphrodite. In a contract from 364 CE, Marsis leased one room in the house of Psais II in Aphrodite for the price of two *artabas* of wheat. The scribe and witness was Iakob son of Besis the priest, reader of the catholic church (P.Kell.Gr. 32.20–21). Such singular indications of religious officials, even if

<sup>38</sup> I am grateful to H. Teigen for bringing this to my attention.

<sup>39</sup> From where Pamour and Maria add their postscript to his letter (just as Maria did with Pamour's letters (P.Kell.Copt. 64 65, 66, 71 and P.Kell.Gr. 71). Discussed also in T. Gagos, "A Multicultural Community on the Fringes of the Desert: A Review of the Greek Papyri from Kellis," *Journal of Roman Archaeology* 12, no. 2 (1999): 758, who suggests that the communication increased when more family members moved to Aphrodite.

<sup>40</sup> If this Aurelius Pebos, son of Tithoes, is the same person as the Pebo in P.Kell.Copt. 66, he might also have shared the Manichaean affiliation. See Gardner, Alcock, and Funk, *CDT2*, 55.

<sup>41</sup> Which is inherited by Horos for 1/3th, suggesting his mother had three children who all received 1/6<sup>th</sup> of the farmhouse. Worp, *GPK1*, 87–91 in particular 90n11. Other testimonials to private property in the Pamour family stem from 320, 333 and 369 CE. The first deals with a sale by Takysis of 1/4<sup>th</sup> of a house in Kellis, it is no longer visible whether it dealt with House 3 or another house (P.Kell.Gr. 37). Worp, *GPK1*, 106. The second is a document in which Pausanias grants a plot of land to Pamour. The latter attests to Pamour III's ownership of a house, since he is able to lease one room to Psais the son of Psyros, a carpenter from Kellis, for 200 talents per year (P.Kell.Gr. 33). Much may have been changed in the period between Takysis and Pamour III, but their family's wealth and property was still relatively strong.

<sup>42</sup> Αἰγύπτιων λεγομένων Discussed at Worp, *GPK1*, 90.

<sup>43</sup> P.Kell.Copt. 50 mentions the ὄμοι and in 71 pack-animals (πῶαρες, camel (?)) are discussed by Pamour. Cf. P.Kell.Copt. 20.54 (Makarios about the owners of the pack-animals). Worp suggests that some of these Kellites belonged to a family of cameldrivers. Worp, *GPK1*, 90.

they only hold minor offices, are the only religious self-designations of non-Manichaean Christians in the Kellis documents (see previous chapter, however, on the office of the bishop). Both Psais II and Marsis, however, have been associated with the Manichaean community.<sup>44</sup> Why Marsis and Psais II did not use the services of a fellow Manichaean scribe is unknown. It could have been caused by their remote location in Aphrodite, far from the oasis, or by the fact that they reckoned they needed someone of official status in the Aphrodite village context with experience in Greek legal documents, regardless of his religious affiliation.

#### 4.4 Performing personal letters

Building a social and religious history on the basis of personal letters requires a profound understanding of the social function of these documents. Ancient letters were not used primarily to convey new information, but to establish and nurture social ties. They bring the absent author in the presence of the recipients and convey his or her best intentions. Since the level of literacy was not high, most letters would have been read out loud by someone else than the primary addressees.<sup>45</sup> Reading and writing personal letters was therefore not a private affair. Apart from a scribe or a literate acquaintance to help with composing the letter, other members of the household would probably have been present when news from the Nile valley finally reached the oasis. Epistolary conventions also point toward this social setting, as many of the letters take remarkable effort to greet all family members and neighbors. Of course, we cannot be certain that all these people would have been present when the letter was read, but they would have received the news soon enough. Shorter letters could also be more abrupt, skipping the formulaic greetings, while sometimes only containing brief informal requests.<sup>46</sup> In such instances, additional information and greetings were transmitted in the associated letters or through the letter carrier. As some time may have passed between the author writing the letter and the recipients reading it, the letter carrier was to provide further information to fill the gap.<sup>47</sup> This made reading a dynamic

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<sup>44</sup> This affiliation with the Manichaean circle known through the letters of Makarios and his son, where she is called Marshe (in Coptic). Another Greek contract could strengthen this hypothesis. P.Kell.Gr. 30 mentions Aurelius Psais son of Pamour who acted on behalf of this son and grandson in an exchange of ownership rights in Aphrodite (363 CE). This Psais is likely to be the same as in the contract with Marsis (same name, same time, same location and same find location in Kellis). This adds strength to the hypothesis that she is a Manichaean, because Psais was also closely related to the Makarios archive. Gardner, Alcock, and Funk, *CDT1*, 41 identifies the Psais in P.Kell.Copt. 25 and perhaps 26 with Psais II. Worp, *GPK1*, 51. But see the number of individuals called Psais in Worp's onomasticum.

<sup>45</sup> But also see Wipszycka's argument for a relatively high degree of literacy. E. Wipszycka, "Le degré d'alphabétisation en Égypte byzantine," *Revue des études augustinienne* 30 (1984): 279-96.

<sup>46</sup> Bagnall and Cribiore, *Women's Letters*, 15-19.

<sup>47</sup> There is a dearth of literature on the situatedness of ancient (personal) letters. The few studies that reflect on these reading-experiences include L. H. Blumell, "The Message and the Medium: Some Observations on Epistolary Communication in Late Antiquity," *Journal of Greco-Roman Christianity and Judaism* 10 (2014): 46-53, 57-65. A. Verhoogt, "Dictating Letters in Greek and Roman Egypt from a Comparative Perspective (Unpublished Working Paper)," (2009). Bagnall and Cribiore, *Women's Letters*, 25-32 turn to medieval letters to remedy the absence of late antique information. On the gifts that sometimes accompanied these letters,

performance with additional information, questions from the audience, and communal conversation. Formulating an answer thus started with these initial oral responses. As Lincoln Blumell remarks, this should remind us that "the whole epistolary process in Late Antiquity was often a group project."<sup>48</sup> It is, thus, important to realize the difference between these communal reading experiences and modern, private letters or emails. In fact, the postcard with greetings from family members on holiday may be a more suitable comparison. The postcard is generally not meant to convey information, it reinforces family bonds, contains formulaic phrases and greetings, and it may suggest an informal status or hierarchies (like between those who can afford the expensive holiday and those who stay at home). As with the postcard, we need to be aware of the audience and its expectations. They would know the conventions, the sequence, cues, and codes. The accumulation of these expectations and the performative context has been conceptualized as a "performance arena" with various players involved.<sup>49</sup> The performance arena is a culturally determined contact between these people, in which certain cultural and social expectations were met with more or less success.<sup>50</sup> As part of an implicit information game, authors employ extensive formulas and phrases belonging to politeness strategies, to establish or frame a smooth working relationship against which the interaction may take place.<sup>51</sup> Many of these epistolary politeness formulas are known through practice-letter formularies.<sup>52</sup> Ancient letter writers could draw on multiple repertoires and schemes. Greek letters became more formal and elaborate in the fourth century, with allusions to biblical narratives and strongly marked Christian formulas, while Coptic letters could maintain both a level of spontaneous simplicity as well as a more lavish or formal style.<sup>53</sup> Some of the latter-type letters have been found in Kellis, but the majority combined an informal conventional tone with sections of marked religious language.

This brings us to the role of religion, or Manichaeanness, in the letters of Makarios, Pamour III, and their relatives. To bring together some of the details from various letters, we

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see J. Williams, "Letter Writing, Materiality, and Gifts in Late Antiquity: Some Perspectives on Material Culture," *Journal of Late Antiquity* 7, no. 2 (2014): 351-59. A number of studies are focused on letter-writing in relation to the New Testament. S. K. Stowers, *Letter Writing in Greco-Roman Antiquity* (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1986). H.-J. Klauck, *Ancient Letters and the New Testament: A Guide to Context and Exegesis* (Waco: Baylor University Press, 2006).

<sup>48</sup> Blumell, "The Message and the Medium," 65.

<sup>49</sup> J.M. Foley, *How to Read an Oral Poem* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2002), 116.

<sup>50</sup> E.D Zakrzewska, "The Bohairic Acts of the Martyrs as a Genre of Religious Discourse," in *Christianity and Monasticism in Northern Egypt*, ed. G. Gabra and H.N. Takla (Cairo: American University in Cairo Press, 2017), 228. E.D Zakrzewska, "Masterplots and Martyrs: Narrative Techniques in Bohairic Hagiography," in *Narratives of Egypt and the Ancient Near East: Literary and Linguistic Approaches*, ed. F. Hagen, et al. (Leuven: Peeters, 2011), 516.

<sup>51</sup> Goffman, *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life*, 10 and passim.

<sup>52</sup> Collected in M. Hasitzka, *Neue Texte Und Dokumentation Zum Koptisch Unterricht* (Vienna: Hollinek, 1990), no.109-83. Studied in T.S. Richter, "Coptic Letters," *Asiatische Studien* 62, no. 3 (2008): 739-70. E.M. Grob, *Documentary Arabic Private and Business Letters on Papyrus: Form and Function, Content and Context* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2010), 121-23.

<sup>53</sup> Bagnall and Cribiore, *Women's Letters*, 17-18.

should take a step back and reflect on three ways in which these papyri shed light on Manichaeism.

#### 4.5 Indications of Manichaeanness

The first and foremost reason to examine these letters for traces of Manichaean groupness is their find location, together with liturgical and theological texts from the Manichaean tradition. Many of the following chapters will explore the connections between the documentary letters and the liturgical texts, putting them in the context of earlier discoveries like the Manichaean Psalmbook from Medinet Madi. A second incentive—maybe more exciting—are the passages in the personal letters where Manichaean thought and practice are discussed or alluded to. Some of the letters refer to Manichaean deities, while others include titles of officials or books. Because of the nature of the letters, these references are often short or ambiguous, lacking most of the contextual evidence that would inform us in more depth about the role Manichaeism played in daily life. Finally, there are passages in which the authors do not directly discuss the Manichaean church, but employ phrases that nevertheless give their religious affiliation away. More reflection on the existence and use of this Manichaean repertoire has to be postponed to Chapter 5, but section 4.5.2 will already highlight some of the remarkable formulas from the Kellis letters.

The following sections will exhibit some of this evidence for Manichaeanness. Taken together, they show the undisputable Manichaean affiliation of Makarios, Pamour, and their families, while at the same time making it apparent that they only occasionally foregrounded this aspect of their lives.

##### 4.5.1 *Traveling with the Teacher*

Makarios's letters are characterized by complaints. Frequently, he grumbles about the state of the goods sent, but particularly about the lack of news from the oasis.<sup>54</sup> Maria knew the camel drivers were coming, why did she not send a letter (P.Kell.Copt. 20.53–4)? Why has she not replied to his letters or even confirmed that she received them (P.Kell.Copt. 20.14)? Makarios's frustrations loom large, even more so in modern ears. These complaints are, however, commonplace in papyrus correspondence. With long journeys separating families and no official post service, ancient authors had to rely on other travelers to carry their correspondence back to the oasis. Makarios, nevertheless, wondered if she did not return his letters because his children "have been taken from me" (ἀγχι παύηρε ἵττοτ... P.Kell.Copt. 20.22). Could she have been angry about this situation?

With hindsight, Maria should have been proud. Their children were taken from Makarios by a higher authority, as he wrote: "I have no power in this matter beyond ... requests (?)."<sup>55</sup> Piene, one of their sons, was traveling with the Teacher:

<sup>54</sup> This is a common feature in papyrus letters, see Clarysse, "Emotions in Greek Private Papyrus Letters," 65–9.

<sup>55</sup> .. παύηρε ἵττοτ ἡῖτεϊ γὰρ ἀπὸ τοῦ μετὰ... παύηρε P.Kell.Copt. 20.22–23.

the Great Teacher let him travel with him, so that he might learn Latin. He teaches him well. Their body is set up, and they are good and worthwhile [MB: i.e., they are healthy and doing well].<sup>56</sup>

In other letters, she was informed that Piene was in training to read in the church (P.Kell.Copt. 25) and intended to go to Alexandria with the Teacher (after their stay with Apa Lysimachos, P.Kell.Copt. 29.15). This "Great Teacher" (πναδ ηαα) was more than an

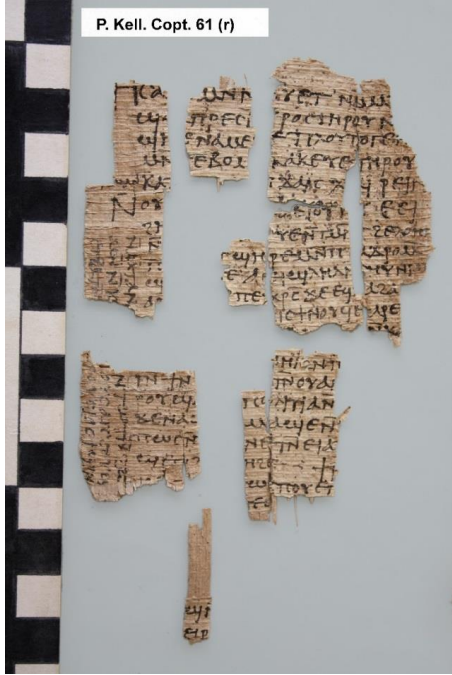


Figure 15: Letter P.Kell.Copt. 61. Photograph by Jay Johnston. Published in the edition (used with permission).

<sup>56</sup> πνεη δε α πναδ ηαα καη ερη[αα]ε νεμεη ατρεηηααω αηηηρωηαααο ηηααη κααωα ποηαωηα αηαηη αηω αεηααη κααωα P.Kell. Copt 20.24-26.

ordinary teacher, as the Manichaean church hierarchy was said to be led by twelve Teachers, themselves only directed by the successor of Mani (the *Archegos*). An official designated as the Teacher could have been a major authority to the Manichaeans in the oasis.

Piene was not the only one traveling with the Teacher. Amongst the heaps of papyri extracted from the domestic debris is one fragment of a letter from the Teacher to Ploutogenios, Pebo, and others (P.Kell.Copt. 61, see Figure 15). The introduction of this letter confirms that the Teacher was a high church official. The author followed an established pattern in Manichaean letters by referring to himself only by title.<sup>57</sup> Matthaios wrote to his mother: “[N]ow if he [MB: Piene or the Teacher?] depends (?) on him, and the child is content following him, it will be his glory.”<sup>58</sup> Presumably, this glory derived from his training for several ecclesiastical duties. Learning how to read, as well as learning Latin, could indicate training as a *lector* or, as the editors suggest, as one of the new elect.<sup>59</sup>

This latter interpretation is tantalizing since there is little evidence for the selection and training of Manichaean elect. One section of the Coptic *Kephalaia* has been interpreted as indicating a system of child donation. In this passage, catechumens are urged to follow a threefold discipline to become perfect. Apart from the regular obligations of prayer, fasting, and almsgiving, they are asked to give a child to the church:

A person will give a child to the church for the (sake of) righteousness, or his relative or a member of the household, or he can rescue someone beset by trouble, or buy a slave and give him for righteousness. Accordingly, every good he might do, namely this one whom he gave as a gift for righteousness; that catechumen... will share in with them (ΝΑΚΟΙΝΩΝΗ ΝΕΜΕΥ).<sup>60</sup>

<sup>57</sup> For everything on this letter, see I. Gardner, "A Letter from the Teacher: Some Comments on Letter-Writing and the Manichaean Community of IVth Century Egypt," in *Coptica - Gnostica - Manichaica: Mélanges offerts à Wolf-Peter Funk*, ed. L. Painchaud and P. H. Poirier (Leuven: Peeters, 2006), 317-28.

<sup>58</sup> εἰ μὲν ἐσθωπὲ ἐφεῖχε ἡναγ ἦτε πῶλον ἦταν ἐφοιτῆ ἡσὼν ἡγεαγ πὲ P.Kell.Copt. 25..46-48.

<sup>59</sup> Gardner, Alcock, and Funk, *CDT1*, 76 and on 170 they state: "one wonders if Piene was being groomed for missionary work in the west." Dubois, "Une lettre du manichéen Matthaios," 235 "Ces renseignements sur les responsabilités réciproques de membres de la hiérarchie manichéenne orientent l'interprétation générale de la lettre, et surtout de la figure de Matthaios. Matthaios participe au réseau des élus manichéens chargés d'instruire et de prêcher (voir peut-être aussi la référence a "entendre ma parole," ligne 74) dans les communautés le long de la vallée du Nil." I see no reason to divert from the primary edition which reads "everyone who wishes our word" (λογαν νιν ἐφοιτω πῶδεξε) as a Manichaean self-designator in line 74. This does not necessarily suggest that Matthaios was involved in teaching (nor that a first person singular is indicated here).

<sup>60</sup> .. πρὸνε ναϝ [ο]ϣωπρε ντ[εκ]κλνσιδ ατδικαιουσνн η περφωργενος [η при]ннн η еφасωте ное еφаре аретῗ зῗ оуѡлѣ[ис η еф]аταγ оуѡоган нѣтееѣ аτδικαιουσнн хекαα[с ага]θон нин еφасѣтоу нхι πεῗ етаѣтееѣ нλωρον [ατλ]καιουσнн ере пκατнхоуенос етῗнеу ет[.....] νακοινωνн немев 1 Keph. 80, 193.5-11, the Coptic text is from the edition of Böhlig, the translation from Gardner and Lieu, *MTRE*, no. 74. In Gardner's earlier translation the final sentence was "That catechumen who [does this] will be in partnership with them." Gardner, *The Kephalaia of the Teacher*, 202. Note, moreover, Gardner's reconstruction "for the sake of." Alternatively, we could consider "righteousness" in the first line as referring to the lives of the elect. BeDuhn, *Manichaean Body*, 31.

The donation of houses (which immediately follows this passage as a third "work"), children, or slaves to the church was meant to establish partnership (κοινωνία) with the elect.<sup>61</sup> Such donations were more commonly practiced in Christian Egypt, as becomes apparent from eighth-century contracts from the village of Jeme, in which children were donated to the adjacent monastery of Phoibammon.<sup>62</sup> These contracts, despite their narrative structure, not necessarily indicate that the children were to become monks. They describe the arrangements under which children served as servants or were trained for useful occupations when parents could not afford their upbringing and education.<sup>63</sup> Though some of them remained ascetics, their initial role would have combined domestic duties with a monastic education.<sup>64</sup> Parallels have been drawn between these eighth-century Christian practices and earlier traditions, including the hagiographical story about Mani's youth in a Baptist sect.<sup>65</sup> The Manichaean *Homilies* mention children in an apocalyptic setting during (and after) the Great War (Hom. 30 and 31) and one of the Psalms alludes to religious education or training since childhood (2 PsB. 75). The *Kephalaia* contains one additional passage that confirms that children or slaves were trained to become elect, as a "boy from his slaves" was ordained by Mani (1 Keph. 166, 410.23–414.30 οὐλοῦν γὰρ ἡ[ε]ρωαγοῦνε on 411.1). Unfortunately, these passages are fragmentary and hardly reflect actual social practices. The passages on the education of Kellis's children are therefore a much-needed contribution to our knowledge of the training of elect, or the role of children in Manichaean communities.

In this background of poverty, education, and servanthood, at least one other boy from Kellis was "given" to an ascetic teacher. In P.Kell.Copt. 12, Titoue (Tithoes) wrote his son Shamoun to inform him that his son Titoue is very well and "he has gone to the monastery to be with father Pebok."<sup>66</sup> In an earlier (?) letter in Greek, Shamoun instructed his father: "[A]s I indicated to you concerning my son ---, put him into the monastery, where it

<sup>61</sup> BeDuhn, *Manichaean Body*, 59.

<sup>62</sup> T.G. Wilfong, *Women of Jeme* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2002), 95-116 on religious duties and the donation of children.

<sup>63</sup> C. T. Schroeder, "Children and Egyptian Monasticism," in *Children in Late Ancient Christianity*, ed. C. B. Horn and R. R. Phenix (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2009), 334-5; For the documents from Jeme, E. Wipszycka, "Donation of Children," *The Coptic Encyclopedia* III (1991): 918-19; L. S. B. MacCoull, "Child Donations and Child Saints in Coptic Egypt," *East European Quarterly* 13, no. 4 (1979): 409-15; A. Papaconstantinou, "Notes sur les actes de donation d'enfant au monastère thébain de Saint-Phoibammon," *Journal of Juristic Papyrology* 32 (2002): 83-105; T. S. Richter, "What's in a Story? Cultural Narratology and Coptic Child Donation Documents," *Journal of Juristic Papyrology* 35 (2005): 237-64; S. Schaten, "Koptische Kinderschenkungsurkunden," *Bulletin de la société d'archéologie copte* 35 (1996): 129-42; G. Schenke, "The Healing Shrines of St. Phoibammon: Evidence of Cult Activity in Coptic Legal Documents," *Journal of Ancient Christianity* 20, no. 3 (2016): 496-523.

<sup>64</sup> Hagiographical evidence suggests that some children remained ascetics, even though they were probably able to leave on becoming adults. Schroeder, "Children and Egyptian Monasticism," 325. See also a possible parallel with P.Oxy. XII 1493, discussed in L. H. Blumell and T. A. Wayment, *Christian Oxyrhynchus: Texts, Documents, and Sources* (Waco: Baylor University Press, 2015), 490-3.

<sup>65</sup> Suggested without sufficient evidence in Lieu, *Manichaeism in Mesopotamia*, 151. There is no indication in CMC 121-123 about the age of the girl, nor of her role in the community.

<sup>66</sup> αϥβωκ αβαλ ατρενετε ρατῖ πῖωτ πεβωκ P.Kell.Copt. 12.6-7.

(one) teaches him the linen-weaving trade.”<sup>67</sup> These letters do not contain any explicit Manichaean language. Still, the possibility of a Manichaean monastery in the oasis has provoked discussion (see Chapter 7).<sup>68</sup> What happened at the monastery is, in this case, more important. The boy Titoue was sent there to learn the linen-weaving trade from a Christian monk. The object is educational. Nothing suggests he was trained as a Manichaean ascetic or monk. Late antique families could send their children into an apprenticeship even when a skilled father (and, rather exceptionally in this case, grandfather) was still alive.<sup>69</sup> Another document from Kellis mentions how a house slave was given to a master to learn the weaver’s trade for a period of two years.<sup>70</sup> Piene’s apprenticeship with the Teacher, on the other hand, was different. In contrast to Titoue, Piene could read and learned Latin, and may therefore have been trained for a position within the church.<sup>71</sup>

Traveling with Manichaean church officials, who were all by definition ascetic elect, was a more widespread group style.<sup>72</sup> Makarios and his other son were also involved with the Teacher. Matthaïos’s letters reveal an intimate knowledge of the journey of his brother. Initially, his letters suggest, Matthaïos traveled with the Teacher, but he was left in Antinoou when his brother and the Teacher went to Alexandria.<sup>73</sup> Both Makarios and Matthaïos traveled in the Nile valley, where the son stayed at least some time at Hermopolis (mentioned in the address of P.Kell.Copt. 26). Makarios is reported to have stayed at the house of Apa Lysimachos, one of the Manichaean elect whose name occurs regularly in the corpus. There, he was visited by the Teacher, who was by then very sick (P.Kell.Copt. 24. 19–20 and 41). On this occasion, Makarios also met some of the “brothers” from Alexandria, presumably elect accompanying the Teacher, who informed him about Piene’s journeys (P.Kell.Copt. 24.25).

This social structure, of lay individuals traveling with the elect, is visible in at least two other letters from Kellis and in a Greek Manichaean letter from Oxyrhynchus. Philammon III wrote: “I asked Apa Lysimachos, (and) he said that we might not stay here.”<sup>74</sup>

<sup>67</sup> [ . . . . . ] σης τῶν υἱῶν. Κα[θὼς ἐδήλωσ]ά σοι περὶ τὸν υἱόν [ . . . . . ] βαλε εἰς τὸ μονοστή[ριον] [ὅπου διδάσκει αὐτὸν λινοῦ[φικίην]. P.Kell.Gr. 12.16-20.

<sup>68</sup> I. Gardner, “‘He Has Gone to the Monastery...’” in *Studia Manichaica IV*, ed. R. E. Emmerick, W. Sundermann, and P. Zieme (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 2000), 247-57.

<sup>69</sup> R. P. Saller, “The Roman Family as Productive Unit,” in *A Companion to Families in the Greek and Roman Worlds*, ed. B. Rawson (Malden: Wiley-Blackwell, 2011), 125.

<sup>70</sup> P.Kell.Gr. 19a with interpretation Bergamasco, “P.Kell.G. 19.A, Appendix,” 193-96.

<sup>71</sup> The editors wondered whether Piene was groomed for missionary work. Learning Latin in fourth-century Egypt is indeed remarkable since most official correspondence was in Greek. It has been suggested that the Teacher was from North-Africa, which opens up the larger framework of the diffusion of Manichaeism in the Roman Empire. Gardner, Alcock, and Funk, *CDT1*, 170.

<sup>72</sup> On church officials chosen from the elect, see Gardner and Lieu, *MTRE*, 17.

<sup>73</sup> P.Kell.Copt. 25.41-42. Makarios, in his effort to inform his wife, describes his lack of power, “until Matthaïos is placed near to me” (P.Kell.Copt.19.24). Presumably the authority who let Piene travel with The Teacher also “placed” Matthaïos somewhere. See the notes in Gardner, Alcock, and Funk, *CDT1*, 170.

<sup>74</sup> ...ἄε εἰς τὸν ἀπα λυσιμαχος ἡλασεν καὶ ἡνερμας τεῖ P.Kell.Copt. 82.37-40. I follow the translation in the edition and not the preliminary notes in the first volume, in which the translation “do not save this!” was suggested.



This suggests that Philammon III may not have had the authority to divert from the arranged plan. In a postscript to a letter from Pamour III, Psais III (?) and a number of others are greeted by "those of Apa L(ysimachos?) and Hor."<sup>75</sup> If this reading is correct, it supports the notion of a small group of followers or retinue of these established religious leaders.

A final strong indication for a group style based on communal journeys is found in P. Oxy. 31. 2603, a Greek letter of reference for people traveling in the "company of Ision and Nikolaos," two Manichaean elect.<sup>76</sup> Reading these passages in tandem, I suggest that the Manichaean elect in this period lived itinerant lives, while being supported by either local households of catechumens or by fellow travelers.

These passages are the principal sources for collating an impression of the social structure of the Manichaean community. The documentary evidence never reports about elect in the oasis, but consistently portrays them as traveling in the Nile valley. Contact with the Manichaeans in Kellis was established in letters, or through the personal stories of individuals like Piene and Matthaïos. Presumably, the elect also visited the oasis, but this remains invisible in our sources. The succinct result of these journeys was a geographically dispersed network of traveling Manichaeans supported by local houses to sustain them. This type of grouping depended on the ratio between weak and strong ties. Infrequent contact with the religious specialists may have led to the diminishing value of Manichaeanness in individuals' lives, while frequent and intense moments of shared experience with the Manichaean elect could have made Manichaeanness more relevant and central to an individual's self-understanding.

#### 4.5.2 *Manichaean Prayer Formulas*

Makarios's letters left few doubts about his knowledge of the church of Mani. The issues discussed, the book titles mentioned, the phrases used, and the deities called on: they all connote Manichaeism. This is not to say that there is no ambiguity in his words. On the contrary, most religiously marked phrases can be interpreted as stemming from a non-Manichaean, Christian background. This dual usage of religious phrases and formulas has led to the situation in which academic specialists in Manichaeism argue for a distinct Manichaean epistolary style in some of the Kellis letters, while historians of Christianity point to parallels in Egyptian Christian letters and liturgical traditions.<sup>77</sup> In this section, some

<sup>75</sup> ⲭⲏ ⲛⲁⲁⲡⲁ ⲗ. ⲙⲏ ⲉⲱⲣ ⲱⲛⲉ ⲁⲡⲁⲥⲁⲛ ⲛⲱⲁⲓ ⲧⲟⲛⲟⲩ P.Kell.Copt. 72.35, on the verso.

<sup>76</sup> Gardner, Alcock, and Funk, *CDT2*, 82 where he also points to anti-Manichaean polemics about young acolytes. I. Gardner, "Once More on Mani's Epistles and Manichaean Letter-Writing," *Journal of Ancient Christianity* 17, no. 2 (2013): 291-314. I am not convinced by their reference to Biruni (which is found on page 190 in the 1879 edition of Sachau). The young and hairless servant mentioned by Biruni is part of the discursive slander about the sexual ethics of Manichaean ascetics, which is already called into question by Biruni himself. Translation and notes about this passage in J. C. Reeves, *Prolegomena to a History of Islamicate Manichaeism* (Sheffield: Equinox Publishing Ltd., 2011), 213-15.

<sup>77</sup> See discussion below, primarily the challenged posed by Martinez. Similar discussions about the use of specific phrases or symbols to identify religious affiliations in papyrus letters (or inscriptions) have addressed Jewish and Christian identities. On Jewishness see, R. S. Kraemer, "Jewish Tuna and Christian Fish: Identifying Religious Affiliation in Epigraphic Sources," *Harvard Theological Review* 84, no. 2 (1991): 141-62. S. J. D. Cohen, "'Those Who Say They Are Jews and Are Not': How Do You Know a Jew in Antiquity

of these epistolary formulas and their dual usage will be discussed, as they shed light on the role of Manichaeism in the lives of Makarios, Pamour, and their families. Instead of conceptualizing Manichaeanness and Christianness as two opposing tendencies, I consider them together as part of a wider, late antique Egyptian milieu in which several strands of thought and practice were shared beyond the boundaries of religious categories and groups.

There is only one letter in the Kellis corpus that cites Mani explicitly. In P.Kell.Copt. 19, Makarios wrote:

Before everything: I greet you. I remember your gentleness and your calm, and the example (τύπος) of your ... propriety; for all this time I have been without you, I have been asking after you and hearing of your good reputation. Also, when I came to you, I found you correct as you have always been. This too is the (right) way. Now, be in worthy matters (δυναστροφᾶν); just as the Paraclete (παράκλητος) has said: "The disciple of righteousness is found with the fear of his teacher upon him (even) while he is far from him; like a guardian." Do likewise, my loved one; so that I may be grateful for you and God too may be grateful for you, and you will be glorified by a multitude of people. Do not acquire fault or mockery for your good conduct (ἵνα κενόδοξα ἔσῃς).<sup>78</sup>

The title “Paraclete” derives from a gospel passage in which Jesus promised his disciples a supernatural advocate (παράκλητος, John 14.16), whom Manichaeans identified with Mani, or Mani’s supernatural double (*syzygos*).<sup>79</sup> Although the source of the citation cannot be identified, it is highly probable that Makarios cited one of Mani’s *Epistles*. The Kellis version of one of the *Epistles* mentions a letter called “the conducts of righteousness” (ἡ ἀγαθὴ διαγωγή, P.Kell.Copt. 53, 71.15–16).<sup>80</sup>

Several lines further down in the letter, Makarios returned to the topic of ardent study, stressing that his son should be zealous “whether I am far from you or near to you.”<sup>81</sup> At first glance, there is nothing peculiar about these passages. Many ancient letters play with the tension between being present and absent at the same time. Iain Gardner, however, has argued that Makarios in this instance not only cites Mani, but also adapts a Manichaean

When You See One?," in *Diasporas in Antiquity*, ed. S. J. D. Cohen and E. S. Frerichs (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1993), 1-45.

[illegible]

<sup>29</sup> This identification is made in the *Living Gospel* in CMC, 69, but also 17, 36, 63, 70. C. M. Stang, *Our Divine Double* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2016), 145–84. For an examination of the CMC passages, see van Oort, "The Paraclete Mani," 139–57. The foremost *Kephalaia* passage on the Paraclete presents the biblical proof text (John 16.7) in Manichaean interpretations (1 Keph. 14.3–10), discussed in T. Pettipiece, "Separating Light from Darkness: Manichaean Use of Biblical Traditions in the *Kephalaia*," in *The Reception and Interpretation of the Bible in Late Antiquity*, ed. L. DiTommaso and L. Turcescu (Leiden: Brill, 2008), 422.

<sup>80</sup> Gardner, *KLT1*, 82-3.

<sup>81</sup> ..εΙΟΥΗΥ [ΑΒΑΛ ΜΗΩΤ]̄Ν ΕΙΣΗΝ ΔΡΩΤ̄Ν P.Kell.Copt. 19.69-70.

epistolary style based on Mani's *Epistles*.<sup>82</sup> In particular, the theme of being far while physically near is used in several more letters. Chief among these is the letter of the Teacher, which employs it in an introductory formula:

Now, every time I am afar it is as if I am near. I remember the gentleness of your (pl.) sonship and the strength of your faith. I pray always to Jesus Christ: That he will guard you for me with this fragrance (?), as you are honoured by everyone corresponding to your conduct (πολιτια).<sup>83</sup>

Since both Makarios and the Teacher used this theme, it is likely that such a saying of Mani indeed featured in one of the Manichaean books. The notion of being far while near (οὐκ ἄλλοθεν ἔστιν) was employed by several other letter writers. A member of the elect used it to remind their supporters in Kellis of their obligation to remember the traveling fathers in their gifts, even if they were far away<sup>84</sup>, and Ploutogenes addressed his brothers as those “whose memory is sealed in my soul at all times, who are far from me in the body yet are near in the state of never-changing love.”<sup>85</sup> The repetition of the theme shows the conscious appropriation of scriptural models in everyday correspondences.

According to Gardner, there are more instances that follow Mani's epistolary style. The Teacher may have followed Mani's *Epistles* in several other regards, like stressing specific Manichaean values.<sup>86</sup> This is even more telling in the similarity with a Manichaean letter from a totally different region. Makarios wrote: "[W]hen I came to you, I found you correct as you have always been."<sup>87</sup> A similar statement was made in a Parthian Manichaean letter: "Furthermore you should know this: When I came, I found brother Rashten to be just as I would wish. And as for his devotion and zeal, he was just as Mar Mani would desire."<sup>88</sup>

<sup>82</sup> Gardner, "Letter from the Teacher," 321-2. For these observations about far-near. I take "like a guardian" to refer to the respect for the teacher, which kept the pupil safe, following the interpretation in H. M. Schenke, "Rezension zu Iain Gardner: Kellis Literary Texts; Iain Gardner/Anthony Alcock/Wolf-Peter Funk (Ed.): Coptic Documentary Texts from Kellis," *Enchoria* 27 (2001): 229. The argument is developed in I. Gardner, I. Nobbs, and M. Choat, "P. Harr. 107: Is This Another Greek Manichaean Letter?," *Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik* 131 (2000): 118-24. Gardner, "Once More," 291-314. The latter explicitly engages with the critique of David Martinez.

<sup>83</sup> ἡγο[αῖο] μεν νιν] αἰογῃ εἰ ρη[ν αἰερε ἡπῆρ]νε]γε ἡτηνῆρξελῆντ ἡ[τετῆνῆ]τῶνρε ἡν πτᾶχρο ἡπ[ετῆν]αρ]τε αἰωλνα ἡςνυ νιν ρ[α ἡσο]γς πεφρς xε εϋ[η]α[ρα]ρ[ρη] ἀρ[ωτῆ]ν ἡν ῖν π[α]τ[ρ]ιογχε ἀρε[τῆ]ν [ταῖατ ἡ]τῶοαν [ν]ημ [ἡτωτ]ῆ κ[α]τ[α] [τετῆ]πολιτια ἡ[...P.Kell.Copt. 61.6-13. The translation from Gardner, Alcock, and Funk, *CDT2*, 32 is used and not an earlier version found in Gardner, "Letter from the Teacher," 317-23. The translation of π[α]τ[ρ]ιογχε as "fragrance" is dubious; the editors note the alternative "good reputation" (P.Kell.Copt. 19.2,7 31.20-21, P.Kell.Gr. 63.6-7 and 1 Keph. 259.11, 380.13).

<sup>84</sup> [erte e]n'ouny· erte [enɛnn Δ]nēn prpnyēe pō nēn[γ' t]nnē P.Kell.Copt. 31.24: "Whether we are far or we are near: indeed we have found remembrance among you."

<sup>85</sup> «метере поурпинеуе таве зп тауҫхн Һнеу нин' метоуҫн мен ҺнаӀ зп псмаа еуҫнн де зп т.д.д.е.с.с. нтагапн  
 Һатове анне...P.Kell.Copt. 85.2-4, translation modified, see also P.Kell.Copt. 15.12, 17.5, 19.5, 26.11, 31.24,  
 61.6-7, 63 (?), 72.10.

<sup>86</sup> Gardner, "Letter from the Teacher," 317-23. Gardner, "Once More," 291-314.

<sup>87</sup> ἡταριεὶ ἀν ψαράκ ραιβῆντῆ ἐκσμιντῆ ἡτεκρε τεκρ[ε] πει ἀν πε πρητε P.Kell.Copt. 19.7-8.

<sup>88</sup> M5815 II translation from Klimkeit, *Gnosis at the Silk Road*, 260. Cited in Gardner, "Once More," 300-1.

The commonality between the two letters may well be explained as resulting from a deep awareness of the Manichaean scriptures and the existence of a Manichaean epistolary style used as a “model” (τυπός P.Kell.Copt. 19.4–5).<sup>89</sup> Gardner’s argument about the exemplary role of Mani’s *Epistles* is convincing, but can only be examined in full after the publication of what is left of the Medinet Madi fragments of this canonical work. Tracing phrases back to a hypothetical Manichaean origin, moreover, may obscure the interaction between epistolary customs in the local Egyptian context. One additional approach, therefore, is to compare the prayer formulas in the Kellis letters with each other and with Ancient Christian letters and literature, to discern patterns and establish how the Kellites used religious notions in the introduction of their letters.

Prayer formulas are a standard feature of Greek and Coptic letters. Scholars have studied them extensively, aiming to determine the religious affiliation of the author(s).<sup>90</sup> As more and more documentary letters were published in the last decades, it became clear that despite the Christian tone of some formulas, many phrases were used by authors from various religious backgrounds. Characteristic phrases like “God is my witness,” with “God” in the singular, are not exclusively Christian. Apparently, monotheistic formulas were also used outside a Christian (or even monotheistic) framework.<sup>91</sup> Specific prayer formulas (*proskynema*) often occur in relation to the Christian “God,” but are also attested for Serapis.<sup>92</sup> This coalescence of expressions hampers the identification of distinct religious groups. As a general rule, papyri do not inform us in depth about specific religious concerns that would allow us to categorize them along the lines of the theological controversies. This does not mean, however, that all these letters are the same, as epistolary formulas can be examined for their variation and the way they play with conventions.

Makarios’s sons started their letters with praise for their mother’s kindness, and continued in a remarkably similar style, with a prayer formula addressing the “Father, the God of Truth.”

(Matthaios to Maria) Before everything I greet you warmly, my lady mother; with my brothers, my masters whose names are very precious to me at all times, every day and every hour. This is my prayer to the Father, the God of Truth, and his beloved son the Christ and his holy spirit, and his Light angels: That he will watch over you together, you being healthy in your body, joyful in heart, and rejoicing in soul and spirit, all the time we will pass in the body, free from any evil and any temptations by Satan and any sickness of the body. And furthermore (I pray) that this great day of joy should happen to us, the (day) for which we pray indeed every hour...<sup>93</sup>

<sup>89</sup> Gardner, “Once More,” 301 refers to P.Kell.Copt. 53, 71.22–72.2 and 53, 83.20–21.

<sup>90</sup> Three recent contributions include Bagnall and Cribiore, *Women’s Letters*, 89–90; M. Choat, *Belief and Cult in Fourth-Century Papyri* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2006); L. H. Blumell, *Lettered Christians* (Leiden: Brill, 2012).

<sup>91</sup> Choat, *Belief and Cult*, 106.

<sup>92</sup> Choat, *Belief and Cult*, 111.

<sup>93</sup> Ζαοη ηρωδ νη ιρωιη αρο τονου· τανο ταχαϊς ην νασνηυ ναχιςαγε ετε πογρεν αι ητοτ’ τονου· ηογαϊω νη· ην ροογ νη· ηννι’ ογνογ νη πει πε ναωληλ φα πωτ’ πνωγτε ητνηε’ ην πεωρηε ημερτ’ πηρς· ην περηπα ετογαβε’ ην πεφαγ’ γελος ηογαηε χεφναραϊς ηνι αρωτη ζι ογσαπ’ ερετηογαχ ζη πετησωνα’ αρετηραγτ’ ζη πετηρητ’ ετε τητεληλ ζη τετητηχη· ην πετηηπα· ηπογαϊω τηρϑ’ ετηναεϊτϑ ζη σωνα· ηπσα ηβαλ ηπεθαγ νη· ζι πρασνος νη

(Piene to Maria) This is my prayer every hour to the Father, the God of Truth, that he may preserve you healthy in your body, joyful in your soul, and firm in your spirit; for all the time that you will spend in this place. Also, after this place, you may find life in the kingdom for eternity.<sup>94</sup>

It is not just these letters that resemble each other in their usage of this specific prayer formula; their combination of the prayer to "the Father, the God of Truth" and a tripartite division of body, soul, and spirit, was employed, with some variation, in more Kellis letters (see P.Kell.Copt. 65.7–14, 71.4–9, 72.3–12). This resemblance has led Gardner, Choat, and Nobbs to conclude that it was "a valid and important indicator of religious belief."<sup>95</sup> In other words, if Greek or Coptic letters combine these features, they were most probably written in a Manichaean context. Interestingly, Gardner, Choat, and Nobbs noticed the same formulaic elements in P.Harr. 107, 4–12, which they consequently reconsidered and classified as a Manichaean letter.<sup>96</sup>

How strongly did these formulas evoke religious groupness? David Martinez has challenged the Manichaean interpretation of P.Harr. 107, and suggested that some of the phrases "could have their ultimate source in the language of liturgy and protective magic."<sup>97</sup> The God of Truth, he points out, occurs ten times in the liturgical traditions of the fourth-century *Prayers of Serapion*. Instead of connoting Manichaeanness, the formulas could have been associated with these non-Manichaean liturgical traditions. Despite Gardner's rebuttal of Martinez's argument, the dual usage of expressions remains a problematic issue. To illustrate this problematic status—I will not claim to have solved the question of the exact origin of the phrases—I will reexamine two of these formulaic phrases: the use of "Father, the God of Truth" and the tripartite prayer.

Martinez correctly identified the Christian use of the phrase "the God of Truth," which is not only common in the *Prayers of Serapion* but also in works by Eusebius, Athanasius, Epiphanius, and other Early Christian authors. At the same time, its frequent

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ⲛⲧⲉ ⲡⲥⲁⲧⲁⲛⲁⲥ' ⲛⲓ ⲡⲱⲛⲉ ⲛⲓⲙ ⲛⲧⲉ ⲡⲥⲱⲙⲁ' ⲛⲧⲉ ⲡⲓⲛⲁⲉ ⲁⲛ ⲛⲣⲟⲟϥ ⲛⲣⲉⲱⲉ ⲧⲉⲣⲁⲛ' ⲡⲉⲧⲏⲱⲗⲏⲗ ⲁⲣⲁϥ ⲣⲱ ⲛⲛⲉϥ ⲛⲓⲙ  
P.Kell.Copt. 25.9-23.

<sup>94</sup> ⲛⲛⲟ ⲛⲓⲙ ⲡⲉⲓ ⲡⲉ ⲡⲁⲱⲗⲏⲗ ⲱⲁ ⲡⲱⲧ' ⲡⲛⲟϥⲧⲉ ⲛⲧⲏⲛⲉ ⲧⲁ[ⲣ]ⲉⲣⲁⲓⲥ ⲁⲣⲟ ⲉⲣⲉⲟϥ [ⲁ]ⲭ' ⲉⲛ ⲡⲉ[ⲥ]ⲱⲙⲁ ⲉⲣⲉⲣⲉⲱⲉ ⲉⲛ ⲧⲉⲧⲱⲭⲏ  
ⲉ[ⲣ]ⲉⲧⲁⲭ[ⲡⲁⲓⲧ' ⲉⲛ] ⲡⲉⲡⲓⲁ ⲛⲡⲟⲱⲗⲱ ⲧⲏ[ⲣ]ⲓ ⲉⲧⲉⲣ[ⲁ]ⲉϥ ⲛⲡⲓⲙ[ⲁ] ⲛⲓⲥⲁ ⲡⲓⲙⲁ ⲁⲛ [ⲧ]ⲉⲃⲓⲛⲉ ⲛⲡⲱⲛⲉ ⲉⲛ [ⲧ]ⲏⲛⲧⲣⲟ  
ⲱⲁⲁ[ⲛ]ⲛⲉ P.Kell.Copt. 29.7-13.

<sup>95</sup> Gardner, Nobbs, and Choat, "P. Harr. 107," 123.

<sup>96</sup> P.Harr. 107.4-12. Other variations are found in P.Kell.Copt. 25.12-26, 29.7-13, 31.12-16, 32.19-24, 62.1-15 (?), 63.1-10 (?), 71.4-9, 72.4-5.

<sup>97</sup> D. G. Martinez, "The Papyri and Early Christianity," in *The Oxford Handbook of Papyrology*, ed. R. S. Bagnall (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 602. The expression ὁ θεὸς τῆς ἀληθείας (Psalm 30.6 LXX) occurs more often in patristic authors (such as Eusebius, Athanasius, Epiphanius, but also the apocryphal *Acts of Thomas*). A TLG search (accessed May 2017) lists at least 30 exact matches. The date and authorship of the *Prayers of Serapion* are contested, but the most recent literature tends to see a fourth-century date for the majority of the prayers B. D. Spinks, "The Integrity of the Anaphora of Sarapion of Thmuis and Liturgical Methodology," *Journal of Theological Studies* 49, no. 1 (1998): 136-44; M. E. Johnson, *Prayers of Serapion of Thmuis: A Literary, Liturgical and Theological Analysis* (Roma: Pontificio Istituto Orientale, 1995).

usage in Manichaean sources, as “the Father, the God of Truth,” stands out.<sup>98</sup> Clearly, Christians and Manichaeans participated in the same linguistic repertoire, which makes it difficult to establish whether the authors appropriated the phrases from a Christian or Manichaean source. In personal letters, the God of Truth is only attested in P.Harr. 107 and the Coptic letters from Kellis, which slightly bends the argument in favor of the Manichaean connotations.<sup>99</sup> Here, Gardner’s argument about Mani’s *Epistles* counts in full, as the Kellis copy of one of these letters contains the exact phrase “The Father, God of Truth” (ⲡⲓⲱⲧ ⲡⲓⲛⲟⲩⲧⲉ ⲛⲧⲉ ⲧⲏⲛⲉ).<sup>100</sup> Presumably then, the Manichaeans of Kellis appropriated this phrase from liturgical Manichaean texts.

What about the other formula? Prayer formulas including a tripartite division between body, soul, and spirit are not uncommon. Searching for the origin of this notion is therefore not useful. As with the previous phrase, it belonged to the shared repertoire of fourth-century Egypt. Here, Gardner’s comparison with Mani’s own *Epistles* fails to convince. His examples (even though not all copies of Mani’s *Epistles* have been published) do not contain tripartite divisions, but only dipartite divisions. The copy found at Kellis, for example, contains a dipartite division with body and spirit, omitting the soul, “... and may it [MB: the peace of God] guard you and ... you in your body, and your spirit. He is with you namely the Father, the God of Truth.”<sup>101</sup> The other fragments of Mani’s *Epistles* contain similar formulas, but never full tripartite divisions. Other Ancient Christian texts and letters, on the other hand, contained the same tripartite formulas.

A passage in the New Testament incorporates spirit, soul, and body (1 Thess. 5:23b), while the *Prayers of Serapion* changed the order to soul, body, and spirit. Three Greek personal letters (from the fourth to the sixth century) employ the formula in various orders (see Table 8, with P.Neph. 17.15, P.Oxy. VIII 1161 and SB XII 11144.5). It may be significant that none of these texts adhere to the Pauline order, while only one letter used the reversed order known from the *Prayers of Serapion*.<sup>102</sup> The order soul, body, spirit, is shared with P.Harr. 107. Could this specific sequence point to the origin of this formula?

Manichaean personal letters	Subsequent order of elements from the tripartite formula, with prayer wish in brackets		
P.Kell.Copt. 25	Body (health) Body (2x, free from evil, and healthy)	Heart (joy)	Soul and spirit (joy)
P.Kell.Copt. 29	Body (health)	Soul (joy)	Spirit (firm)

<sup>98</sup> Among others, the God of Truth is mentioned in 1 Keph. 20.30, 23.32, 25.13, 38.33, 39.32, 41.1 and 10, 81.29, 100.10, 151.20, 181.4, 217.16 etc. For more references see Crum, CD, 117.

<sup>99</sup> A papyri.info search for ἀληθεία lists primarily Greek census documents (accessed June 2017).

<sup>100</sup> P.Kell.Copt. 53, 12.11, discussed in Gardner, Nobbs, and Choat, “P. Harr. 107,” 121.

<sup>101</sup> ⲛⲥⲁⲓⲣⲁⲓⲥ ⲁⲣⲁⲕ ⲛⲉⲓ[...].ⲛⲓⲛⲁⲕ [ⲉⲛ] ⲡⲉⲕⲥⲱⲛⲁ ⲛⲓ ⲡⲉⲕⲡⲓⲁ: ⲕⲣⲓⲛⲛⲉⲕ] ⲛⲁⲕⲓ ⲡⲓⲱⲧ ⲡⲓⲛⲟⲩⲧⲉ ⲛⲧⲉ ⲧⲏⲛⲉ[...]. P.Kell.Copt. 53, 12.9-11. Dipartite divisions are very commonly used in Greek letters, see the list of references in Blumell and Wayment, *Christian Oxyrhynchus*, 499n9-10.

<sup>102</sup> Blumell, *Lettered Christians*, 224-25. Referring to Stowers, *Letter Writing*, 74. They do not refer to the fifth-century amulet that employs the same phrase: P.Coll.Youtie. 2.91.

P.Kell.Copt. 32	Body (health)	Spirit (joy)	Soul (joy)
P.Kell.Copt. 65 <sup>103</sup>	Body (health)	Spirit (joy)	Soul (health)
P.Kell.Copt. 71	Body (health)	Soul (flourishing)	Spirit (joy)
P.Harr. 107	Soul Body (health)	Body Spirit (joy)	Spirit Soul (eternal life)
<b>Non-Manichaean personal letters</b>			
P.Neph. 17 (fourth century)	Soul	Spirit	Body
P.Oxy. VIII 1161 (fourth century) <sup>104</sup>	Body	Soul	Spirit
SB XII 11144 (fifth–sixth century)	Soul	Body	Spirit
<b>Scriptural or liturgical examples of the same (?) formula</b>			
Sundermann's edition of fragments of Mani's letters (Middle Persian) <sup>105</sup>	Spirit (health)	Body (content and happy)	—
Mani's letter from Kellis (P.Kell.Copt. 53)	Body	Spirit	—
Mani's Epistula Fundamenti (Latin) <sup>106</sup>	—	Heart (piety)	Soul
Mani's letter to Menoch (Latin) <sup>107</sup>	—	—	—
Unpublished Seventh Ktesiphon Letter (Berlin Codex) <sup>108</sup>	—	—	—
Mani's letter to Marcellus (Latin) <sup>109</sup>	—	—	—
Mani's Seal Letter (Sogdian) <sup>110</sup>	—	—	—
1 Thes. 5.23b (NT)	Spirit	Soul	Body (all kept sound and blameless)

<sup>103</sup> But note that body, spirit and soul are reconstructed in the lacunas.

<sup>104</sup> In a list, just as the first time they are mentioned in P.Harr. 107, without additional designations.

<sup>105</sup> W. Sundermann, "A Manichaean Collection of Letters and a List of Mani's Letters in Middle Persian," in *New Light on Manichaeism*, ed. J. D. BeDuhn (Leiden: Brill, 2009), 259-77. Note that "spirit" is reconstructed. The order of some of the fragments is discussed in I. Gardner, "Some Comments on the Remnants of the Codex of Mani's Epistles in Middle Persian as Edited by W. Sundermann," in *Zur lichten Heimat: Studien zu Manichäismus, Iranistik und Zentralasienkunde im Gedenken an Werner Sundermann*, ed. Team Turfanforschung (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2017), 173-80.

<sup>106</sup> Translation in Gardner and Lieu, *MTRE*, no. 53. It is dubious whether we are dealing with the same formula here, but it is included in this list because protection from evil is referred to in a similar way as some of the other letters.

<sup>107</sup> The attribution to Mani is contested, see G. Harrison and J. D. BeDuhn, "The Authenticity and Doctrine of (Ps.?) Mani's Letter to Menoch," in *The Light and the Darkness*, ed. P. A. Mirecki and J. D. BeDuhn (Leiden: Brill, 2001), 128-72. Translation in Gardner and Lieu, *MTRE*, no. 54.

<sup>108</sup> As cited and discussed by Gardner, "Once More," 296-7.

<sup>109</sup> I. Gardner, "Mani's Letter to Marcellus: Fact and Fiction in the Acta Archelai Revisited," in *Frontiers of Faith: Encounters between Christianity and Manichaeism in the Acts of Archelaus*, ed. J. D. BeDuhn and P. A. Mirecki (Leiden: Brill, 2007), 33-58.

<sup>110</sup> C. Reck, "A Sogdian Version of Mani's Letter of the Seal," in *New Light on Manichaeism*, ed. J. D. BeDuhn (Leiden: Brill, 2009), 225-39.

Prayers of Serapion (fourth century)	Soul	Body	Spirit
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Table 8: Overview of formula with tripartite division in various sources.

The Kellis letters have one remarkable, consistent distinction that sets them apart from the Greek letters and the Egyptian liturgical texts (Table 8 gives an overview of the way in which this formula is used). While they employ a tripartite formula with body, soul, and spirit, they do not simply list them, as the other texts do. They add a wish for health and joy to the three elements, reworking them into longer eloquent phrases (as the example cited above). This extension of the formula seems to be shared with one of the fragments of Mani's *Epistles* and not with their Christian parallels. Further publications will have to show whether this elaborated formula was more frequently employed in Mani's *Epistles*.

Two concluding points follow from these observations. First, the prayer formulas hardly contain explicit and exclusive Manichaean language. The Manichaean "Light Mind" (ⲙⲓⲛⲓⲛⲓⲛⲓ ⲛⲟⲩⲁⲓⲛⲓ P.Kell.Copt. 15.3–4) is mentioned once, but most phrases are open to multiple interpretations. They could be associated with either Christian liturgy, or Manichaean scripture, or the phrases used in amulets. The similarity in style and vocabulary could derive from the Christian tone of Mani's third-century *Epistles*, which were evidently transmitted into Coptic (P.Kell.Copt. 53). Apart from the origin, the continuation of this style suggests it was meaningful to a fourth-century Egyptian audience. Makarios, Pamour, and other authors could have used more significantly different terminology, but they used the standard patterns of language available to them.<sup>111</sup> The second observation complements this dual-language usage by noting the similarity in style and vocabulary of letters from the village network. Sociolinguists have discussed how authors tend to adopt the language of their correspondents, leading to the convergence of linguistic variation.<sup>112</sup> Variation derives from these social factors, social networks being one of them. Through shared training as scribes, socialization, or frequent interactions, numerous authors could come to use the same linguistic repertoire. In this respect, it is noteworthy that most of the explicit Manichaean terminology came from either the elect or from those who traveled with them.<sup>113</sup>

#### 4.5.3 Book Writing

Makarios frequently mentioned Manichaean book titles in his letter to Matthaïos: the *Psalms*, *The Judgment of Peter*, the *Apostolos*, *The Great Prayers*, the Greek *Psalms*, and the great *Book of Epistles* (all in P.Kell.Copt. 19). While an in-depth discussion of the Manichaean nature of these books is the topic of Chapter 9, they should be discussed briefly here in relation to

<sup>111</sup> This approach is also pivotal to Boustán and Sanzo's evaluation of "Jewish idioms" in late antique amulets. They argue that most perceived Jewish features were indigenized and understood as belonging to a Christian repertoire. Boustán and Sanzo, "Christian Magicians," 217–40.

<sup>112</sup> L. Milroy and J. Milroy, "Linguistic Change, Social Network and Speaker Innovation," *Journal of Linguistics* 21 (1985): 339–84.

<sup>113</sup> It is difficult to establish this with certainty, as "Manichaean terminology" has to be defined in relation to a more general "Christian" repertoire. See some of my earlier observations in M. Brand, "Speech Patterns as Indicators of Religious Identities: The Manichaean Community in Late Antique Egypt," in *Sinews of Empire: Networks in the Roman near East and Beyond*, ed. H. F. Teigen and E. Heldaas Seland (Oxford: Oxbow Books, 2017), 105–19.



Makarios's involvement in the textile business, as there might have been a connection between a cushion and a book.

Cushions are only mentioned in passing as items sent from the oasis to the Nile valley. Maria sent a "cushion" (?) (ϣατ) together with the hard mat and the mattress (P.Kell.Copt. 20.35) and Kapiton is asked to bring the large cushion to Egypt (P.Kell.Copt. 82).<sup>114</sup> It is only natural to consider these cushions as part of the textile industry, a flourishing trade for Kellites, due to the abundance of cotton in the oasis. One of these cushions might have had additional connotations, since it was mentioned in combination with a book. If the sequence of the letters is understood correctly and if they are about a single situation, the cushion Makarios is asking for may have been a decorated cushion for a Manichaean book.

Beginning at the end of the reconstructed situation, Makarios complains about the received goods. Instead of a high-quality product, Makarios received blemished goods, "indeed, you sent them, but when I received them I was distressed. For on the one hand, the threads were smitten by moth, even the cushion too!"<sup>115</sup> Earlier, Makarios had urged Maria to send a cushion, "also the cushion, and the book about which I sent to you, saying: 'send it to me.'"<sup>116</sup> The initial request (or a repetition) is found in another letter asking for "the dyed cushion for the book" as well as threads (πϣατ νηῖ ἵχνηε ἱπχωνε P.Kell.Copt. 21.24). Threads and dye have an important place in the textile production, and as such it would not be strange to consider the editors' alternative translation for the dyed cushion: "the bag of dye for the book." Unfortunately, the exact nature of ϣατ and the situation remain largely beyond our comprehension. Why would they have needed dye in the context of books? Was it used for the decoration of the book itself? Was the cushion decorated? The editors suggest that it referred to a decorated cushion, on which a sacred book could rest, or a special bag or cover to protect it.<sup>117</sup> Manichaeans are known for their books, not only because they prided themselves in Mani's authorship, but also because of the picture book in which Mani depicted some of the key doctrines. A decorated cushion or special bag for Manichaean sacred books is therefore a tantalizing option.<sup>118</sup> Concrete evidence for the treatment, decoration, and transportation of Manichaean books in Late Antiquity is, however, never handed down. Nor is "cushion" (ϣατ) used by other late antique authors in the context of book production.<sup>119</sup>

<sup>114</sup> Other references include P.Kell.Copt. 79, 92, 103 and 116. A. Paetz gen. Schieck, "Late Roman Cushions and the Principles of Their Decoration," in *Clothing the House. Furnishing Textiles of the 1st Millennium AD from Egypt and Neighbouring Countries*, ed. A. De Moor and C. Fluck (Tiel: Lannoo, 2009), 115-31 never mentions cushions in relation to books. For the remains of a cushion, found in a burial context in Kellis, see Livingstone, "Late Antique Household Textiles," 78.

<sup>115</sup> ετβε πϣατ νηῖ ἵρως ατῖναγσε μεν αλλα ἡτα[ρ]ιχογ αἱρλγτην δε ἡρως νηι αγβααχ ἡθαλε P.Kell.Copt. 24.3-7.

<sup>116</sup> πκεϣατ ἡ[ν] πχωνε εταῖγνηαγ νε ετβητγ δε τμη[α]γν νηῖ P.Kell.Copt. 20.35.

<sup>117</sup> Gardner, Alcock, and Funk, *CDT1*, 174. If the cover was decorated, however, one would expect κοετ instead of ϣατ.

<sup>118</sup> On the εἰκων, see 1 Keph. 7, 92, 151, 191 and Hom 18.24-27. Gulácsi, *Mani's Pictures*, 26-39.

<sup>119</sup> A. Boud'hors, "Copie et circulation des livres dans la région thébaine (VIIe-VIIIe siècles)." In *Et maintenant ce ne sont plus que des villages...: Thèbes et sa région aux époques hellénistique, romaine et byzantine*, ed. A. Delattre and P. Heilporn (Bruxelles: Association Égyptologique Reine Élisabeth, 2008), 149-61.

These difficult passages regarding the cushion for a sacred (?) book have been related to the equally difficult question of persecution. Makarios seems to suggest that the book must be protected against those who “pursue it” (ἀνὰ τὸν ἱερεῖον P.Kell.Copt. 22.65). Could this refer to the religious persecution of Manichaeans in Egypt? Books were regularly targeted. Outsider sources and legislation suggest that Manichaeans were increasingly persecuted under the Christian emperors, but how much of this is visible in the documentary papyri? The following section will examine the archaeological and papyrological material from Kellis for traces of religious persecution or the maltreatment of Manichaeans. By pursuing this question, we will not only learn more about the social position of the families of Makarios and Pamour, but also critically engage with the scholarly representation of Manichaeism as a sectarian and persecuted religion in the Roman Empire.

#### 4.6 Manichaeans and the Roman Administration

The Kellis letters have frequently been considered against the background of religious persecution. Samuel Lieu suggested that House 3 functioned as a “safe house” or “an ideal haven” for Manichaeans fleeing persecution in the Nile valley, a notion that has been adopted uncritically by a number of recent studies.<sup>120</sup> Jean Daniel Dubois speculates that the Manichaeans could have been deported to the oasis during the persecution of Diocletian.<sup>121</sup> In line with these ideas, the editors of the Coptic papyri described the personal letters as “written against a backdrop of persecution (ΔΙΩΡΗΟΣ 22.73) in their authors’ lives.”<sup>122</sup> Several elements, such as the reference to ΔΙΩΡΗΟΣ in P.Kell.Copt. 22, seem to support this idea to some extent, while other characteristics of Kellis’s village life cast doubts on the extent of the persecution or maltreatment. The presence of the Roman army in the oasis, for example, makes it unlikely that Manichaeans would have been invisible to the Roman administration in the oasis.

<sup>120</sup> Lieu, *Manichaeism in Mesopotamia*, 89. Lieu, “Manichaeism,” 224. Cf. a similar statement: “while there is nothing to suggest from their private letters that theirs was a community hiding from the long arm of the law, the remoteness of the oasis would certainly have helped a Manichaean community to last longer than in other parts of Roman Egypt.” S. N. C. Lieu, “The Diffusion, Persecution and Transformation of Manichaeism in Late Antiquity and Pre-Modern China,” in *Conversion in Late Antiquity: Christianity, Islam, and Beyond: Papers from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation Sawyer Seminar, University of Oxford, 2009-2010*, ed. D. Schwartz, N. McLynn, and A. Papaconstantinou (Burlington: Ashgate, 2015), 113; Similarly in S. N. C. Lieu, “The Self-Identity of the Manichaeans in the Roman East,” *Mediterranean Archeology* 11 (1998): 207, he states: “the rescript of Diocletian might have the effect of driving Manichaeans in Upper Egypt to seek shelter in remote oases like that of Dakhleh.” N. A. Pedersen, “Die Manichäer in ihrer Umwelt: Ein Beitrag zur Diskussion über die Soziologie der Gnostiker,” in *Zugänge zur Gnosis: Akten zur Tagung der patristischen Arbeitsgemeinschaft vom 02.-05.01.2011 in Berlin-Spandau*, ed. J. van Oort and Christoph Marksches (Leuven: Peeters, 2013), 270.

<sup>121</sup> J. D. Dubois, “L’implantation des manichéens en Égypte,” in *Les communautés religieuses dans le monde gréco-romain*, ed. N. Belayche (Turnhout: Brepols, 2003), 295; Dubois, “Vivre dans la communauté manichéenne,” 209; Gardner and Lieu, *MTRE*, 110 “...members of the sect migrated to the Dakhleh Oasis to avoid persecution.”

<sup>122</sup> Gardner, Alcock, and Funk, *CDT1*, 81; The same statement is taken over in C. Römer, “Manichaeism and Gnosticism in the Papyri,” in *The Oxford Handbook of Papyrology* ed. R. S. Bagnall (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 642.

#### 4.6.1 Direct Connections to the Military and Administrative Elite

With the incorporation of Egypt into the Roman Empire, the western desert became part of the overarching military structure of the Romans. Even though the desert cities were located on the fringes of Egypt, the region was considered important enough to have a permanent military presence after Diocletian's reign.<sup>123</sup> The *Notitia Dignitatum*, a list of military units, mentions a cohort of foot soldiers at Mut and a cavalry unit at Trimithis, which are also mentioned in the KAB (KAB 793, 1263, 1407).<sup>124</sup> Detachments from other units included the Tentyrites and the Legio II Traiana (both mentioned in ostraka from Trimithis) and the horse-mounted archers at Mothis (ostraka found at Ain el-Gedida).<sup>125</sup> The archaeology, moreover, reveals a number of Roman fortresses—one of which was even used during the First World War by British soldiers defending the oasis.<sup>126</sup> The presence of Manichaeans in the Great Oasis can therefore hardly have resulted from them fleeing persecution in the Nile valley and living secluded lives on the periphery of the Roman Empire.<sup>127</sup> In fact, a fourth-century document found in House 4 (P.Gascou 67, an irrigation contract from 368 CE) addressed Flavius Potammon, an honorably discharged veteran. This former member of the military lived in one of the houses that contained at least one Manichaean psalm.<sup>128</sup> Although we do not know when this Manichaean psalm was left there, it seems highly unlikely that Flavius Potammon was unaware of the presence of Manichaeans in his village. The only indication of tension between Kellites and the military is a side reference in a Coptic letter about someone who has been attacked on the road and he is now looked after "lest the

<sup>123</sup> Bagnall points out that the construction of military sites during the late 280s CE are found all over Egypt Bagnall et al., *An Oasis City*, 172.

<sup>124</sup> Called the Ala I Quadorum, from the Danubian region. Bagnall et al., *An Oasis City*, 170 (Bagnall). cf Wagner, *Les oasis d'Égypte*, 375-77.

<sup>125</sup> Bagnall et al., *An Oasis City*, 171 (Bagnall); R. Ast and R. S. Bagnall, "New Evidence for the Roman Garrison of Trimithis," *Tyche, Beiträge zur Alten Geschichte, Papyrologie und Epigraphik* 30 (2015): 1-4.

<sup>126</sup> At El-Deir, reported in Jackson, *At Empire's Edge*, 185. At Dakhleh a fortress was located at Qasr al Halakeh, at Qasr al-Qasaba and al-Qasr. The military perspective on the oasis is discussed by A. L. Boozer, "Frontiers and Borderlands in Imperial Perspectives: Exploring Rome's Egyptian Frontier," *American Journal of Archaeology* 117 (2013): 283. The work on the Al-Qasr fortress is discussed in P. Kucera, "Al-Qasr: The Roman Castrum of Dakhleh Oasis," in *Oasis Papers 6: Proceedings of the Sixth International Conference of the Dakhleh Oasis Project*, ed. R. S. Bagnall, P. Davoli, and C. A. Hope (Oxford: Oxbow Books, 2012), 305-16; I. Gardner, "Coptic Ostraka from Qasr Al-Dakhleh," in *Oasis Papers 6*, ed. R. S. Bagnall, P. Davoli, and C. A. Hope (Oxford: Oxbow Books, 2012), 471-4. On the Kharga forts, R. S. Bagnall, "The Camp at Hibis," in *Essays and Texts in Honor of J. David Thomas*, ed. T. Gagos and R. S. Bagnall (Oakville: American Society of Papyrologists, 2001), 3-10; C. Rossi, "Controlling the Borders of the Empire: The Distribution of Late-Roman 'Forts' in the Kharga Oasis," in *Oasis Papers 6*, ed. R. S. Bagnall, P. Davoli, and C. A. Hope (Oxford: Oxbow Books, 2013), 331-36.

<sup>127</sup> As suggested in Lieu, *Manichaeism in Mesopotamia*, 89 (a contribution by Dominic A.S. Montserrat), but see also his remark on page 97-8 that Kellis was less overseen by imperial administration and less Christianized. This phrase is repeated frequently in academic literature, see for example Morris, "Insularity and Island Identity," 134; Kaper and Zoest, *Treasures of the Dakhleh Oasis*, 17.

<sup>128</sup> This document derives from House 4, room 4, but a second reference to a honourably discharged veteran is found in an unpublished document in room 2, where also the documents of Tithoes and Pausanias were found. Worp, "Miscellaneous New Greek Papyri from Kellis," 438.

commander do anything evil to him.”<sup>129</sup> Far from being evidence of religious persecution, such passages attest to the prevailing tension that ancient villagers experienced in all facets of life. The harvest could be spoiled or neighbors could act violently or cast a spell on you, while the price for daily necessities could go up.

A second reason to doubt the religious persecution of Manichaeans in the oasis is found in the legal petitions. Known Manichaeans were included in the lists of complaining villagers, seemingly unafraid! Pamouris son of Psais from the village of Kellis (Pamour I?) complained to the *praeses Thebaidos* about Psa-s, a powerful man from the same village who took away his donkey when he was still young (P.Kell.Gr.20, dated in the first two decades of the fourth century). In another petition to a local magistrate, he complains that Sois son of Akoutis, *komarch*, and an anonymous son of Psenamounis assaulted his wife (P.Kell.Gr. 21 from 321 CE). These letters show how Manichaeans (if Pamouris son of Psais indeed has to be identified with Pamour I) could call for official protection and without hesitation participated in the legal structure of Roman Egypt. Pamour’s grandson, Pamour III, is included in a list of thirty-three inhabitants of Kellis complaining about violence, addressed to the provincial dux of the Thebaid (P.Kell.Gr. 24 from 352 CE). Interestingly, this list is headed by a priest and two deacons, indicating their leading role in village society.<sup>130</sup>

Another indication of excellent social connections is the suggested legal appeal against (or *via*?) Kleoboulos (P.Kell.Copt. 20.40–42). The contextual information is sparse but it appears that brother Sarmate (otherwise unknown in the corpus)<sup>131</sup> has petitioned an imperial military officer (could he have been the *comes*? The editors initially translated “petitioned Pknaes (?)” and noted the alternative κωνης) for the return of Kleoboulos in order to “cause to be given (back), the things of Matthaïos that had been taken.”<sup>132</sup> Why the *comes* was called on as mediator, conveying the petition to Kleoboulos, who is known as the *logistes* of the Great Oasis (P.Kell.Gr. 25), is not made explicit.<sup>133</sup> The sequence of interactions, Sarmate requesting the help of a high military official to approach the *logistes*, who in turn has to order (?) Kleoboulos to return, is presumably embedded in the patronage ties of the local community. Who else than a military official could put pressure on the *logistes*? Without situational information, it is hard to establish what exactly befell Matthaïos. Are his “things” stolen? Is this why he does not even have sandals (P.Kell.Copt. 20.58)? Is Kleoboulos a Roman official or the suspected thief? Whatever might have happened to the Makarios family, the fragment adds to the impression of a strong social position with at least some connections in the Roman administration. If Matthaïos or his father Makarios indeed

<sup>129</sup> .. ρινας δε ηνε πεπρεποσι ερ λαγ ηπεθοογ ναϭ P.Kell.Copt. 127.37-38. See the *praepositus pagi* in P.Kell.Gr. 27.3.

<sup>130</sup> See, T. Gagos and P. van Minnen, *Settling a Dispute. Towards a Legal Anthropology of Late Antique Egypt* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1997), 12-14.

<sup>131</sup> Except for in P.Kell.Gr. 30 as a patronym.

<sup>132</sup> πσαν σαρηατε σνηε ηπκωνανς αφρεκελεγε ατρε κλεοβογλε κατογ ηϭτρογϭ ηαν[αϭ]λιος εταγχιτογ (P.Kell.Copt. 20.40-42). The editors initially translated “petitioned Pknaes (?)” and noted the alternative κωνης, in which the superlinear η replaced the α and the η was used for η. The ω instead of the ο is also attested in P.Ryl.Copt. 404 (seventh or eighth century).

<sup>133</sup> Gardner, Alcock, and Funk, *CDT1*, 171. See references to other people with this name in Worp, *GPK1*, 77.

petitioned a Roman imperial official after a theft or assault, it is most unlikely that they would have been afraid of maltreatment by the Roman authorities for their religious affiliation. They acted as if they had nothing to conceal.

One of the underlying reasons for the friendly relations with the regional administration was the social position of these families in village society. Evidence for Manichaeans in the higher layers of village society includes a Greek letter from Pegosh to his brother Pamour III about "our son Horos" who served as a liturgist in Kellis. Pegosh reproached Pamour for his lack of involvement. Instead of coming to the oasis or sending items like fleece, purple dye, or linen cloth, he is away and "appeared heavy-headed."<sup>134</sup> Presumably, Horos was appointed to a compulsory service, like tax collection, a system that gradually became coercive instead of honorific and voluntary.<sup>135</sup> The participation and support of an uncle may have been of critical value, as the scribes of the village archive would have selected people who were financially responsible for carrying the load of their liturgical service. Again, we see that this family must have been of substantial means; otherwise the scribes (or the *komarchs*) would have been held responsible for the financial burden of the liturgical office.<sup>136</sup>

#### 4.6.2 The Patronage of a Former Strategos?

Wealth and social standing were not enough. The relatively secure position of the Manichaeans in the oasis may have been due to the patronage of a former magistrate. In a Greek legal contract from 333 CE, a certain Pausanias son of Valerius granted a plot of land in the eastern part of the village of Kellis to Aurelius Psais, son of Pamour (see the documents listed in Table 9). The plot of land was located adjacent to other land belonging to Pausanias, and its description suggests that it might be identified with the land north of House 3 (P.Kell.Gr. 38a and b).<sup>137</sup> In this contract, Pausanias is designated as a former magistrate of the city of the Mothites, but it is probable that he also functioned as *strategos* and *riparius* in the Great Oasis between 326 and 333 CE (P.Gascou 69).<sup>138</sup> On the basis of this function he was called on to mediate between a brother and sister in a conflict about the inheritance of their father, who also belonged to the class of former magistrates. In 337 CE, the same Pausanias son of Valerius paid for the transportation of the president of the local

<sup>134</sup> καὶ καταλαμβάνω ὑμᾶς ταχέως ἐπὶ το[ῦτο, ὡς] γὰρ βαρυκέφαλος ἐφάνης. P.Kell.Gr. 72.43.

<sup>135</sup> The power and appointment of the *komarchs*. Bagnall, *Egypt in Late Antiquity*, 133-8 and 57-60. About compulsory service, A. Monson, *From the Ptolemies to the Romans. Political and Economic Change in Egypt* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 236-46; N. Lewis, *The Compulsory Public Services of Roman Egypt* (Firenze: Gonnelli, 1982), 88-89.

<sup>136</sup> Monson, *From the Ptolemies to the Romans*, 244 on wealth assessment and collective liability. A similar issues is discussed by Barys and father Diogenes in P.Oxy. LVI 3858. E. J. Bridge, "A Difficult (?) Request to 'Beloved Father' Diogenes," *New Documents Illustrating Early Christianity* 10 (2012): 168.

<sup>137</sup> See the examination in Worp, *GPK1*, 109. Is P.Kell.Gr. 2 a contract of *parachoresis* related to the same house? Worp suggests to restore the name of the addressee as Aurelius Psais son of Pamour. Worp, *GPK1*, 20.

<sup>138</sup> Worp suggests that Optatus in P.Gascou 70 was the precursor of Pausanias who might have been in office between 326-33 CE. Worp, "Miscellaneous New Greek Papyri from Kellis," 447.

town council (P.Gascou 71) and some of his business transactions are traceable in his correspondence with Gena (P.Kell.Gr. 5, 6 found in House 2).

Document	Description and find location
P.Kell.Gr. 4	Contract of cession. Parcel given to Aurelius P--- (House 2, 331 CE)
P.Kell.Gr. 5–6	Correspondence with Gena (House 2)
P.Kell.Gr. 38ab	Grant of a plot of land to Psais (House 3)
P.Kell.Gr. 63	Manichaean letter addressed to Pausanias and Pisistratos (House 3)
P.Gascou 69 and 71	Petition to Pausanias the <i>strategos</i> and a tax receipt from 337 CE (D/8)

Table 9: List of documents by Pausanias.

Was this influential individual only a neighbor? An undated Greek personal letter found in House 3 suggests that he may have shared a Manichaean affiliation. Addressed in a laudatory style, Pausanias and Pisistratos are acknowledged and praised by an anonymous author who employs several Manichaean phrases to make his gratefulness known. He has “benefitted also from the fruits of the soul of the pious...” and “we shall set going every praise towards your most luminous soul inasmuch as this is possible for us. For only our lord the Paraclete is competent to praise you as you deserve and to compensate you at the appropriate moment.”<sup>139</sup> It is conceivable that a wealthy Roman official supported members of the Manichaean community or came to belong to their inner circle.<sup>140</sup> If Pausanias was the

<sup>139</sup> ..κ[α]λὶ νῦν ἀπολαύομεν πνευματικῶν ὀλίγων καρπῶν, ἀπολαύ[ο]μεν δ[ὲ] πάλιν καὶ τῶν ψυχικῶν τῆς εὐσεβοῦς . . . φορᾶς δηλονότι· καὶ ἀμφοτέρω[ν] πεπλησμέ[ν]οι παῖσαν εὐλογίαν σπ[ε]υσόμεθα πρὸς τὴν φωτινοτάτῃ[ν] ὑμῶν ψυχὴν καθ’ ὅσον ἡμῖν ἐστι δυνά[τ]ον . . .]. Μόνος γὰρ ὁ δε[σ]πότης ἡμῶν [ὁ] π[α]ρ[ά]κ[λ]ητος \ίκανός/ ἐπαξίως ὑμᾶς εὐλογῆσα[ι] κ[α]λὶ τ[ῷ] δέοντι καιρῷ ἀνταμείψα[σθ]αι. P.Kell.Gr. 63.20-30.

<sup>140</sup> Further prosopographical connections could include his father Valerius, a name which returns in a manumission of a female slave in 355 CE. This Valerius set her free because of his “exceptional Christianity, under Zeus, Earth and Sun” with a presbyter as witness. ὁμολογῶ δι’ ὑπερβολὴν χ[ρ]ι[σ]τιανότητος ἀπελευθερωκέναι σε ὑπὸ Δία Γῆν Ἥλιον. P.Kell.Gr. 48.4-5. On this a-typical situation and vocabulary see Worp, *GPKI*, 140-3. The main argument against identifying Pausanias in these letters is their find location. While P.Kell.Gr. 4-6 derive from House 2, P.Kell.Gr. 38ab and 63 were found in House 3 and P.Gascou 69 and 71 in D/8 in the temple area. Despite this distribution, I am convinced we are dealing with the same person. In P.Gascou 71 (temple area) Pausanias is designated as the son of Valerius, just as in P.Kell.Gr. 38ab (House 3), which in my interpretation deals with the same house and addressee as P.Kell.Gr. 4 (from House 2). The identification of the two individuals called Pausanias at the same find location in House 3 (P.Kell.Gr. 38ab the official and P.Kell.Gr. 63 the Manichaean) is further strengthened by the relation between the former and Psais son of Pamour. His name occurs also in O.Kell. 57.5, 85.1, 137.4, 256.2. Of these only the first could be the same individual, as it is dated in the year 296/297 CE. In 85 Pausanias is mentioned with “our (?) son Pisistratus.” The editor notes that if they are father and son, they could have been the same people as those addressed in P.Kell.Gr. 63. Worp, *Greek Ostraka from Kellis*, 84. More complex is the relation with Pausanias son of Gelasios (O.Kell.256), who is mentioned frequently as the *strategos* or

*strategos* of the oasis, the Manichaeans would have had access to one of the most powerful figures of the regional government.<sup>141</sup>

Close relations between Manichaeans and Roman provincial or imperial officials are not without precedent. Roman legislation during the fourth and fifth century suggests that some officials covered for them or even protected Manichaeans among their imperial colleagues.<sup>142</sup> The only other instance of such patronage ties outside legal sources is the request of the rhetor Libanius, in 364 CE, to his friend Priscianus, the proconsul of Palestina, appealing for his protection of the Manichaeans so they could be "free from anxiety and that those who wish to harm them will not be allowed to do so."<sup>143</sup> It is unknown whether Priscianus acted in accordance with this request, but the letter shows that it could be dangerous to be Manichaean, even in a period without anti-Manichaean legislation. Local bishops had no need for official legislation to start persecuting Manichaeans. This evidence for Manichaeans suffering from the goading of local Christians is further complemented by reports of public debates and philosophical and theological works written against them.<sup>144</sup> The question of the social reality behind such literary production cannot be pursued here, but we should look into the documentary papyri to see whether there are any indications of such religious maltreatment or persecution of Manichaeans.<sup>145</sup>

#### 4.6.3 Religious Persecution or Maltreatment

Three passages in the documentary papyri from Kellis stand out. The first passage is found in a letter from Makarios to his wife Maria (P.Kell.Copt. 22), in which he accuses her (or is he

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*logistes* in the first decade of the fourth century (P.Gascou 72.5 and 82.1, P.Kell.Gr. 7.22). An individual with the same name held an office at Amheida in the second half of the fourth century. Worp, "Miscellaneous New Greek Papyri from Kellis," 438.

<sup>141</sup> On the role of the *strategos* in Late Antiquity see A. Jördens, "Government, Taxation, and Law," in *The Oxford Handbook of Roman Egypt*, ed. C. Riggs (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 58-59; J. Rowlandson, "Administration and Law: Graeco-Roman," in *A Companion to Ancient Egypt*, ed. A. B. Lloyd (Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010), 237-54.

<sup>142</sup> Prohibition to serve in the imperial service in 445 CE (Novel of Valentinian) and under Justinian specific penalties for officers who failed to denounce their Manichaean colleagues (527 CE, CJ I.5.16). I am grateful to Rea Matsangou for bringing these laws to my attention. The rhetorical nature of the complains about 'Manichaeans' and the portrayal of persecution of Manichaeans in the *Liber Pontificalis* is discussed by S. Cohen, "Schism and the Polemic of Heresy: Manichaeism and the Representation of Papal Authority in the *Liber Pontificalis*," *Journal of Late Antiquity* 8, no. 1 (2015): 195-230.

<sup>143</sup> Libanius, *Epistle* 1253, translation and citation in Gardner and Lieu, *MTRE*, 125.

<sup>144</sup> For example, the debate between Aetius and Aphthonius in Alexandria, or the work of George of Laodicea and the refutations of Agapius work described by Photius. Lieu, *Manichaeism in the Later Roman Empire*, 137-41. The comparative evidence from the late third/early fourth-century persecution of Christians in Egypt also suggests that persecutions were local. The intensity varied and periods of violence or repression did not start at the same time in all regions. Wipszycka, *The Alexandrian Church*, 83.

<sup>145</sup> Gardner, Alcock, and Funk, *CDT1*, 81; Dubois, "Vivre dans la communauté manichéenne," 9. On the relation between legislation and a Manichaean discourse of suffering, see my M. Brand, "In the Footsteps of the Apostles of Light: Persecution and the Manichaean Discourse of Suffering," in *Heirs of Roman Persecution: Studies on a Christian and Para-Christian Discourse in Late Antiquity* ed. E. Fournier and W. Mayer (London: Routledge, forthcoming).

still addressing Kyria?) of having no pity for her brother's son "because he is under persecution" (ⲉⲓⲁⲓⲛ ⲟⲩⲁⲓⲱⲣⲏⲟⲥ P.Kell.Copt. 22.73). Earlier, he announced that he prayed to God to "grant us freedom and we may greet you again in the body."<sup>146</sup> Both passages are suggestive. They allude to difficulties that keep them apart, but are these best understood as religious persecution? This entire episode, including the fear pertaining to the sacred book as discussed above could have been about a failed business transaction (including books?), for which Makarios blames Maria (or Kyria). The brother's son may have suffered the financial or legal consequences for this misbehavior, as the Coptic term for persecution (ⲁⲓⲱⲣⲏⲟⲥ) was also used in military or legal settings.<sup>147</sup> Without further context, it remains unclear whether religious persecution was meant.

The second passage is found in the concluding warning of P.Kell.Copt. 31: “[D]o not let it stay with you, it may fall into somebody’s hands.”<sup>148</sup> Presumably, this refers to the letter itself, which has to be passed on to the author’s son. While the editors stress the implied need for secrecy, this passage could have stressed the act of passing on. The final warning could have been a reminder to send the letter to his son “with certainty” (ἐν ὀνόματι) instead of forgetting about it and leaving the letter behind. That the translation and interpretation of such passages is extremely difficult is seen in the proposed connection to a letter in which Apa Lysimachos urges recipients: “do not save this.” A new and more probable reading, however, is that Apa Lysimachos says “we might not stay here” (ἡμεῖς ἔσμεν ἐν αὐτῇ). Instead of reflecting on the way that these letters were to be treated, the passage refers to the travel plans of a number of people.<sup>149</sup>

The third passage referring to persecution is found in P.Kell.Copt. 37, where Ammon expresses that “great grief overcame me ... when I heard about what happened: namely that they shook (?) those of this word.”<sup>150</sup> The verb translated as to “shake” (κιν+ε) also has a

<sup>146</sup> †ϣⲗⲏⲗⲁ ⲁⲣⲓⲛⲟⲩⲧⲉ ϣⲉϣⲁ† ⲛⲉⲛ ⲛⲟⲩⲡⲁⲣⲉⲛⲥⲓⲁ ⲛⲧⲛⲟⲩⲱⲙⲧ'ⲧⲏⲛⲉ ⲛⲕⲉⲥⲁⲡ ⲉⲛ ⲡⲥⲱⲙⲁ.. P.Kell.Copt. 22.10-11. The phrase "parresia" returns several times in Makarios' letters (P.Kell.Copt. 20.7, 22.10 and 25.25). In Manichaean literature, the phrase is used to express Mani cannot freely speak in the world (1 Keph. 184.7 and 185.2). The editors of the Kellis papyri wonder "if it is more than just the tyranny of distance that keeps the family away from the oasis." Gardner, Alcock, and Funk, *CDT1*, 82 with further references. Is there any reason to read these passages as indicators of persecution? As Makarios frequently employs Manichaean repertoire, and these phrases do not return in other letters, I take these as rhetorical statements which do not directly reflect the maltreatment of Manichaeans in fourth-century Egypt.

<sup>447</sup> Although *ΔΙΩΓΜΟΣ* is used frequently by Christian authors to designate the persecution under Decius, the word could be used in military context for hunting or the pursuit by soldiers (of Bedouin criminals?). See O.Clau. 2.357 and 4.327. The verb is used in a legal sense, P.Alex.Giss. 39 (second century CE), BGU 8.1822 (first century BCE) and in the legal designators for the prosecuted party, for example in P. Mich. 13.659 and P.Lond. 5.1708 (both sixth century CE).

<sup>148</sup> ΜΗΤΡΕΤΗΚΑΣ ΖΑΤΗΤΗΝΕ' ΣΖΕΙΕ ΑΤΟΤΩ ΑΡΩΜΕ P.Kell.Copt. 31.54.

<sup>149</sup> The original interpretation is found in Gardner, Alcock, and Funk, *CDT1*, 81n110. The new translation and interpretation is discussed in Gardner, Alcock, and Funk, *CDT2*, 134n39-40, they suggest the verb is  $\pi\alpha\iota\sigma\tau$ , "to sit down." Is a similar authority standing behind Ammon's remark that he is not allowed to come to the oasis (P.Kell.Copt. 37.24-25)?

<sup>150</sup> οὐνάδ γάρ τε τ[λγ]ιπιν εταρ ωωπε νηί μη[[τῆ]] πιωω ἦρητ εταρτε ραῖ νταρσωτῆ ετβε πεταρωωπε κε ἀγκιν  
 ἀνα πισεχε P.Kell.Copt. 37.13-20.



softer meaning, namely to move, touch, or beckon. Combined with the grief expressed by Ammon, it may have carried stronger negative connotations. It is also used in the *Homilies* (28.1–2) for something that should not happen, namely: “[T]he church shall not be shaken.”<sup>151</sup> Ammon’s letter refers to the Manichaean church with “those of this word,” an ambiguous designator that carried additional religious connotations since it was followed by what seems to have been an allusion to scripture, “for it is possible for God to thwart their designs.”<sup>152</sup> It is the only passage in which the difficulties are connected, more or less directly, to the religious community. If so, it intimates social problems encountered by the Manichaeans of the oasis, in the Nile valley. The editors of the papyri emphasize that it is difficult “to know what weight should be given to a reference” with comments as “this place is difficult” (ⲡⲏⲁ ⲏⲁⲭⲉ P.Kell.Copt. 31.47, 83.7, 110.25) or with prayers wishing to be kept “safe from all the temptations of Satan and the adversities of the evil place (?).”<sup>153</sup> None of these phrases is straightforward and most can be read in terms of economic difficulties (compare P.Kell.Cop. 89.30) as well as pious, religious formulas against all sorts of evil. Although these phrases have a religious background, they are hardly solid evidence for religious persecution.<sup>154</sup>

Ultimately, then, was the Manichaean community in Kellis under persecution?<sup>155</sup> Probably not. The Kellis documents show few traces of religious violence. A number of

<sup>151</sup> ⲧⲉⲕⲓⲕⲏⲥⲓⲁ ⲏⲁⲕⲓⲏ ⲉⲛ ⲉⲥⲏⲏⲏ ⲁⲃⲁⲗ Hom. 28.1-2, translated by Pedersen as “The church will not cease remaining,” even during the time of the Antichrist. The same phrase returns in Hom. 33.29, 44.10, 82.17 (which is significant: “his heart was firm, he did not waver before him at all”), 85.25 (about the church, “it will not waver until the day...”). The virtue of not wavering, even though life is difficult, is central to the Manichaean ascetic practice and features in other ascetic discourses as well. See section 5.2.3 on the Manichaean expression “rest” and Crum, *CD*, 108b on the verb “to shake.”

<sup>152</sup> ⲟⲩⲛ ⲃⲁⲛ ⲉⲁⲣ ⲏⲡⲏⲟⲩⲧⲉ ⲁⲧⲣⲉⲟⲩⲱⲥⲟⲩ ⲏⲡⲏⲟⲩⲙⲉⲩⲉ P.Kell.Copt. 37.20-22. The editors suggest ‘quite probably this is a quotation or at least allusion to some scripture; but we can not identify it’. Gardner, Alcock, and Funk, *CDT1*, 233.

<sup>153</sup> ⲁⲣⲉⲧⲏⲟⲩⲁⲭ ⲁⲃⲁⲗ ⲏⲡⲣⲉⲥⲏⲟⲥ ⲧⲏⲣⲟⲩ ⲏⲡⲥⲁⲣⲧⲁⲏⲁⲥ ⲏⲏ ⲏⲃⲏⲏⲃⲁⲗ ⲏⲧⲉ ⲡⲏⲁⲏⲃⲟⲏⲉ P.Kell.Copt. 71.8-9. Gardner, Alcock, and Funk, *CDT2*, 74-5. See also P.Kell.Copt. 83, 89 and 97 for similar troubles, disturbances and difficulties.

<sup>154</sup> Gardner, Alcock, and Funk, *CDT1*, 82. In the letters collected by Bagnall and Cribiore, the evil eye is mentioned frequently in similar formulas: P.Brem. 64, P.Mich. VIII 473, BGU III 714, P.Würzb. 21, P.Oxy. VI 930 and XIV 1758, from the second century. From the fourth and fifth (?) century, P.Wisc. II 74, P.Köln II 111. A similar sentiment is expressed in liturgical formulas from the fourth century, which were incorporated in an amulet (P.Ryl. III 471). Bruyn, “P. Ryl. III.471,” 105-7.

<sup>155</sup> Römer, “Manichaeism and Gnosticism in the Papyri,” 642 also thinks that it does “not necessarily refer to the difficult circumstances of the person as a Manichaean but rather to the position of a Manichaean believer in a difficult family situation.” It should be noted that persecution was also a literary trope for Manichaeans, who remembered the suffering of Mani and the earliest Manichaean community in the Sasanian empire. See the letters of Mani (P.Kell.Copt. 53, 51.04) and the Syriac fragments from Oxyrhynchus. MS. Syr.D.14 P (recto) fragment 2, in Pedersen and Larsen, *Manichaean Texts in Syriac*, 107. A major argument against persecution by the Roman government is the spatial division of the Kellis houses. The relative lack of private space made it impossible to conceal one’s religious practice, as suggested for the Christians under Decius’ persecutions, “in an eighth of a rented room or a twentieth of a house in an Egyptian township, it was simply not possible or necessary to conceal one’s prayers or worship of God

passages refer to feelings of unease, fear, or otherwise unexplained difficulties. Of the three more informative passages, only one makes the connection to the religious community. While it is possible that some Manichaeans experienced maltreatment on the basis of their religious affiliation, there is no evidence for full religious persecution. Instead, just like modern minorities in Egypt, they may have suffered from petty acts of discrimination or a subordinated position in relation to other people. Such maltreatment may have converged with the negative stereotype of the oasis as a foreign and dangerous place.<sup>156</sup> Merchants from the oasis may have suffered because of these stereotypes while traveling in the Nile valley. The connections to the Roman administrative and military elite from the region, however, make it highly improbable that Manichaeans had to conceal their religious affiliation in their daily affairs in the oasis.

#### 4.7 Conclusions

Dakhleh's wealth spread beyond the elite owners of agricultural estates. Makarios, Pamour, and their families belonged to the affluent, well-off segment of oasis society, whose occupation strongly linked them to one of the sources of Dakhleh's wealth: cotton and the textile industry. By taking a holistic and microhistorical approach to the Manichaeans of Kellis, this chapter has used the correspondence of two families to identify them foremost as Kellites. Their letters attest to a network of local village relations, which included family members, coworkers, and neighbors. Religious identifications were only sometimes considered relevant enough to be mentioned in this context. Manichaeans did not spend their entire time being Manichaean, but they were happy to wear many hats.<sup>157</sup>

At the heart of the Manichaean network stood family units. A relatively small number of people interacted on the basis of kinship, business, and religious relations. This resembles Le Roy Ladurie's classical description of the Cathar households in southern France. Just like in this medieval setting, the institutional organization of the religious community appears to have been secondary to the household network structure. In social network terminology, these people had strong ties among each other, while they were connected to the elect by rather weak ties. Weak ties, by definition, connect parts of a network that would otherwise have few direct relations. Itinerant religious specialists such as the Teacher and Apa Lysimachos had such positions in the network that they could stimulate the diffusion of innovative practices.

A second set of connections, which stand out among the many names in the Kellis documents, consists of the connections to members of the local and regional Roman elite (again, these could be understood as weak ties). Makarios and Pamour III, as well as their relatives, were embedded in patronage structures that transcended the local level. Some of them even petitioned the provincial governor without hesitation. Nothing suggests that

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from everyone's eyes." R. Lane Fox, *Pagans and Christians* (London: Penguin Books, 1986), 316 about Early Christians in Rome. Manichaeans in Kellis never concealed themselves, but fully participated in village life.

<sup>156</sup> On the negative stereotypes of the oasis as a "physical, conceptual, and human buffer zone between the 'civilized' Nile valley and the 'chaotic' desert," see Boozer, "Frontiers and Borderlands," 275.

<sup>157</sup> Here I paraphrase one of Peter Brown's characterizations of late antique Christians. P. Brown, "Rome: Sex & Freedom," *The New York Review of Books*. Dec. 19, 2013.

these people were seeking shelter in a region "less overseen by imperial administrators and also less Christianised," as was previously suggested.<sup>158</sup> The propounded ease in the relations with non-Manichaeans and Roman officials may be explained by their shared identification as villagers from Kellis. As elucidated, the inhabitants of the oases sometimes explicitly identified themselves in opposition to those of the Nile valley. Such feelings of otherness caused them to stick together outside the oasis. The intersection of a village identification with religious identification(s) may thus have been less problematic than sometimes assumed. Instead of crosscutting identities, to use Mairs's conceptual division, these identifications appear to have existed in separation, without bearing a direct relation to one another. Of course, the absence of conflict or concealment may be explained by the periodization of Roman legislation, since most of the documents derived from the period before the anti-Manichaean laws of Valens and Valentinian. Some of the expressions of anxiety and unease in the Kellis letters might have been related to incidents in the Nile valley involving Manichaeans, as Ammon reported to his relatives: "[T]hey shook (?) those of this word" (ⲁϥⲕⲓⲙ ⲁⲛⲁ ⲡⲓⲥⲉⲭⲉ P.Kell.Copt. 37.22). Religious persecution or incidents of maltreatment, however, did not characterize daily interactions on the village level, nor the attitude of the Roman administration or the relations with Christians in the oasis. Rather than marked and tense relationships, the association of Manichaeans and Christian officials seems unmarked; only to be detected by historians through detailed prosopographical analysis. A heavy and religious reading of the other expressions of anxiety and unease is, therefore, not the most probable interpretation.

The construction of an imagined religious community seems not to have been a priority of these individuals and families, presumably because of the limitations of the type of sources. Letters do not usually convey this information. Their references to a religious group are occasional and often without further situational information, which would have been known to the addressees anyway. When we decide to filter out all other issues and identifications to focus solely on the Manichaean identification, we can capture a basic impression of the group-specific speech norms. By looking at the Manichaean phrases and vocabulary in the personal letters, we get a glimpse of the way in which Makarios, Pamour, and their families activated Manichaeanness. These situations can be understood as belonging to a performance arena in which a number of social expectations concurred, including epistolary conventions and group norms. Since letters were read out loud, effort was put into the composition of the letter, especially through the use of cues, politeness formulas, and in-group language. More elaborate and explicit Manichaean phrases were included for strategic reasons, but they also contributed to the performance, and therefore to the maintenance, of Manichaeanness. The children who heard Makarios's letters read out loud would have had ample opportunity to get familiar with the Manichaean repertoire. The (relative) absence of such language and formulas in most of the letters of Pamour III and his brothers, in turn, resulted in a decrease of situational performances of Manichaeanness. The children in his generation would have been less exposed to these events. They would have had less opportunities to witness talking and performing Manichaeanness.

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<sup>158</sup> Lieu, *Manichaeism in Mesopotamia*, 97.

The question of the diffusion of a Manichaean linguistic repertoire has a bearing on the representativeness of these two families. While Makarios and his sons were closely associated with the Manichaean elect, there is no reason to assume that all individuals in House 3, or even all Manichaeans in the village, had similar experiences. For some of them, Manichaeanness could have been restricted to the textual and performative world of Manichaean scriptures and psalms in communal gatherings (see Chapter 7). Pamour and his relatives, although also associated with Apa Lysimachos, referred less frequently to the Manichaean church and its ascetic officials. What we call “Manichaeism” was subject to a variety of experiences and levels of involvement. When we compare the letters of Makarios and Pamour III, despite all shortcomings of such a comparison, it seems that the younger generation used less elements from a Manichaean repertoire, indicating that they might have been less deeply involved in the community.

The variation in levels of involvement and the social dynamic of letter writing provide the background for the use of explicit Manichaean self-identifications. The next chapter will examine these phrases and ask what these expressions *did* and meant for the construction of Manichaean groupness.