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

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Citation

Matsangou, R. (2021, June 17). *The Manichaeans of the Roman East: Manichaeism in Greek anti-Manichaica & Roman Imperial legislation*. Retrieved from <https://hdl.handle.net/1887/3188571>

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Issue Date: 2021-06-17

Chapter 1: The Two Basic Textual Traditions of Greek anti-Manichaica

1.1 Introduction

The starting point of this study is two principal texts, which belong to two different textual traditions of the anti-Manichaean literature: the *Acta Archelai* and the *Seven Chapters against the Manichaeans* (abjuration formula). These sources contain most of the information about Manichaeans, and therefore present the most comprehensive picture of what Manichaeism meant for a citizen of the Roman East during the period under investigation.

In addition, both sources are of particular interest, each one for different reasons. The *Acta Archelai*, apart from being the earliest extensive testimony recording the first encounter between Christianity and Manichaeism,¹ constituted a key source for authors of the following centuries and had a huge impact on subsequent literature. “Without doubt” it was “the most popular and probably the most effective polemical work against Mani and Manichaeism in Late Antiquity”.² The core of the *Acta*’s narrative was reproduced until the late Byzantine era, constructing a dominant image of Manichaeism, regardless of the presence of real Manichaeans in any specific time and place. On the other hand, the *Seven Chapters against the Manichaeans* is a unique source, metaphorically and literally. First, this is because it is not based on the preceding textual anti-Manichaean tradition, and because it preserves information crosschecked for its accuracy with actual Manichaean texts, which is not recorded in any other Greek polemic source. In addition, unlike the *Acta*, the *Seven Chapters* has barely attracted scholarly interest and has not been studied by Manichaean scholars, with the exception of Sam Lieu’s work.³

In addition to their significance for the study of Manichaeism in the Roman East, these two texts are crucial for the subsequent chapter because they constitute the most comprehensive sources of information for the early history and reception of Manichaeism, as well as for the first Manichaean missions in the Roman Empire. In this sense, the current chapter acts as an introduction to ch.[2]. For this reason, the conclusions of the present chapter will be incorporated in the conclusions of the second chapter.

1.2 *Acta Archelai* (AA) and its Echoes in Subsequent Literature

Acta Archelai

Author

The AA is attributed to an author named Hegemonius, who is not known from any other source. Thus, the only knowledge preserved about him comes from this text, which ascribes the authorship to him.⁴

¹ See Jason BeDuhn and Paul Mirecki, eds., *Frontiers of Faith: The Christian Encounter with Manichaeism in the Acts of Archelaus* (2007), a volume devoted to AA’s encounter.

² Lieu 2010, 165.

³ Lieu 1983, 152-218; 1994a, 203-305; 2010, 116-25, 194. More detailed information on ch.[1]:1.3.

⁴ AA 68.5 (Vermes, 151): “I, Hegemonius, have written down this disputation which I recorded to describe for those who wish”. Cf. BeDuhn and Mirecki 2007, 7. Klein 1991, 22.

Date of the AA's composition

What is certain is that the *Acts of Archelaus* (either as a tradition or as a written composition) were formed during the first half of the fourth century. The *terminus ante quem* must be 348–350 CE, since one of the *Catecheses* (6.20 ff.) of Cyril of Jerusalem provides a brief summary of part of it.⁵ On the basis of internal evidence, the *terminus post quem* of the work can be put after 300 CE.⁶ Some researchers have proposed a post-Nicene date for the work because of the word *ὁμοούσιος* in the text.⁷ However, I consider that such a proposal to be unfounded, as the context in which the term is used in the AA has no bearing on the triadological discourse (i.e. the relationship between Father and Son in the Holy Trinity, as to their essence), which was a major theological issue discussed at the Synod of Nicaea.⁸ Besides, the use of the term *ὁμοούσιος*, in the sense of consubstantiality, is also recorded in pre-Nicene literature.⁹

Taking into account that the AA constituted a basic source for Greek heresiologists, certain features allow us to attempt to narrow down the possible time-span of its composition. When the authors of the early fourth century (e.g. the philosopher Alexander of Lycopolis, the bishops Eusebius of Caesarea, and Serapion of Thmuis) were writing their anti-Manichaean works, the AA had not yet been published, for otherwise they would surely have referred to it. Alexander's work is dated circa 300 CE. The majority of researchers date the composition of the first edition of the seventh book of the *Ecclesiastical History* of Eusebius (ch. 31 about Manichaeism) quite early, before 312–313, and even before 303 CE.¹⁰ Finally, Serapion composed his treatise *Contra Manichaeos* around 326 CE. Thus, all dates in the first half of the fourth century are likely for the AA's composition, with a higher probability for those after 326 CE.

Translations and manuscripts

The work was originally written in Greek, but the entire work has survived only in Latin translations, the most important of which are preserved in the manuscripts of Montecassino 371 (eleventh–twelfth cent.) and München (early thirteenth cent.).¹¹

⁵ We have to distinguish between the AA as *composition* and the AA as *narrative*. It seems that there was a cluster of narrative versions of AA. The composition that survives in the extant Latin text is one version of that tradition, but both Cyril and Epiphanius, it seems, knew it in a different version. See below in this section.

⁶ In AA 31.7 (Vermes, 85–86), Archelaus (during his debate with Mani) is said to declare, revealing the dating of the work, that “if Mani were correct (in claiming that he is the Paraclete), Jesus sent the Paraclete only after three hundred or more years”. On this see Quasten 1960, 357–58. Cf. BeDuhn and Mirecki 2007, 9.

⁷ Quasten 1960, 357–358. Indeed, Lieu points out that “the word ‘homooousios’ is used in the work in a theological sense”. Lieu in Vermes 2001 (Introduction), 6: “A post-Nicene date (i.e. after 325) of composition had long been suggested for the *Acta* because the word “homooousios” is used in the work in a theological sense in its date”.

⁸ AA 36.7–9 (Vermes, 95–96). See also a relevant argumentation in BeDuhn and Mirecki 2007, 7.

⁹ For the prehistory of the term in Gnostic (and Hermetic) texts and thoughts (including Manichaeism) see the article of Beatrice (2002), “The Word ‘Homooousios’ from Hellenism to Christianity”.

¹⁰ Louth 1990, 111–123. Lieu in his introduction on AA dates the composition of Eusebius’ *HE* between 326 and 330. However, later (Lieu 2010, 164) he revises his opinion arguing that the first edition of Eusebius’ *HE* was completed before 300 C.E.

¹¹ BeDuhn and Mirecki 2007, 7. As far as the Latin text is concerned (which is dated just before 400 CE), it is generally accepted that it was translated into Latin from Greek, see Lieu 1994a, 45 & 136–137; Gardner and Lieu 2004, 26). The München manuscript was discovered by Traube in 1903 and is the only manuscript to have preserved the full text of AA (Lieu 2010, 165).

Summary of the content

The protagonist of the AA is Mani himself, who embarks on a missionary enterprise that aims to spread his religion westwards, to the Roman Empire. The story is set in two cities that are not precisely identified, but most likely were located near the border-zone between the Persian and Roman Empires. In summary, the story goes that the fame of an exceptional Christian and prominent citizen of the (unknown) Roman city of Carchar, named Marcellus, reached Mani; at this point Mani was near the Roman-Persian border fleeing persecution by the Persian king, and decides to proselytize Marcellus in order to convert the whole province to Manichaeism through him. Before meeting Marcellus himself, Mani decided to prepare the ground by sending him a letter with Turbo, who was one of the followers of his disciple Addas. In this letter, he presents himself as an apostle of Jesus and makes a first attempt to persuade Marcellus that his own faith was the correct one. To do this, he points out the basic doctrinal differences with Christianity: (1) the existence of two first principles (darkness-light, evil-good) instead of one, and (2) a docetic Christology. He also offered to explain in detail his doctrines to Marcellus face to face. Marcellus accepted Mani's proposal and invited him to Carchar. Meanwhile, Turbo had arrived at Carchar and was questioned by both Marcellus and the bishop of the city, Archelaus, who wished to know more about Mani and Manichaeism. Turbo briefly presented the essentials of the Manichaean faith. By the end of Turbo's narration, Mani arrived, accompanied by a large group of Elect Manichaeans and a debate between him and bishop Archelaus was held at Marcellus' house. Four eminent pagan citizens were appointed to act as the arbiters of the debate.¹²

The main topic of the debate was dualism, the belief in the two first principles/*roots*. Another subject was the challenge of the alleged 'Apostleship' of Mani and his claim that he was the Paraclete (i.e. the 'comforter', whose future coming Jesus had announced, according to John 14:16). At the end, the arbiters and the audience judged Archelaus to be the winner of the debate. Thereupon, Mani fled to a town called Diodoris (likewise unknown), where one day he began to speak and to present his teachings before the crowd. This led the local priest, Diodorus, to ask the help of bishop Archelaus; Diodorus sent him a letter in which he outlined Mani's teachings, which this time concerned only the rejection of the OT, and asked Archelaus to instruct him on how to deal with Mani. Archelaus responded immediately, trying to cover the issue as much as possible. Diodorus, after receiving and studying the letter of Archelaus, confronted Mani in a debate. The subject of that debate was the contradictions between the Old and New Testament. At some point, as it was late, the debate was interrupted and was postponed for the next morning. The next day however, Archelaus came to Diodoris and the debate was finally continued between Mani and Archelaus. The main topic of this second phase of the debate in Diodoris was the nature of Jesus (Manichaean Docetism). Although at some point Mani's argumentation seemed to be winning over the audience, eventually Archelaus became the winner of the debate. According to Hegemonius, the rest of the AA comprises Archelaus presenting to the congregated people his own version of Mani's 'biography' (his spiritual ancestors, his early life, his first disciples and their missions, Manichaean books, Mani's end). Ending his story, Archelaus referred to the events of the days immediately preceding the debate, when Mani was persecuted by the Persian king and took shelter in 'Castellum Arabionis',¹³ from where he sent the letter to Marcellus before coming

¹² See ch.[2]:2.7.3 with regard to the way debates were conducted.

¹³ There are various opinions on this place name. Pennacchietti's (1988) suggestion that this would be Birt Aropan has been adopted enthusiastically by many, but Luther (1999, 77-84) has collected arguments against this

to Carchar. By the end of the narration (during which Mani seems to have been present), Mani fled and returned to 'Castellum Arabionis'. Finally, he was captured and killed by the Persian king. In the two final chapters of his work, Hegemonius presents the Gnostic Basilides as the spiritual ancestor of Mani's dualism.

The contents of the AA can thus be represented in the following way:¹⁴

1. Marcellus' encomium (1-4).
2. Mani's epistle to Marcellus and Marcellus' response (5-6); topics of the epistle: a) the two principles (dualism), and b) the nature of Jesus (Docetism).
3. Turbo's narration (7-13); topics: Manichaeism cosmogony, pantheon, anthropology, eschatology, and Manichaeism behaviour and practices.
4. Advent of Mani and the preparation of the debate (14).
5. The first debate (15-33 or 42); topics: a) dualism, i.e. the two principles/roots (15-29), b) Mani's claim that he is the Paraclete, dualism, and OT (30-42).
6. From Carchar to Diodoris (43).
7. Diodorus' letter and Archelaus' response (43-51); topic: OT.
8. The second debate (52-61). Parts: a) the debate between Diodorus and Mani (52); topic: OT, b) the debate between Archelaus and Mani (53-60); topic: the nature of Jesus (Docetism), c) the end of the debate.
9. The 'biography' of Mani and of his ancestors, Mani's books, Mani's disciples and their missionary roots, Mani's end (62-66).
10. Mani's teachings as grounded on Basilides' doctrines. (67-68).

In light of the guiding question of this chapter and the following one, the contents of the AA can be divided into the following three main parts:

1. Mani's first enterprise to convert Marcellus through his epistle, and through Turbo's presentation of Manichaeism beliefs.
2. The three debates conducted between Mani and local Christian clergymen.
3. The early history of Manichaeism and its spread westwards, through the 'biography' of Mani and of his ancestors.

The theological issues discussed during the three debates (dualism, Docetism and their refutation, as well as the rejection/defence of the OT), were further developed in all subsequent philosophical-theological anti-Manichaeism treatises.

Historicity and reliability of the AA

Whereas it is generally accepted that the former part of the work (as well as Mani's argumentation during the debates) draws on material from genuine Manichaeism sources, the latter, biographical, part is considered to be the most unreliable and biased part of the work. Hegemonius, for the first and second parts of his report, names as his source a treatise written by the protagonist of his story, the bishop Archelaus; as source for the third part he names Sisinnius, an ex-Manichaeism, as he says, who had converted to Christianity. However, this seems improbable, since it is well known and certified in Manichaeism sources that Sisinnius was Mani's successor at the head of the Manichaeism church. It is more likely that the author of the AA simply uses Sisinnius' name as an attempt to attribute credibility to his testimony.

Turbo's account and Mani's biography (first and third part) acquired a large popularity and were extensively used by later authors (e.g. Cyril of Jerusalem, Epiphanius of Salamis, Socrates the Scholastic, Theodoret of Cyrrhus, Theodorus Anagnostes, Photius, Peter of Sicily, etc.). These parts constituted the main source on Manichaeism for subsequent generations and shaped the representation of Mani in Christian literature, not only during the Byzantine

identification. In light of Luther's findings, it seems that this place name, too, cannot be identified with an actual place.

¹⁴ BeDuhn and Mirecki (2007, 14-15) divide the text in four parts.

period, but right until the twentieth century, when genuine Manichaean texts were brought to light for the first time. When these genuine Manichaean texts were found, the AA, together with the rest of the patristic anti-Manichaica (as stated in the Introduction) were almost immediately put aside as sources of information. Scholars increasingly argued that the patristic writings were unreliable and biased, and this led most of them to disregard them in their attempts to interpret Manichaean history.

Although this reaction was understandable, it had unfortunate consequences; as modern researchers observe, the AA contains a great deal of accurate information about the Manichaean religion.¹⁵ In addition, the AA is a valuable text, not only for scholars of Manichaeism, but also for the study of early Christianity and patristics, since it sheds light on the way Christian writers perceived the interreligious contact, relation and interaction between Christianity and Manichaeism.¹⁶

Further, since the AA constituted a basic source for Greek heresiologists, a more profound investigation of its contents is clearly necessary.¹⁷ Since the original work in Greek is missing and only the Latin translation has survived, it is methodologically correct to co-examine the Latin version and the Greek texts that preserve parts of it.¹⁸ Thus, the following two Greek authors (Cyril and Epiphanius) can be considered as complementary to the textual criticism and comprehension of the AA. For methodological reasons I will start with Epiphanius, although Cyril precedes him chronologically.

Epiphanius of Salamis (fourth century)

Epiphanius' 'Against the Manichaeans', is one of the longest chapters of his *Panarion* (Medicine Chest, 374–376/7).¹⁹ The work preserves, and in fact reproduces almost *verbatim*, a long excerpt of the original Greek AA. To be precise, it contains Mani's epistle to Marcellus, Marcellus' response, Turbo's narration and Mani's biography (i.e. the first and the third parts of the AA). In the rest of his work, Epiphanius comments freely and rebuts each of the theses advanced by Mani during the debates. Thus, the significance of Epiphanius' work is great especially because, through the *verbatim* narration of Turbo, he provides us with a great number of divinities of the Manichaean pantheon and terms in Greek. Apart from the *Seven Chapters*, these are not recorded in any other Greek source.²⁰ As a source of his work, Epiphanius refers to Archelaus' book/disputation (*ἀντιλογία*), which means that he had a written version of the AA in his hands.²¹

Yet, the structure of the contents of Epiphanius' work differs from that followed by the AA. Epiphanius starts with Mani's biography (AA's end) and then briefly recounts the events

¹⁵ BeDuhn and Mirecki 2007, 1-22; Gardner 2007b, 33-48; BeDuhn 2007a, 77-102 and 2007b, 131-147; Kaatz 2007, 103-118; Scopello 2000, 534 & 541-2.

¹⁶ Kaatz 2007, 103; Lim 1995, 76.

¹⁷ Klein 1991, 21-24.

¹⁸ Lieu 2010, 165.

¹⁹ Cf. Lieu 1994a, 107; Lieu 2010, 168-176.

²⁰ For the importance of Turbo's summary, see Lieu in Vermes (2001, 43-44, fn. 27). Recently, Lieu (2010, 165) revised his earlier opinion (Vermes 2001, 10) that "there is no reason to assume that Epiphanius used a different Greek version from the one rendered by the Latin *Acta*" and argued that Epiphanius probably reproduced a later Greek version of *Acta*, different from the one that was preserved in Latin translation.

²¹ Epiphanius, *Pan.* 66.25.2 (Williams, 252): "When the bishop Archelaus, and Marcellus, questioned Turbo about Mani's teaching, Turbo replied in the words I quote from the book" (ἅτινα ἐκ τοῦ βιβλίου παρεθέμην); Epiphanius, *Pan.* 66.32.1 (Williams, 261): "These are the passages I have quoted from the book by Archelaus that I mentioned" (Ταῦτά ἐστιν ἃ παρεθέμην ἀπὸ τοῦ Ἀρχελάου βιβλίου τοῦ προειρημένου).

(Mani's arrival, the debates, etc.) in chronological order. Subsequently, he refutes the Manichaeae positions by quoting intermittently from Turbo's account. This 'correction' of the AA's structure seems to have been a conscious choice, for, as Epiphanius underlines, "whoever embarks on a narrative must start it the best way he can, and introduce it from the very beginning".²²

The following table compares the contents of Epiphanius' *Against the Manichaeae* with the corresponding chapters of AA:

| Epiphanius | Acta |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------|
| 1-5 Mani's biography. | 62-66 |
| 6 Letter of Mani to Marcellus. | 5 |
| 7 Letter of Marcellus to Mani. | 6 |
| 8-9 Arrival of Mani, narration of Turbo. | 14 & <7-13 |
| 10 The debate in Caschar (Carchar in AA). | 14 & 42-43 |
| 10-11 From Caschar to Diodoris. Debate in Diodoris. | 43 |
| 12 The end of Mani, the three disciples of Mani | 66 & 64 |
| 13 The books of Mani. | 62 |
| 14-24 Epiphanius refutes Mani's theses stated either in the debate (e.g. dualism) or in Turbo's narration (e.g. cosmogony) and refers to previous authors combating Mani. | 15-42 (33?) 52-61 |
| 25-31 Turbo's narration (verbatim from the AA). The three disciples are sent to preach Mani's teachings. | 7-13 & 64 |
| 32-58 Epiphanius comments and further criticizes Mani's teachings (from Turbo's narration) juxtaposing the Christian theses. | 15-42 (33?) 52-61? |
| 59-88 Epiphanius again refutes Mani's argumentation, drawing again his material from the AA, but this time he handles it more freely. He also adds his own material (date of Mani's arrival, some other books and missionaries, see next chapter). | 15-42 (33?) 52-61? |

Some minor discrepancies between Epiphanius' text and the AA will be discussed in chapter two. Epiphanius also informs us about the other Greek Church Fathers who had written treatises against Manichaeae. Among them is listed the now lost long treatise of George of Laodicea (a supporter of Arianism).

Marvelously good replies to him have already been composed by great men –by Archelaus the bishop, as has been said; and, I have heard, by Origen; and by Eusebius of Caesarea and Eusebius of Emesa, Serapion of Thmuis, Athanasius of Alexandria, George of Laodicea, Apollinaris of Laodicea, Titus, and many who have spoken in opposition to him.²³

Epiphanius' clarification that he had just heard about the work of Origen strongly suggests that he knew personally the rest of the works and had possibly used some of them.²⁴ The fact that Epiphanius does not mention Cyril among the authors who combated the Manichaeae could be an indication that he was not aware of the content of Cyril's *Catecheses*.

Cyril of Jerusalem (fourth century)

Cyril compiled his *Catecheses ad Illuminandos* between 348 and 350 CE. In his sixth *Catechetical Lecture* he provides us with a brief summary of a part of the AA. It is argued that

²² Epiphanius, *Pan.* 66.2.12-3 (Williams, 228). Epiphanius uses the same method for the whole *Panarion*, see Berzon 2016.

²³ Epiphanius, *Pan.* 66.21.3 (Williams, 248-49). Epiphanius consistency in presenting his records chronologically is also depicted in the order he mentions the anti-Manichaeae authors.

²⁴ Epiphanius' reference to Origen is very surprising. Origen died in 253, when Mani was already active but, we must assume, completely unknown in Egypt.

he used another more extended Greek version than the one preserved in the extant Latin translation.²⁵

The AA material in the sixth *Catechetical Lecture* comes mainly from ch. 6.20 onwards, although in the earlier parts of the text there are many hints that seem to allude to Manichaeism (e.g. references to dualism). The parts of the AA from which Cyril draws information are:

(1) *The biography*: Mani's forerunners, books, and disciples (22-24), that he was persecuted by the Persian king (25), and Mani's martyrdom (30).

(2) *The debates*: Cyril delineates the context of the debates; that initially one debate was conducted between Archelaus and Mani (27) after which Mani fled to Diodoris(?)²⁶ (30). Yet, he does not mention anything else about the debates in Diodoris. Apart from the reference to Mani's claim that he was the Paraclete (25), the content of the discourse during the debate, as presented by Cyril, does not correspond to that of the AA. Initially, as a cause of this inconsistency, it was suggested that Cyril wrote the dialogue from memory and paraphrased its content. More recently, it has been argued that this mismatch is due instead to the fact that Cyril used another more extended Greek version than the extant Latin translation.²⁷

(3) *Turbo's narrative*: there are references to the Manichaean cosmogony (34), and to the belief of reincarnation (31). However, Cyril focuses mainly on Manichaean ethics and practices (32). Among the latter, Cyril refers to the sexual mores and practices of the Elect (33), which does not seem to be based on the testimony of the AA, at least in the extant version. This part of Cyril's text—"not surprisingly"—as Lieu remarks, "was heavily abridged" in the English translation of the Library of Fathers of the Holy Catholic Church (1872),²⁸ and this omission continued to exist in a series of subsequent translations (1894, 1955, 2000).²⁹

Socrates the Scholastic (fifth century)

The church historian Socrates, in the first book of his *Ecclesiastical History*, found it necessary to update the entry regarding *Manes* of Eusebius' *History*, since as he says, Eusebius had not gone into detail concerning Mani. Socrates wanted his readers to know "who this Manichaeus was, whence he came, and what was the nature of his presumptuous daring".³⁰

To stress the validity of the information about Manichaeans that Socrates gives, he declares that this information is not fabricated by himself but is gathered from a book entitled *Archelaus' Disputation*. This Archelaus, Socrates adds underlining also the reliability of his source, "disputed with Manichaeus face to face and expounds what I wrote in his biography".³¹ Specifically, Socrates' account draws on materials from the first and third parts of the AA (i.e. Turbo's narrative, Mani's epistle, and biography).

²⁵ As Lieu remarks, with Traube's research it has become known that Cyril's source was a different more extensive version of the AA in Latin (Lieu in Vermes 2001, 8).

²⁶ Cyril does not provide the name of this city.

²⁷ BeDuhn, 2007b, 135. Lieu in Vermes 2001, 7-8.

²⁸ Lieu 2010, 166-67. LFHCC 1872, 76-77.

²⁹ Gifford 1894, 7: 176-77; Telfer 1955; Yarnold 2000.

³⁰ Socrates, *HE* 1.22 (*NPNF*² 2).

³¹ Socrates, *HE* 1.22.13.61-65 (*NPNF*² 2, altered): Ταῦτα δὲ ἡμεῖς οὐ πλάσαντες λέγομεν ἀλλὰ διαλόγῳ Ἀρχελάου τοῦ ἐπισκόπου Κασχάρων, μῆς τῶν ἐν Μεσοποταμίᾳ πόλεων, ἐντυχόντες συνηγάγομεν. Αὐτὸς γὰρ Ἀρχελάος διαλεχθῆναι αὐτῷ φησιν κατὰ πρόσωπον καὶ τὰ προγεγραμμένα εἰς τὸν βίον αὐτοῦ ἐκτίθεται.

Theodoret of Cyrrhus (fifth century)

One of the sources of Theodoret's chapter on Manichaeism, in his work *Haereticarum fabularum compendium* (mid-fifth century), was the AA. The chapter belongs to the first of the five books of this work.³² This book includes all those who "invented another creator", "denied the one beginning/principle [of the whole cosmos]", suggesting that "there were other principles which do not exist", and said "that the Lord appeared among men by illusion".³³ The book starts with the Samaritan Simon Magus, "the first inventor of these doctrines" and ends with Mani, "the Persian sorcerer [γόης]".³⁴

Although not explicitly mentioned, it is from the AA (most probably from Cyril's version) that Theodoret drew his information for Manichaeism (i.e. Mani's biography, names of the first disciples, information on Manichaean ritual practices and sexual mores). However, the summary of the Manichaean cosmogony that he provides has less in common with Turbo's narratives and is rather closer to the cosmogonic myth of Basilides (as presented by Hegemonius at the end of his work) or with Severus of Antioch's and Simplicius' accounts of the Manichaean myth. As earlier authors who wrote works against Manichaeans, Theodoret names Titus of Bostra, Diodorus of Tarsus, George of Laodicea and Eusebius of Caesarea. Some researchers have argued that Theodoret, Severus of Antioch, and Titus of Bostra had a common source for Manichaean cosmogony.³⁵ This must then have been one of the lost anti-Manichaean works (Diodorus of Tarsus and/or George of Laodicea), which Theodoret mentions, or possibly some other genuine Manichaean source.

Theodorus Anagnostes (sixth century)

Theodorus Anagnostes, in his work entitled *Epitome historiae tripartitae* (early sixth cent.), reproduces information from the history of the proto-Manichaean Scythianus, Bodda, and of Mani (third part). He mentions as his sources the *Acts of Archelaus* and Eusebius' *Ecclesiastical History*.³⁶

Heraclian of Chalcedon (sixth century)

Another author who mentions the AA (and Hegemonius for the first time) among other anti-Manichaean works, is Heraclian bishop of Chalcedon.³⁷ However, this is 'second-hand information' provided by Photius, since the original work is lost. His work comprised twenty books, which Photius says that he had read. As Photius states in his *Bibliotheca*, Heraclian wrote his treatise against the Manichaeans,

at the request of a certain Achillius, whom the author calls his faithful and beloved son. This Achillius, seeing that the Manichaean heresy was growing, begged that it might be publicly refuted, and this work was written [...] This most pious Heraclian flourished in [...].³⁸

³² Theodoret, *Haer.* 26 (PG 83:377A8-381B31). About Theodoret's heresiological method see Berzon (2016, esp. 131-144).

³³ Theodoret, *Haer.* (PG 83:337.37-39); I have modified Cope's (1990, 76) translation here.

³⁴ Theodoret, *Haer.* (PG 83:337C.39-41).

³⁵ Kugener and Cumont 1912, 151-172. Bennett 2001b, 77. Pedersen 2004, 83, fn. 69. For our sources on Manichaean cosmogony, see Lieu 2010, xii-xviii.

³⁶ Theodorus Anagnostes, *Epit. hist. trip.* 1.33 (Hansen 2011, 16-17).

³⁷ Photius, *Bibl.* cod. 85 (65a36-65b38) (Henry 1960), (65b)5-6: "He also gives a list of those who wrote against the Manichaean impiety before him - Hegemonius, who wrote out the disputation of Archelaus against Manes". Translated by Lieu (Vermes 2001, 10-11 & Lieu 2010, 124-27, 127).

³⁸ Photius, *Bibl.* cod. 85 (65a/b).

The rest of the text, unfortunately, is not preserved, so it is difficult to specify when the work was written. Yet, current researchers date it around 500 CE.³⁹ The other anti-Manichaean authors mentioned by Heraclian are: Titus of Bostra, George of Laodicea, Serapion of Thmuis, and Diodorus of Tarsus.

1.3 Abjuration Formulas (AFs): The *Seven Chapters* (SC)

It is at the time when Heraclian of Chalcedon wrote his treatise (500 CE. in all probability), that the composition of the *Seven Chapters* is dated.⁴⁰ This was a time during which the spread of Manichaeism had taken on such dimensions that it alarmed both the state and the ecclesiastical authorities.

The *Seven Chapters* belong to the literary genre known as *abjuration formulas* (AFs). It is commonly accepted that AFs and *Anathemas* are of particular value as historical sources.⁴¹ In comparison to other available anti-heretical sources, AFs are more reliable and provide us with a great deal of accurate information about the persecuted heresies. As Beskow characteristically says, for the case of the AFs against Manichaeism:

The anti-Manichaean documents produced by those authorities which wanted to repress the community of Mani are a most valuable complement to Manichaean source-material. More than the purely theological treatises against Manichaeism [...] they give us information about the actual situation of the Manichaean communities in the Roman (or Byzantine) Empire before their actual extinction, and contain details not to be found in the Manichaean documents themselves. The abjuration formulae from Byzantine times comprise such an anti-Manichaean source of information.⁴²

These texts were part of a ritual of abjuration.⁴³ The 'heretic' had to condemn the doctrine and the worship of his former faith during a public renunciation ceremony. The ritual consisted of two stages. First, the converted anathematized his former heretical religious beliefs in the hearing of all (εἰς ἐπήκοον πάντων).⁴⁴ At the end of the ceremony, he had to sign a written statement of the anathemas, which the *Chartophylax* kept in the ecclesiastical archives.⁴⁵ This procedure is clearly illustrated in the introduction of the following Latin anathema formula: "these are the chapters of Saint Augustine which those who are suspected of being Manichaeans should read out in public and sign".⁴⁶

Form of Abjuration Formulas

Because of their use in this ritual setting, the AFs soon became standardized. Already existing AFs (or parts of those) often formed the basis for the AFs of later sects. Thus, the Manichaean AFs were used for the anathematization of Paulicians and Bogomils.⁴⁷ However, it seems that standard AFs were not used for all kind of heretics. The renunciations in the heresiological collections of the Vienna and Turin manuscripts, which were studied in an important work by

³⁹ Pedersen 2004, 67, 79 and 138 fn. 73. On the dating of Heraclian, see also Alfarc 1918, 66, 100; Henry 1960, 9 fn. 1; Sfameni Gasparro 2000, 549.

⁴⁰ Lieu 1994a, 225.

⁴¹ Lieu 1994a, 217; Badenas 2002, 97.

⁴² Beskow 1988, 1.

⁴³ Badenas 2002, 97-106.

⁴⁴ Eleuteri and Rigo 1993, 19.

⁴⁵ Badenas 2002, 99. Gouillard 1967, 301-303. More details on this ritual will be given in ch.[8].

⁴⁶ *Prosperi anathematismi et fidei catholicae professio*, PL 65.23 in Adam 1954/1969, 90; Lieu 1994a, 210.

⁴⁷ Badenas 2002, 97-106.

Eleuteri and Rigo are classified into two major categories: (1) the ancient *AFs* (Le formule d'abiura più antiche), and (2) the more recent *AFs* (Le formule d'abiura più recenti). In the first group are included the short and long *antimanichea* and *antiebraica*, as well as the formulas for the Athingani and the Muslims. The second group comprises the *AFs* for the converted Armenians, Jacobites, and Bogomils.⁴⁸ The *AFs* "have come down to us mainly in manuscripts of Byzantine euchologies".⁴⁹

Date

The *AFs* against Manichaeans are considered to be the most ancient. Indeed, according to Lieu, some form of anathemas existed since Cyril's time. As he argues, "although there was no mention yet of set abjuration formulas, it appears that catechumens who had formerly been Manichaeans had to renounce Mani publicly before they could be baptized".⁵⁰ However, the latter remains an assumption since it is not explicitly recorded in Cyril's text.

The Greek Abjuration Formulas against Manichaeans

There are three (surviving) anti-Manichaean *formulas* in Greek. Two of them have been known in scholarship since the seventeenth century, and are those included in the Vienna collection: the short and the long *AFs*.⁵¹ The former is dated before the seventh century, perhaps even during the fifth or sixth centuries, since it contains no reference to Paulicians. The majority of scholars support the view that it was written sometime in the mid-fifth century.⁵² The latter is dated in the ninth or tenth⁵³ centuries, because "it combines twenty-seven Anathemas against Manichaeism with ten Anathemas more specifically directed against Paulicianism".⁵⁴ The third is our source, the *Seven Chapters*. According to Lieu, both the *Long* and the *Short Formulas* have the *Seven Chapters* as a common source.⁵⁵ The question of the interdependence of the three *AFs* will be discussed in the following sections and in ch.[2].

The Seven Chapters (SC)

The SC has been known to scholarship since the late twentieth century, thanks to Marcel Richard. It was first published in 1977 in a volume containing the works of John of Caesarea, edited by Richard. Subsequently, it was republished by Lieu, first in 1983, with a translation of

⁴⁸ Eleuteri and Rigo 1993, 5. Texts included in the collection: The earliest abjuration formulas: 1) *How heretics who present themselves to the Holy and Apostolic Church of God should be received*; 2) The *Diataxis* of the patriarch Methodius, 3) The "shorter" Anti-Manichaean formula, 4) The *Ritual for the Manichaeans who convert to the pure and true faith of us Christians*, 5) The "longer" Anti-Manichaean formula, 6) the "shorter" Anti-Jewish formula, 7) The *Logos* of Gregory Asbestos, metropolitan of Nicea, 8) The "longer" Anti-Jewish formula, 9) The Formula for the Athinganoi, and 10) The formula for the Muslims. The more recent abjuration formulas: 1) The formula for the Armenians, 2) The formula for the Jacobites and 3) The formula for the Bogomils.

⁴⁹ Lieu 1994a, 212.

⁵⁰ Lieu 1992, 132.

⁵¹ About the editions of *SAF* and *LAF* and their content, cf. Lieu (1994a, 212-19); Eleuteri and Rigo 1993, 39-42; Adam 1954/1969, 93-103.

⁵² Lieu 1994a, 215; Eleuteri and Rigo 1993, 40 cite Ficker (*Sammlung*, p. 445); Gouillard *et al* 1970, 187, fn. 10; Klein 1991, 16; Adam 1954/1969, 93.

⁵³ Eleuteri and Rigo (1993, 41) cite Ficker (*Sammlung*, p. 446); Adam 1954/1969, 97; Lieu 1994a, 217.

⁵⁴ Lieu 1994a, 214.

⁵⁵ Lieu 1994a, 218-19: "The Manichaean part of the *Long Formula* and the entire *Short Formula* have clearly a common source. [...] There are some minor differences [...]. [...] However, the similarities, reinforced by exact verbal parallels, are so overwhelming that both Formulas must be derived from the exact source, either directly or indirectly".

the text in English and full commentary, (revised and updated in Lieu 1994a), and then in 2010 (Lieu's translation revised by Fox and with a complementary commentary by Lieu).⁵⁶ As Lieu points out, "The *Seven Chapters* is a particularly valuable source because of its comprehensive coverage of the history as well as the doctrine of the sect and preserves a host of proper names and *termini technici* in Greek not attested in any other anti-Manichaean text in Greek or Latin".⁵⁷

Authorship

Although the text is anonymous, Richard suggested that Zacharias of Mytilene (or Rhetor, or Scholasticus, c. 465–after 536) was its author, because in the prologue of another work of Zacharias, the *Antirrhesis*, it is stated that he himself was also the author of seven chapters/anathemas against Manichaeism.⁵⁸ It is interesting to note that Zacharias, during Anastasius' reign, before becoming an orthodox and bishop of Mytilene, had been a Monophysite church historian. He was a supporter of Anastasius' policy and the biographer of Severus of Antioch; both Anastasius and Severus were labelled as Manichaeans by their opponents.

Date

The exact date of composition remains uncertain, but it is likely that it preceded the *Antirrhesis* (sixth century).⁵⁹ In any case, the absence of anathemas against the Paulicians "suggests a pre-seventh century date".⁶⁰

Sources

The work, as evident from the introduction of the SC, was based on "various works of theirs (i.e. Manichaeans) and from those composed against them by the teachers of the Holy Catholic Church of God".⁶¹ Judging from the accuracy of Zacharias' information, he must have had real access to the Manichaean books.⁶² As far as his anti-Manichaean sources are concerned, it seems that he had borrowed material from the AA,⁶³ and probably from sources that did not survive, such as works of Diodorus of Tarsus and Heraclian of Chalcedon.⁶⁴

Content

Through the anathemas, the SC provides us with valuable information, such as the names of Mani's students, parents, books, the divinities of the Manichaean pantheon, the grades of the Manichaean hierarchy, the community rituals and feasts. Most of these are not found in the AA tradition, yet are accurate and confirmed by the Manichaean sources.

The table below shows the contents of the SC:

⁵⁶ Richard 1977, xxxii-xxxix; Lieu 1983, 152-218; 1994, 203-305; 2010, 116-25, 194.

⁵⁷ Lieu 2010, 194.

⁵⁸ Richard 1977, xxxii. Lieu 2010, 194.

⁵⁹ *Antirrhesis* must have been written between 527 and 536 (Zacharias' ordination date as a bishop of Mytilene) because, as stated in the prologue of the work, Zacharias wrote it when he was still *scholasticus*, under Justinian. Cf. Eleuteri and Rigo 1993, 41.

⁶⁰ Lieu 1994a, 223.

⁶¹ SC pr. (Lieu 1994, 223): Κεφάλαια ἐπὶ τὰ συν ἀναθεματισμοῖς [...] συνηγμένα ἐκ διαφόρων αὐτῶν βιβλίων καὶ ἐξ ὧν κατ' αὐτῶν συνεγράψαντο οἱ τῆς ἀγίας τοῦ θεοῦ καθολικῆς ἐκκλησίας διδάσκαλοι.

⁶² Lieu 1994a, 223.

⁶³ Lieu 1994a, 224-225.

⁶⁴ Lieu 1994a, 225.

| Chapter | Content |
|----------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1 st Ch.: | The converted Manichaeans had to anathematize dualism. |
| 2 nd Ch.: | He then anathematized Mani, Mani's claim to be the Paraclete, his parentage, his forerunners and teachers, his disciples, his books and the Manichaean hierarchy. The lists of disciples, books, and hierarchical grades record information not provided by other Greek sources but securely attested in the Manichaean sources. |
| 3 rd Ch.: | The anathematization of Mani's cosmogonic myth and of the whole Manichaean Pantheon. Here, a valuable list of the names of the Manichaean deities with the Greek forms is provided. ⁶⁵ |
| 4 th Ch.: | The anathematization of those who reject the OT and the anathematization of Manichaean Christology. |
| 5 th Ch.: | The anathematization of Manichaean Christology and of the claim of Mani to be the Paraclete. |
| 6 th Ch.: | The anathematization of Manichaean anthropology. Mainly of the Manichaean claim of consubstantiality of human souls with God and the belief in metempsychosis. |
| 7 th Ch.: | The anathematization of the Manichaean ethics which mainly concern certain Manichaean beliefs and religious and social practices. |

The other two *Abjuration Formulas*

As Lieu argues, especially the *Long formula* (LAF) “derived almost all its information on Manichaeism” from the SC; the “borrowings are verbatim”, and the “verbal parallels are so striking”.⁶⁶ The *Short formula* (SAF) too, derives its information mainly from the SC. However, the LAF also preserves information from the tradition of the AA (probably through Photius and Peter of Sicily), which is not recorded in the SC (e.g. Cubricus, Terebinthus). Lieu points out that the text of the SC is “closer to the true Manichaean position” than that of the later versions, which were further embellished, something which is worth noting for the present study.⁶⁷

The importance and reliability of the *Seven Chapters*

Samuel Lieu is the only scholar who elaborated a full commentary on the text of Richard's edition, providing also a translation in English.⁶⁸ As he observes, “The value of this new material does not seem to have been fully realized”.⁶⁹ For the value and importance of the text, it is better to let Lieu himself speak:

Abbé Richard has laid before us an exciting and important document [...] The excellence of its information is enhanced by the fact that it was composed in Greek as we do not have an abundance of accurate sources on Manichaeism in that language, especially on Manichaean cosmogony. The new text has preserved the Greek forms of many important Manichaean technical terms which cannot be found elsewhere except for those which had been excerpted into the later Byzantine formulas. To the compilers of these later texts we owe much for preserving some of the excellent material from the *Seven Chapters* for us. However, their late date and the fact that much of the *Long Formula* is directed against Paulicians have hitherto cast a dark shadow on their usefulness to the study of the early history of Manichaeism. It is gratifying therefore to know that much of the excellent material pertaining to genuine Manichaeism goes back to a sixth century source which we now have in our possession. We owe a great debt to the late Abbé Marcel Richard for making a preliminary publication of this fascinating text in his

⁶⁵ Tardieu 1980, 340-341.

⁶⁶ Lieu 1994a, 225-26.

⁶⁷ Lieu 1994a, 227.

⁶⁸ Lieu 1983, 1994a & 2010.

⁶⁹ Lieu 1994a, 231, fn. 153.

edition of the works of John of Caesarea. Had he not done so we may have had to wait for many years before it is rediscovered.⁷⁰

There are many open questions concerning the *SC*. From which Manichaean works does the author draw his information? Was he the only one, among the many Greek anti-Manichaean authors, who had access to these sources? In any case, it appears that he had access to sources which the authors of the *Acta* tradition did not have (or did not use). Was he the only one? Or were there others before him whose works were lost, such as Diodorus of Tarsus and Heraclian of Chalcedon? A further question is how the posterior tradition of the *SC* is recorded in the literature thereafter (apart from the later abjuration formulas). As I will argue in the next section, the first authors who used the *SC* are Photius and Peter of Sicily, who probably derived their information from their contemporaneous *LAF*. The *SC* does not rely on a previous tradition, nor did it create a new one; it was not exploited by authors of the sixth century who wrote works against Manichaeans. How can this be interpreted?

1.4 Later Echoes of the *Acta Archelai*

Photius (ninth century)

Photius, in his work *Contra Manichaeos*, mainly attacks the Paulicians whom he considers to be neo-Manichaeans. He traces the origins of Paulicianism to the Manichaean heresy, and therefore considers it appropriate to briefly present it. He declares that his sources for this presentation are the accounts of Cyril of Jerusalem, Epiphanius of Salamis, Titus of Bostra, Serapion of Thmuis, Alexander of Lycopolis and Heraclian of Chalcedon.⁷¹ He does not mention the *AA*, but he draws much information from the *AA*'s narrative (as it is reproduced by Cyril and Epiphanius), which he then enriches with information from the abjuration formulas.⁷² On the contrary, in his other work, the *Bibliotheca*, Photius refers firstly to the *AA* as one of the sources of Heraclian.⁷³

Peter of Sicily (ninth century)

Peter of Sicily mainly used Cyril in his *Historia utilis et refutatio Manichaeorum vel Paulicianorum*,⁷⁴ reproducing the *AA* story and mentioning his source. A long part of the work is quoted almost *verbatim* from Cyril. Like Photius, Peter also complements the information from the *AA* with material drawn from the *AFs*.⁷⁵ He also mentions the anti-Manichaean writings of Socrates the Scholastic (78-81) and Epiphanius (82-83).

⁷⁰ Lieu 1994a, 233.

⁷¹ Photius, *c. Manichaeos* 37.19-28, p. 131.

⁷² Contents drawn from *AA* (38-49 & 53): from the third part, Mani's biography, i.e. the story of the proto-Manichaean Scythianus etc., Mani's persecution by the Persian king, Mani's claim that he is the Paraclete, and Mani's end. From the second part, the debates. Archelaus, Carchar, debates, and Diodoris, appear in two parts of the work (46-49 & 53). Contents drawn from abjuration formulas (49-52): Sisinnius as Mani's successor, and extra names of Mani's disciples and expositors. Contents apart from *AA* and abjuration formulas: that Mani had twelve disciples.

⁷³ Photius, *Bibl.* 85(65b) 5-6.

⁷⁴ Peter of Sicily, *Hist. ref. Man.* Papachryssanthou 1970, 7-67. Astruc et al. 1970, 7-67.

⁷⁵ Peter of Sicily, *Hist. ref. Man.* chs. 46-83, i.e. 37 from the 189 chapters in total; verbatim quotation from Cyril are chs. 46-77: Ἡ δὲ λοιπὸν καὶ τῶν ὑπομνηματικῶν ιστοριῶν ἀπάρχασθαι καιρὸς ἐστίν. Ἀπάρξομαι δ' οὕτως τὰ τε παρὰ τοῦ μακαρίου Κυρίλλου ἐν ταῖς κατηχήσεσιν ρηθέντα προθεῖς καὶ τὰ παρ' ἡμῶν ἀρτίως διαγνωσθέντα ὑποθεῖς, ὡς ἂν ἄρα οἰκιοτέρα ἢ σκέψις γενήσεται. [...] Ἐξηγηταὶ δὲ αὐτοῦ καὶ ὑπομνηματισταὶ

SUDA Lexicon (tenth century)

The main source of the entry on Mani in the *Suda Lexicon* is the biography of Mani as recorded in the *AA*, although the compiler does not mention it. Instead, he refers to Theodorus of Raithou as one of those combating Manichaeans.⁷⁶

γεγόνασιν Ἰέραξ καὶ Ἡρακλείδης καὶ Ἀφθόνιος. Ὑπῆρχον δὲ αὐτῷ καὶ ἕτεροι μαθηταὶ τρεῖς Ἀγάπιος ὁ τὴν Ἑπτάλογον συντάξας, καὶ Ζαρούας καὶ Γαβριάβιος.

⁷⁶ *Suda Lexicon*, entry 147.1-23; entry 147.30: περὶ οὗ καὶ Θεόδωρος ὁ τῆς Ραῖθοῦ πρεσβύτερός φησι. Theodorus of Raithou (sixth-seventh cent.) in his work *Praeparatio* devoted a paragraph to Mani's beliefs (see ch.[4], 4.4.2).