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

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Chapter 4: Classifying Manichaeism

Mani is not of Christian origin, for God's sake!
Nor was he like Simon cast out of the Church.
(Cyril of Jerusalem)¹

4.1 Introduction

The previous chapter outlined that although the *CTh* classified Manichaeans among Christian heretics, it treated them as a distinctive religious category, differentiating them from intra-Christian heresies. The question of this chapter is how the rest of the sources, both Christian and pagan, classify the Manichaeans in their heresiological accounts (treatises, catalogues, lists, etc.).

Recently, an increasing number of researchers, such as Berzon, have adopted Cameron's critique on modern scholars who consider "heresiology as sterile or boring, as mere scholastic exercises".² In his *Classifying Christians: Ethnography, Discovery, and the Limits of Knowledge in Late Antiquity*, Berzon interprets "heresiology as a Christianized mode of ethnography".³ "The heresiologists," he argues, "devised and ordered a Christian epistemological system that thrust two competing realities into contention: knowledge of the heretical world and the rejection of that knowledge".⁴ Through the taxonomy of a great variety of different groups, beliefs, practices and concepts, the heresiologists provide "information through an organized system or principles, by which readers locate and retrieve data readily (the reference function) or grasp meaning through the fact of arrangement (a specific impression)".⁵ The heresiologists' goal with their "quasi-scientific" classification and cataloguing of heresies is to make sense of their world and of the world's history. In order to answer the question 'how and why were Manichaeans classified in the way they are classified', we must first ask what kind of options were available to the authors in order to make sense of the Manichaeans? In other words, we have to take into account the categories that existed on their mental map by which they could classify and make sense of Manichaeans. These, it can be argued, were Hellenism (paganism), Judaism and Christianity (all in the broad sense, including Gnosticism).

The aim of this chapter is to examine not only the Catholic perspective on the classification of Manichaeans, but also the corresponding perspective of all other Christian denominations as well as that of the pagans. In other words, how did the followers of other

¹ Cyril of Jerusalem, *Catech.* 6.20-1. For the original text in Greek see section 4.2.1.

² Cameron 2003, 484; Cf. Berzon 2016, 14-16; Flower 2013, 172-74.

³ Berzon 2016, 42, 27-57.

⁴ Berzon 2016, 18.

⁵ Berzon 2016, 224. Cf. Foucault (2005/1966) esp. his discussion on "Mathesis and 'Taxinomia'" (79-85). As Berzon (2013, 37 & 145-46) states: "The heresiologists' codification of differences of praxis and theology, from cosmology to Christology to dietary practices and clothing preferences, became metrics of heresy as a name and thus a charge—and the tools by which Christians could try to excise and limit the profusion of diversity [...] The ethnography of heresy at once narrows the order of the world to its Christian aegis and yet defines the world by its Christian (theological) governance. [...] The ethnographic impulse of heresiology emerges out of a desire to impose a fixed order on its world. Christianity can, above all else, explain the conditions, both past and present, of the world".

religious groups regard Manichaeans? To pagans, were Manichaeans just one Christian heresy alongside others? For the adherents of the several Christian parties was Manichaeism a rival Christian version? Or was it regarded as not Christian at all, what we today would call a different religion?

Methodological ruminations

The investigation of the above query touches upon some hermeneutical and methodological questions which are quite problematic. For this reason, a further illumination of some vital concepts and terms, already discussed in the introduction, is necessary at this point.

First of all, it has to be clarified that, although the query itself is interconnected with the debated issue of the origin of Manichaeism (the same question in the *etic* discourse), our analysis here concerns only the *emic* level of the discourse. In this context, it is worth mentioning Gardner's theory of stratigraphy, which is based on the textual Manichaean tradition. By comparing texts attributed to Mani himself (*Epistles*) with the (later) texts ascribed to the community of the faithful (*Kephalaia*), Gardner argues that Mani's 'Manichaeism' was radically different from the 'Manichaeism' of his followers. While Mani's point of departure was a Christian tradition, later (for Gardner possibly quite fast, even during Mani's lifetime),

The development of [...] [the] scholastic tradition in the [Manichaean] community altered [fundamentally] [Mani's] presentation.

It was his followers, and a peculiar trajectory of development, (which would in many ways have astonished its originator), that led to the carving out of a discrete identity called 'Manichaeism' (similarly) 'Christianity', and so on.⁶

Regardless of whether we agree with Gardner's view concerning Mani's religious point of departure, for the question of the current chapter, this separation of Manichaeism at an earlier and a later stage of development is important. The issue here is not Mani's religious identity, but that of the (much) later Manichaeans.

The second issue pertains to the 'insider-outsider' problem.⁷ The sources of information for the religious profile of East-Roman Manichaeans are *ab extra* and, indeed, distinctly polemical. For an explanation of the religious profile of the Manichaeans (which is the ultimate goal of this chapter), the *ab intra* self-understanding of the Manichaeans is of vital importance. Unfortunately, real evidence, such as Augustine provides for the West (his anti-Manichaean works preserve theses and attitudes of his Manichaean opponents) do not exist in the relevant repertoire of East-Roman authors.⁸ Besides, as pointed out in the introduction, even the Manichaean testimonies themselves are contradictory regarding the use of autonyms by the Manichaeans.⁹ Whereas for the Latin Manichaeans the use of the

⁶ Gardner 2010, 147.

⁷ According to Jensen (2011, 46, 30) "the insider-outsider distinction is really a 'pseudo problem' in epistemic and interpretive terms [which ...] obscures more than it discloses."

⁸ Similar Manichaean texts might have been preserved in AA but they do not provide evidence for this particular question.

⁹ Cf. Introduction, 5.3 (Defining Terms: Manichaeism in relation to Christianity). Manichaeans distinguishing themselves from Christians: *1Keph.* 105. According to Brand (2019, 185) this text is an exception of the Manichaeans of Egypt; *1keph.* 151: 370.16–375.15 (On the ten advantages of the Manichaean religion), Cf. Gardner and Lieu (2004, 265–68 [no 91]). Manichaean self-identification as Christians: *2PsB* 7.11–9.1 (A bema psalm no 222 in the Medinet Madi Psalm-Book codex, cf. Allberry 1938), Cf. Gardner and Lieu (2004, 238 [no 78]): "It is worth reiterating that the Manichaeans regarded themselves as the true church of the saints". Augustine, *Faust.* 5.1: The famous pronouncement of Faustus claims for the Manichaean Elect the status of true

autonym 'Christian' is central, "we have no clear evidence for any use of the name 'Christian' as an autonym" by the Egyptian Manichaeans.¹⁰ It is also worth noting that the Egyptian texts (Coptic) were written for internal use, while the Latin was "with a view to outsiders" (Christians).¹¹ Nevertheless, in order to reconstruct the religious profile of Byzantine Manichaeans, I consider equally important the opinion of the non-Manichaeans of the time, for whom Manichaeans were a lived and daily reality. Despite the fact that they were their religious opponents, these individuals were their interlocutors in the religious discourse of the era. Furthermore, it is important that these opinions come from followers of different religious groups who were rivals to each other. The fact that there was a variety of Christian parties within Christianity serves as a valuable tool which helps us to construct a more comprehensive picture. This is because it enables us to compare how different Christian 'sects' saw the Manichaeans, as those different sects did not perceive the Christian doctrine and faith in the same way. Of particular importance is the view of the pagans (clearly outsiders) on the issue, as it sheds light on Manichaeism from a third more neutral angle. While this does help to complement the general picture, unfortunately the relevant evidence is scant.

The last thorny issue is the clarification of the content of the terms *heresy* and *religion* (briefly discussed in the introduction). The ancient Greek word αἵρεσις (heresy) means 'choice' and thus also in antiquity it was used to mean 'school of thought' or a 'philosophical tendency'. Gradually, the term acquired a pejorative connotation (i.e. the wrong choice); since the mid-second century it could (additionally) indicate the 'deviant doctrine and the team that supported it'.¹² However, during the period under examination, the term still had a broader connotation. Thus, apart from meaning 'choice', the relevant literature used the word αἵρεσις as a technical term to denote different religious choices, especially the rival ones (i.e. those of the opponents). The concept and criminalization of heresy as an intra-Christian religious choice which deviates from the 'correct' Christian dogma first appeared and was gradually established after the *Cunctos Populos* (CP) of 380.¹³ Thus, especially before the CP, the term 'heretic' was attributed by Church Fathers to every opposing religious group, not only within Christianity but also to pagans and Jews. Athanasius of Alexandria, for example, in his *Historia*

Christians. For more on the self-designation of Manichaeans, see: Lieu 1998b, 205-227; Pedersen 2013a and 2013b; Gardner 2010; Brand 2019; Lim 2008; Baker-Brian 2011, 15-24. According to Brand (2019, 185), the textual evidence from Kellis "stands against the otherwise stimulating argument by Richard Lim that "the people whom we have grown accustomed to calling Manichaeans mainly represented themselves as Christians". See also Brand 2017, 105-119.

¹⁰ Pedersen 2013b, 192. Cf. Brand 2019, 185.

¹¹ Pedersen 2013a, 1. Researchers also remark that the use of the name and adjective 'Manichaean' in both Latin and Coptic texts is very rare. In particular, Egyptian Manichaeans used to express their religious self-understanding through many different autonyms (e.g. 'the Holy Church', 'Sons of the Living Race', etc). As Brand (2019, 186) concludes, these "Self-designators used by Kellites cannot indisputably support the hypothesis of a Manichaean self-identification as Christians".

¹² For the meaning of the term in antiquity and the evolution of its content, see: Chadwick 1998, 561; Kazhdan 1991, 918; Mango 1980, 94-104; *Lampe Patristic lexicon*, 51; Young 1982, 199. Cf. LSJ, s.v. Αἵρεσις as inclination, choice: Polybius, *Historiae* 2.61.9 (διὰ τὴν πρὸς τοὺς Ἀχαιοὺς αἵρεσιν); Plutarchus, *Quaestiones convivales* 2.708b. Αἵρεσις as system of philosophic principles, or those who profess such principles, sect, school: Polybius, *Historiae* 5.93.8 (ἦν δὲ τῶν ἐπιφανῶν ἀνδρῶν ἐκ τοῦ Περιπάτου καὶ ταύτης τῆς αἵρέσεως); Polystratus, *Περὶ ἀλόγου καταφρονήσεως* (P. Herc. 336/1150) (p.20 W.) (καὶ ἡ τῶν ἀπαθεῖς καὶ κυνικοὺς αὐτοὺς προσαγορευσάν[ω]ν αἵρεσις); Dionysius of Halicarnassus, *De compositione verborum* 2 (καὶ μάλιστα οἱ τῆς Στωικῆς αἵρέσεως ἡγεμόνες); Diogenes Laertius, *Vitae philosophorum* 7.191 (Αἵρεσις πρὸς Γοργυπτίδην, title of work by Chrysippus). Αἵρεσις as faction, party: Appianus, *Bellum civile* 5.1.2 (ἐς Σικελίαν καὶ τὴν ἰσχὺν Πομπηίου Σέξτω συνήψαν, οἱ δὲ κατέμειναν παρὰ Ἀγνοβάρβω καὶ τιν' αἵρεσιν ἐφ' ἑαυτῶν καθίσταντο).

¹³ CTh 16.1.2 (February 28, 380).

Arianorum, tells us that the Arians surpass (in deviance) all the other heresies, and as examples of these he lists pagans, Jews, Manichaeans, and Valentinians.¹⁴ The leading ancient authority in the field of heresiology, Epiphanius, presented his genealogy of heresy by enumerating Hellenism and Judaism among the first heresies.¹⁵ On the other hand, pagans themselves considered the Christians as heretics. The Emperor Julian, for example, asserted that heresies were the doctrines of the ‘Galilean’ and not those of the Greeks or the Jews.¹⁶ Apart from the term heresy, however, the term *θρησκεία* (religion) was also used by the authors.¹⁷ Didymus the Blind, for example, exhorts believers to stay away from the Manichaean *θρησκεία* and walk away from places that Manichaeans frequented.¹⁸ The church historian Socrates, in his *Historia Ecclesiastica*, uses alternatively both terms (*θρησκεία* and *αἵρεσις*) to refer to Manichaeism.¹⁹ Further, another term which was used by the writers as an alternative expression for the terms *θρησκεία* and *αἵρεσις*, was the multivalent word *δόγμα*/dogma (belief, doctrine, tenet etc.). As we read in the *SC*, Aristocritus in his *Theosophy* “tries to demonstrate that Judaism, Paganism, Christianity, and Manichaeism are one and the same doctrine *δόγμα*/dogma”.²⁰ Mani proclaims in his epistle to Edessa, (quoted in the *CMC*), that he will offer “the truth and the secrets” that his Father disclosed to him to those “who were prepared to be chosen by him from the dogmas (religions)”.²¹

Recapitulating, it could be argued that the use of the term ‘heresy’ in the relevant literature is inclusive (and broader in content) of both the modern meanings attributed to the terms *heresy* and *religion*. For this reason, it should always be interpreted contextually. Further, as noted, all three terms, *αἵρεσις*, *θρησκεία* and *δόγμα* are interchangeably attributed to what we would today define as religion.

¹⁴ Athanasius, *H. Ar.* 66.4: ὑπερβάλλουσι [Ἀρειανοί] τὰς ἄλλας αἱρέσεις. [...] καὶ Ἕλληνες μὲν, [...] Ἰουδαῖοι δὲ [...] Μανιχαῖοι γὰρ καὶ Οὐαλεντινῖοι [...] οἱ δὲ Ἀρειανοὶ τῶν μὲν ἄλλων αἱρέσεων εἰσι τολμηρότεροι καὶ μικροτέρας ἑαυτῶν ἀδελφὰς ἀπέδειξαν ἐκείνας.

¹⁵ Epiphanius, *Pan.* pr.3.1-2: ἐν δὲ ἐκάστῳ τόμῳ ἀριθμὸς τις αἱρέσεων καὶ σχισμάτων ἔγκειται, ὁμοῦ δὲ πᾶσαι εἰσιν ὀγδοήκοντα, ὧν αἱ ὀνομασίαι καὶ αἱ προφάσεις αὗται· πρώτη Βαρβαρισμός, δευτέρα Σκυθισμός, τρίτη Ἑλληνισμός, τετάρτη Ἰουδαϊσμός, πέμπτη Σαμαρειτισμός. As Young (1982, 199-200) comments: “for Epiphanius the word is by no means confined to Christian deviations; such things as Greek philosophical schools and the various Jewish parties like the Pharisees and Sadducees are described as αἵρεσις. Of course, the word αἵρεσις simply means ‘division’. Long before it acquired the technical sense of ‘heresy’, the word was the classical designation for different philosophical schools [...] In very general terms, then, we may say that what Epiphanius meant by heresy was everything outside the one, holy, catholic and orthodox Church”. Cf. Cameron 2003, 471: “Judaism was regarded as a heresy by Epiphanius, Islam by no less a person than John of Damascus”.

¹⁶ Julian quoted by Cyril of Alexandria, *c. Jul.* (lib. 1-10), 2.9.5: οὐτε Ἕλληνας οὐτε Ἰουδαίους, ἀλλὰ τῆς Γαλιλαίων ὄντας αἱρέσεως, ἀνθ’ ὅτου πρὸ τῶν ἡμετέρων εἴλοντο τὰ παρ’ ἐκείνοις.

¹⁷ And I dare to say in its current meaning. Cf. Tolan 2014, 58; See Introduction 5.3 (Defining Terms: Religion).

¹⁸ [Pseudo-Didymus], *Trin.*, 42.33-36: ἐκ τῶν λεχθησομένων στοχάζεσθαι τὰ σιωπώμενα, καὶ μακρὰν φεύγειν τῇδε τῆς θρησκείας ἀπώλειαν, καὶ τὸ ποτὲ συναυλίζεσθαι τοιοῦτοις ταύτην ἐπιτηδεύουσιν.

¹⁹ Socrates, *HE* 1.22.76: ἡ Μανιχαϊὼν παρεφύη θρησκεία; 6.9.10-12: γυναῖκα τινα Μανιχαῖαν τὴν θρησκείαν (a woman, Manichaean in religion) εἰς τὰ ιερὰ μυστήρια προσδεξάμενος, μὴ πρότερον τῆς Μανιχαϊκῆς αἱρέσεως ἀποστήσας αὐτήν; 5.2.1: νόμῳ τε ἐθέσπισεν μετὰ ἀδείας ἐκάστην τῶν θρησκειῶν ἀδιορίστως ἐν τοῖς εὐκτηρίοις συνάγεσθαι, μόνους δὲ τῶν ἐκκλησιῶν εἵργεσθαι Εὐνομιανούς, Φωτεινιανούς καὶ Μανιχαίους.

²⁰ *SC*, ch. 7.223-26 (Lieu 1994, 252; 2010, 125): πειράται δεικνύναι τὸν Ἰουδαϊσμόν καὶ τὸν Ἑλληνισμόν καὶ τὸν Χριστιανισμόν καὶ τὸν Μανιχαϊσμόν ἐν εἰναι καὶ τὸ αὐτὸ δόγμα.

²¹ *CMC* 64.1–65.22: το<τ>ς ἐτοίμοις ἐκλεγῆναι αὐτοὶ ἐκ τῶν δογμάτων Cf. 68.8-9: ἔκ τε τῶν δογμάτων καὶ τῶν ἔθνων, [...]. On the content of the terms religion, sect and superstition see also Linder 1987, 58: “‘Secta’ is another term applied to the Jews in the legal texts, but, unlike the pair ‘religio-superstitio’, it did not evolve in the religious sphere. Originally it signified a philosophical school, a group distinct from others by a specific set of customs, mores, and opinions. Nevertheless, when the chancellery applied it to the Jews, it carried unmistakably religious connotations which emerged whenever the Jewish ...”.

Thus, after the above clarifications, the question to be asked here is whether the Manichaeans constituted a distinctive religious category to their contemporary Christians and pagans, one that was distinguished from other Christian parties: in other words, a different *θρησκεία*.

In order to answer this question, I will examine the opinion of the Manichaean specialists of the era. These are authors who have either written long treatises against the Manichaeans (Catholics and one pagan), or writers who, as reflected in their texts, were highly preoccupied with Manichaeans.

4.2 Manichaean Religious Profile According to the Christian Authors

4.2.1 Manichaeans as ‘Heretics’ (Real Manichaeans)

The opinion of the Manichaean specialists

Were Manichaeans regarded by Church Fathers as Christian heretics, that had lapsed from the correct Christian dogma, or were they not regarded as Christian at all?²² The majority of the texts characterize Manichaeans as heretics. However, as we saw, everyone except the Catholics were considered heretics; yet, although the same term is used, the distinction between heretics and infidels (*ἀλλόθρησκος*) still exists.

Serapion, bishop of Thmuis and author of the oldest Christian treatise against the Manichaeans (326), makes clear from his introduction that the main aim of his work is to stress the danger of the most recently appeared heretics, the Manichaeans. According to him they surpass previous heretics (Valentinians, Marcionites) in deceiving the faithful, invoking the name of Christ, and presenting themselves as Christians while they were not.²³

In the middle of the fourth century (348–350), Cyril, bishop of Jerusalem, introducing the Manichaean heresy in his sixth lecture to the catechumens, gives the religious stigma of Mani: “Mani is not of Christian origin, for God’s sake! Nor was he like Simon cast out of the Church”.²⁴ It could be said, that in this statement, Cyril distinguishes the meaning of Christian heretic from that of the ‘infidel’ (outsider of the Christian faith). Cyril emphasizes that Mani was never a Christian heretic, as was Simon who was excommunicated from the Church.²⁵ Mani is a heretic, but not a Christian heretic. At the end of the presentation of Manichaean doctrines and practices, Cyril, aiming to point out that there is nothing in common with Christianity, asks his students to consider what agreement there can be between ours (doctrines and practices) and theirs.²⁶

Titus, the bishop of Bostra and author of a more extensive treatise against Manichaeans (367–374), seems to answer the above question with clarity:

²² On this question see also Coyle 2004, 224–26. According to Aubineau (1983, 64), Greek theologians and writers had no personal experience and contact with Manichaeans, as happened in the case of Augustine.

²³ Serapion, c. *Manichaeos* 3.5–27. Serapion also in his treatise sometimes uses the term *αἵρεσις* with the meaning of choice (9.8, 10.2) and at others with the meaning of heretics (*αἵρεσιῶται*: 37.23, 49.4; *αἵρεσιωτῶν*: 40.5, 46.42).

²⁴ Cyril, *Catech.* 6.20–1: Οὐκ ἔστιν ἀπὸ χριστιανῶν ὁ Μάνης, μὴ γένοιτο· οὐδὲ κατὰ τὸν Σίμωνα ἐξεβλήθη τῆς Ἐκκλησίας.

²⁵ Contra Cyril, the author of *De Trinitate* (PG 39:989.39–41, previously attributed to Didymus, ca. 380) regarded Manichaean doctrines as stemming from Simon and the Gnostics (Τοῦτο τοίνυν τὸ δόγμα ἔκροιά τις ἐστὶ τοῦ ἐξεληθόντος βορβόρου ἀπὸ Σίμωνος, τοῦ ἐκ Σαμαρείας Μάγου).

²⁶ Cyril, *Catech.* 6.35: τίς συμφωνία τῶν σῶν πρὸς τὰ ἐκείνων; τί τὸ φῶς πρὸς τὸ σκότος, τί τὸ τῆς Ἐκκλησίας σεμνόν, πρὸς τὸ [τῶν] Μανιχαίων μισαρόν;

Mani's teachings differ on nearly every point from what Jesus' apostles taught" [...] The teaching of the two opposite principles, for instance, comes from the Persians, and the concept of 'matter' is from Aristotle, [...] The doctrine of the transmigration of souls is from Plato, and it is common for both barbarians and pagan Greeks to call the sun 'God' and to believe in fate and horoscopes. [...] Like the pagan Mani worships many gods, the only difference being that he gives them barbarian names.²⁷

Thus, according to Titus, Manichaeism is a synthesis of Persian and Greek elements. Moreover, Titus makes the comparison between Manichaeans and Arians, which is particularly illuminating for our question.

The division [Arian controversy] is not about the existence of the hypostases or their properties as such, but only about in what manner these properties exist. [...] For all are agreed in their belief in the one principle that has no beginning, and the important thing is that all honour the Son, just as they honour the Father [...] Against this, the heretics who are completely outside the Church, including the Manichaeans, have introduced non-existing principles and new properties; they are not Christians at all [...].²⁸

Titus is very clear when he distinguishes between Arians whom he considers as Christians and Manichaeans whom he did not consider to be Christians at all.

As can be noticed, while these authors call the Manichaeans heretics, at the same time they are clear that Manichaeans are not Christians. We also note that these Catholic authors avoid characterizing the Arians as heretics, or they do not regard them as such. They attribute the term 'heretic' mainly to Marcionites, Manichaeans and Gnostics. Among them, the Manichaeans were their contemporary heresy.²⁹

Apparently, before the *CP* defined the content of the term heresy by the law, there would have been intense discussions about who is or is not a heretic, a query linked to several other questions related to practical and canonical issues. In this context, Basil, the bishop of Caesarea, in a letter he wrote in 374 answering questions of Amphilochius, the young bishop of Iconium, defines the meaning of the term 'heretic', distinguishing it from that of a 'schismatic' and 'parasynagoge'. This letter later became church canon. According to Basil, who Augustine notes had also written a treatise against Manichaeans,³⁰ a heretic is one who is completely estranged and alienated in terms of faith, because his perception of God is completely different. I would say that this meaning is closer to the concept of infidel (ἀλλόθρησκος). It is also noticeable, that Basil, like the previous authors, makes no reference to Arians or even to Eunomians who were his main adversaries, but he does consider as heretics Manichaeans, Valentinians, Marcionites and Montanists.³¹

As stated in the previous chapter, when Manichaeans were classified with other heretics, the laws addressed to the Prefects of the East mainly categorized them with the Montanists.³² Basil provides the religious interpretation for this classification. He considers that Mani's claim that he is the Paraclete, and Montanus' belief that he is the mouthpiece of the Paraclete are both blasphemies against the Holy Spirit; according to the Church Fathers,

²⁷ Titus of Bostra, c. *Manichaeos* 4.16-21, in Pedersen 2004, 52-53.

²⁸ Titus of Bostra, c. *Manichaeos* 3.73-74, in Pedersen 2004, 47.

²⁹ An exception to this was Athanasius of Alexandria who called Arians heretics, but this was due to his personal adventure with them.

³⁰ According to Augustine's c. *Julianum*, Basil wrote a work *Adversus Manichaeos* which is now lost.

³¹ Basil of Caesarea, *Ep.* 188: Αἱρέσεις μὲν τοὺς παντελῶς ἀπερρηγμένους καὶ κατ' αὐτὴν τὴν πίστιν ἀπηλλοτριωμένους [...] Αἱρέσεις δὲ οἷον ἡ τῶν Μανιχαίων, καὶ Οὐαλεντινίων, καὶ Μαρκιωνιστῶν, καὶ αὐτῶν τούτων τῶν Πεπονηγνῶν· εὐθὺς γὰρ περὶ αὐτῆς τῆς εἰς Θεὸν πίστεως ἡ διαφορά.

³² See ch.[3], 3.3.1.

this was the only unforgivable sin. In addition, as Basil explains, the Montanists had inaugurated a different type of baptism, which he considers invalid and for this reason they had to be re-baptized. However, as is reflected in the letter, Church Fathers were not unanimous in considering Montanists as heretics, which shows that—compared to Manichaeans—they were regarded as a less divergent type of heresy.³³

In practice, however, the theoretical clarity of Basil's definitions was blurred and this was intensified by the fact that Manichaeans identified themselves as Christians.³⁴ As Epiphanius complains, even in his own age the Manichaeans—although heretics—are called by the people and call themselves Christians.

Even today in fact, people call all the heretics, I mean Manichaeans, Marcionites, Gnostics and others, by the common name of "Christians," though they are not Christians. However, although each sect has another name, it still allows this one with pleasure, since the name is an ornament to it.³⁵

Two remarks are necessary at this point. Firstly, for Epiphanius, 'all the heretics' were [mainly] the Manichaeans, the Marcionites and the Gnostics.³⁶ Secondly, Epiphanius' testimony clearly illustrates that simple people considered Manichaeans as Christians; the latter explains why Church Fathers insisted so much on pointing out that the Manichaeans were not Christians but merely pretended to be.³⁷

For the Church Fathers (as opposed to simple people), it is neither sufficient that Manichaeans are self-proclaimed Christians, nor that Christ is a central figure in Manichaeism.³⁸ As Gregory of Nyssa (381) critically comments:

I know that Manichaeans refer to Christ's name. So what? Because the name of Christ is respected by Manichaeans, is that a reason for counting them among Christians?³⁹

Along the same lines is Augustine's criticism of Manichaeans, stating in his Confessions:

³³ Dionysius, for example, argued that Montanists did not need baptism, which reveals that he considered them a Christian heresy.

³⁴ An example is Didymus the Blind who in his *Comm. Zach.* (4.124.1-3) ranks Manichaeans among Christian heretics: Οὐ μόνοι δὲ οἱ πειραστικῶς τῷ Σωτῆρι προσιόντες Ἰουδαῖοι ἀδόκιμον ἔχουσιν λόγον, ἀλλὰ καὶ οἱ ἐν τῷ χριστιανισμῷ ψευδοδοξοῦντες αἰρετικοί.

³⁵ Epiphanius, *Pan.* 29.6.6 (Williams, 128): καὶ γὰρ καὶ νῦν ὁμωνύμως οἱ ἄνθρωποι πάσας τὰς αἱρέσεις, Μανιχαίους τέ φημι καὶ Μαρκιωνιστὰς Γνωστικούς τε καὶ ἄλλους, Χριστιανούς τοὺς μὴ ὄντας Χριστιανούς καλοῦσι καὶ ὁμῶς ἐκάστη αἵρεσις, καίπερ ἄλλως λεγομένη, καταδέχεται τοῦτο χαίρουσα ὅτι διὰ τοῦ ὀνόματος κοσμεῖται.

³⁶ In the same manner Chrysostom states (*Hom. Gal.* 2:11, PG 51.379.26-33) that at the time of the apostles all over the world there were no heresies, but only two dogmas (religions): Greeks and Jews; neither Manichaeus, nor Marcion, nor Valentinus existed. And he wonders: Why should I enumerate all the heresies? The same taxonomy appears in his *De sacerdotio* (*Sac.* 4.4.28-32) where Greeks, Jews, and Manichaeans besieged the Church. However, in a later work (c. 404, *Hom. Heb.* 63.73.53-54) he adds the Arians to his list of heretics; yet as constituting a new category of heresy, distinct from the old ones of which Manichaeism is the newest: πρώτη μὲν πάντων αἵρεσις ἡ Μαρκίωνος [...] Εἴτα ἡ Μανιχαίων· αὕτη γὰρ πασῶν νεωτέρα. Μετ' ἐκείνας, ἡ Ἀρείου.

³⁷ On this see also Gardner and Lieu 2004, 9: "For the lay faithful in the Roman Empire it was a kind of superior Christianity, and the metaphysical details that attract the attention of scholars (and the higher echelons of the elect) had little profile".

³⁸ According to Pedersen (2004, 9) it is "proven misunderstanding that the Jesus-figure was seen as a secondary element in Manichaeism for tactical missionary purposes. [...] Jesus was not merely one among many Manichaean saviours. Jesus was at the centre of Manichaeism, the saviour par excellence".

³⁹ Gregory of Nyssa, *Adv. Macedonianos* 3.1, 101. 22-25: Οἶδα καὶ Μανιχαίους τὸ ὄνομα τοῦ Χριστοῦ περιφέροντας. τί οὖν; ἐπειδὴ σεβάσμιον παρὰ τούτοις τὸ παρ' ἡμῶν προσκυνούμενον ὄνομα, διὰ τοῦτο καὶ αὐτοὺς ἐν Χριστιανοῖς ἀριθμήσομεν;

[...] your name [God], and that of the Lord Jesus Christ, and that of the Paraclete, [...] were never absent from their lips; but it was no more than sound and noise with their tongue. Otherwise their heart was empty of truth.⁴⁰

In 383, Gregory of Nyssa wrote a letter to Letoius, the bishop of Melitene, which later became a canon of the Church, like the abovementioned letter of Basil. In it, he ranks Manichaeans among the atheists, along with Jews and pagans.⁴¹ Since, according to the *CP* a heretic was now anyone who deviated in the slightest detail from the Nicene faith, Arians, Macedonians, Eunomians were counted as heretics too. Thus, Gregory distinguishes Manichaeans from the *noble* heretics by moving them into the category of atheists.

It is relevant to recall at this point that the edict against apostates to Judaism, paganism and Manichaeism was also issued (21 of May 383) exactly at the same period during which Gregory composed his letter (Easter of 383).⁴² According to this law, anyone who at anytime preferred to frequent Manichaean congregations was an apostate. We note that just as in the law, Gregory ranks only the Manichaeans in the same category with Jews and pagans. This is an indication that, for both the State's laws and for the Church's canons, Manichaeans were closer to the meaning that the word 'infidel' has today, than the word 'heretic'.⁴³

Authors of the following centuries share the same opinion, that the Manichaeans were not Christians but were self-proclaimed Christians.⁴⁴ Severianus of Gabala, wondering in what way Manichaeans could claim to be called Christians, since their teachings have nothing in common with Christianity, echoes Cyril of Jerusalem:

Where did you hear in the Gospel of Jesus Christ, that the Sun and the Moon are creators? Where did Christ say that they draw up the souls, and lead them upwards? Where did you read this?⁴⁵

In his biography of the life of Porphyrius (437-449), Mark the Deacon considers the Manichaean 'mythologies' worthy of ridicule and laughter. He focuses his criticism on the Manichaean Christ, and declares in a clever play of words of his argumentation:

And they also confess Christ, but say that he only incarnated in appearance; thus, they can only be said to be Christians in appearance as well.⁴⁶

It is worth noting here that the introductory paragraph of the *SC* emphasized the distinction between the 'others' (the Manichaeans and their heresy) and the 'we' (the Christians):

⁴⁰ Augustine, *Conf.* 3.6 (10), 44. Cf. Gardner and Lieu 2004, 131.

⁴¹ Gregory of Nyssa, *Ep. Letoiium* (PG 45:221-236 [225]): εἴ τις ἠρνήσατο τὴν εἰς Χριστὸν πίστιν, ἢ πρὸς Ἰουδαϊσμόν, ἢ πρὸς εἰδωλολατρείαν, ἢ πρὸς Μανιχαϊσμόν, ἢ πρὸς ἄλλο τι τοιοῦτον ἀθείας εἶδος αὐτομολήσας ἐφάνη As Silvas (2010, 463) notes: "Scarcely any other of Gregory's writings survives in so many manuscripts, some 150 in all".

⁴² Klaus Fitschen dates the letter later, to around (390), cf. Silvas 2007, 213.

⁴³ *CTH* 16.7.3. On this issue, see also Lieu, 1992, 146: "The Roman state, in meting out the same penalties to those who became Manichaeans with those who apostasised to Judaism and paganism, placed Manichaeism in a different category from heresies within the main body of the church like Donatism and Arianism".

⁴⁴ See for example Cyril of Alexandria's *De incarnatione Domini* 9 (PG 75:1428); Macarius of Magnesia, *Apocriticus* 3.151.25-28 (§25).

⁴⁵ Severianus of Gabala, *De Spiritu Sancto* (PG 52:825.30-33): Ποῦ ἤκουσας ἐν τῷ Εὐαγγελίῳ Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ, ὅτι ὁ ἥλιος καὶ ἡ σελήνη δημιουργοὶ εἰσι; ποῦ εἶπεν ὁ Χριστός, ὅτι ταῦτα ἀντλοῦσι τὰς ψυχὰς, καὶ ἀνάγουσιν αὐτάς; ποῦ ἀνέγνωκας τοῦτο; See also a parallel argument in *Homiliae Cathedrales cxxiii* of Severus of Antioch: "From where did the Manichaeans, who are more wicked than any other, get the idea of introducing two principles, both uncreated and without beginning, that is good and evil, light and darkness, which they also call matter?"

⁴⁶ Mark the Deacon, *Vit. Porph.* 86: Ὁμολογοῦσιν δὲ καὶ Χριστόν, δοκῇσι γὰρ αὐτὸν λέγουσιν ἐνανθρωπήσαι· καὶ αὐτοὶ γὰρ δοκῇσι λέγονται Χριστιανοί. For an English translation see Lieu 2010, 96-101.

Below are seven chapters [...] against [...] Manichaeans and their [...] heresy, [...] showing how they [...] must anathematize their former heresy and inform us Christians.⁴⁷

Of particular importance for our question is the opinion of two authors, who—unlike the previous—were not ecclesiastical authorities, namely: the Nestorian geographer Cosmas Indicopleustes and the historian Agathias. Both of them lived in the time of Justinian I.

The Egyptian geographer and later monk Cosmas Indicopleustes, in his *Topographia Christiana* (536-547) uses the terms *religion* and *heresy* in the same way that one would use them today:

No religion therefore, neither the Judaic, nor the Samaritan, nor the Pagan, nor the Manichaean, believes or hopes that there is a resurrection [and] an ascension into heaven for men; but such of these religions as think that heaven is a sphere, namely the Pagan and the Manichaean, are consistent with themselves in holding their unbelief. For, where are they able to find a place in the sphere for the kingdom of heaven? [...]

And, in like manner, every heresy among the Christians can be refuted;⁴⁸

Regardless of Cosmas' knowledge concerning cosmo-geography and his views on the spherical heaven, it is clear that for him Manichaeism is another religion; it is in a class with the religions of pagans, Jews and Samaritans, which he distinguishes from the heresies within Christianity.

Agathias, as it seems, shared Cosmas' classification of Manichaeism as a distinct religion. Presenting in his *Historiae* the Persian Zoroastrians of his era, Agathias finds that they have much in common with the Byzantine Manichaeans. As he says: (1) they believe in two principles, the one is good (and the cause of all good things in the world), and the other is against it. Both the Zoroastrians and the Manichaeans attribute barbarian names to the two principles; (2) the faithful bring offerings to their priests; (3) they honour the water to the point that they may not wash, and are allowed only to drink and water plants.⁴⁹ Regardless of the degree to which the information provided about Zoroastrians is accurate,⁵⁰ Agathias' testimony is important for our inquiry because it reveals the image that a secular historian of the era had of Manichaeans.

As can be deduced, for all authors we examined, the Manichaean heresy was not one of the many 'factions' within Christianity. On every occasion it is emphasized that Manichaeans pretended to be Christians for tactical reasons. It is repeatedly stressed that this was not a

⁴⁷ SC pr. (Lieu 2010, 116-17, altered): Κεφάλαια ἑπτὰ [...] κατὰ τῶν [...] Μανιχαίων καὶ τῆς [...] αὐτῶν [...] αἱρέσεως, [...] παριστῶντα πῶς δεῖ τούτους [...] ἀναθεματίζειν τὴν γενομένην αὐτῶν αἵρεσιν καὶ ἡμᾶς τοὺς Χριστιανοὺς πληροφρεῖν.

⁴⁸ Cosmas Indicopleustes, *Top.* 6.30.1-7 & 6.33.1 (Grindle 259-60, slightly altered): Οὐδεμία τοίνυν θρησκεία, οὐκ Ἰουδαῖος, οὐ Σαμαρεῖτης, οὐχ' Ἕλλην, οὐ μανιχαῖος, πιστεύει ἢ ἐλπίζει ἀνάστασιν ἀνθρώπων καὶ ἄνοδον αὐτῶν γίνεσθαι ἐν τῷ οὐρανῷ. Ἀλλ' αἱ μὲν αὐτῶν ὅσαι τὸν οὐρανὸν δοξάζουσι σφαίραν, τοιούτων Ἕλληνες καὶ μανιχαῖοι, ἀποδοίως ἑαυτοῖς καὶ τὴν ἀπιστίαν κέκτηνται. Ποῦ γὰρ ἔχουσι δοῦναι ἐν τῇ σφαίρᾳ τόπον τῆς βασιλείας τῶν οὐρανῶν; [...] Ὅμοιως δὲ καὶ πᾶσα αἵρεσις ἐν χριστιανοῖς.

⁴⁹ Agathias, *Hist.* 72.9: νῦν δὲ ὡς τὰ πολλὰ τοῖς καλουμένοις Μανιχαίοις ξυμφέρονται, ἐς ὅσον δύο τὰς πρώτας ἡγεῖσθαι ἀρχὰς καὶ τὴν μὲν ἀγαθὴν τὴν ἅμα καὶ τὰ κάλλιστα τῶν ὄντων ἀποκυήσασαν, ἐναντίως δὲ κατ' ἄμφω ἔχουσιν τὴν ἐτέραν· ὀνόματά τε αὐταῖς ἐπάγουσι βαρβαρικὰ καὶ τῇ σφετέρᾳ γλώττῃ πεποιημένα. (73.) τὸν μὲν γὰρ ἀγαθὸν εἶτε Θεὸν εἶτε δημιουργὸν Ὀρμισδᾶτην ἀποκαλοῦσιν, Ἀρμάνης δὲ ὄνομα τῷ κακίστῳ καὶ ὀλεθρίῳ [...] ἐορτὴν τε πασῶν μείζονα τὴν τῶν κακῶν λεγομένην ἀναίρεσιν ἐκτελοῦσιν, ἐν ᾗ τῶν τε ἐρπετῶν πλεῖστα καὶ τῶν ἄλλων ζῶων ὅποσα ἄγρια καὶ ἐρημονόμα κατακτείνοντες τοῖς μάγοις προσάγουσιν ὥσπερ ἐς ἐπίδειξιν εὐσεβείας. ταύτη γὰρ οἶονται τῷ μὲν ἀγαθῷ κεχαρισμένα διαπονεῖσθαι, ἀνιᾶν δὲ καὶ λυμαίνεσθαι τὸν Ἀρμάνην. γεραίρουσι δὲ ἐς τὰ μάλιστα τὸ ὕδωρ, ὡς μὴδὲ τὰ πρόσωπα αὐτῷ ἐναπονίζεσθαι μῆτε ἄλλως ἐπιθιγγάνειν, ὃ τι μὴ ποτοῦ τε ἕκати καὶ τῆς τῶν φυτῶν ἐπιμελείας.

⁵⁰ On this see de Jong 1997, 229-250; Cf. Cameron 1969/1970.

matter of ignorance, but instead was a tactic which served their missionary strategy.⁵¹ As Chrysostom warns his contemporaries:

And if you hear that somebody is not a Greek or a Jew, do not rush to conclude that he is a Christian, [...] because this is the disguise the Manichaeans and all heresies use, in order to inveigle the naïve.⁵²

According to Serapion, when Manichaeans claim that they honour the Gospels and Christ they are merely pretending; they feign in order to convert those who honour them sincerely.⁵³ According to Mark the Deacon, when the Manichaean missionaries aimed to proselytize among the pagans, they foregrounded common elements with Hellenism.⁵⁴ Titus, who addressed the first two books of his treatise to the pagans and the other two to the Christians of his city (Bostra), explains this attitude thoroughly: “Next to the Christians they behave as participating to the Christian tradition”.⁵⁵ “However, towards the pagan Greeks, [they] abandon the Christian material and instead set out to prove that his [Mani’s] message accords with their traditions”.⁵⁶ The latter Manichaean attitude is also criticized by Alexander, which will be discussed in the subsequent section.

Lists of heretics by ecclesiastical authors

That the Manichaeans constituted a distinct kind of heretics (outside Christianity) for the Church Fathers and ecclesiastical writers is also illustrated by the classification of Manichaeans in the lists of heretics that abound in Byzantine literature. These lists also present the rationale which lies behind the classification, namely the common type of ‘failure’ of the heretics who were co-classified.

A similar investigation referring to the laws was carried out in the previous chapter. There, it was observed that the *CTh* usually categorized the Manichaeans along with Priscillianists, Montanists, Donatists and ascetic groups. Although pagans and Jews were allocated special chapters in the laws, there were some laws (e.g. *De Apostatis*) in which Manichaeans were categorized together with these groups. The *CJ* categorized Manichaeans with pagans, Jews, Samaritans and Montanists.

In the corresponding lists of the Church Fathers, the Manichaeans are usually categorized either together with docetic, dualistic, Gnostic sects, specifically with Marcionites

⁵¹ Chrysostom, *Hom. 1 Tim.* (PG 62:558.27-36): Οὐ περὶ Ἰουδαίων λέγει ταῦτα· [...] ἀλλὰ περὶ Μανι-χαίων, καὶ τῶν ἀρχηγῶν τούτων. Πνεύματα δὲ πλάνης ἐκάλεσεν αὐτοὺς, εἰκότως· [...] Τί ἐστίν, Ἐν ὑποκρίσει ψευδολόγων; Αὐτὰ ἃ ψεύδονται, οὐ κατὰ ἄγνοιαν οὐδὲ οὐκ εἰδότες, ἀλλ’ ὑποκρινόμενοι ψεύδονται. John of Caesarea, *Adv. Manichaeos* I 274-75: “invoking Christ’s name they deceive the simple-minded (τῇ τοῦ Χριστοῦ προσηγορίᾳ τοὺς ἀπλουστέρους ἐξαπατῶσι)”.

⁵² Chrysostom, *Hom. Heb.* 8.4 (PG 63:9-236, p. 73): Καὶ μὴ, ἐὰν ἀκούσης, ὅτι οὐκ ἔστιν Ἕλληνας, οὐδὲ Ἰουδαῖος, εὐθέως Χριστιανὸν εἶναι νομίσης, [...] ἐπεὶ καὶ Μανιχαῖοι καὶ πᾶσαι αἰρέσεις τοῦτο ὑπέδυσαν τὸ προσωπεῖον, πρὸς τὸ οὕτως ἀπατᾶν τοὺς ἀφελεστέρους.

⁵³ Serapion, c. *Manichaeos* 36: ἀποδέχεσθαι γὰρ νενομῖκασιν τὸ εὐαγγέλιον, μέμφεσθαι δὲ ἐσπουδάκασιν τῷ νόμῳ καὶ τοῖς προφήταις [...] τιμῆσαι δὲ ὑπονενοήκασιν τὰ εὐαγγέλια, σχηματίζοντες μᾶλλον τὴν τῶν εὐαγγελίων τιμὴν, ἵνα τὸν σχηματισμὸν δέλαρ τῶν ἀπατωμένων λάβωσιν. οὐδὲ γὰρ ἐπειδὴ συντέθενται τοῖς εὐαγγελίοις, τιμὰν ὁμολογοῦσι τὰ εὐαγγέλια, ἀλλ’ ἐπειδὴ τετιμῆται τὸ ὄνομα τοῦ Ἰησοῦ, προσποιοῦνται τὴν τιμὴν, ἵνα τοὺς τιμῶντας μεταποιήσωνται, ὥς βούλονται.

⁵⁴ Mark the Deacon, *Vit. Porph.* 85 (Lieu 2010, 97): “In fact the Manichaeans say that there are many gods, wishing in this way to please the Hellenes (i.e. pagans); besides which, they believe in horoscopes, fate, and astrology ...”.

⁵⁵ Titus of Bostra, c. *Manichaeos* 3.1.18-20: Παρὰ δὲ χριστιανοῖς, τὰ χριστιανῶν δῆθεν μετιών.

⁵⁶ Titus of Bostra, c. *Manichaeos* 4.2, in Pedersen 2004, 50. Cf. French translation CCT 21, 385.

and Valentinians, with Greeks and Jews, with ascetical groups, and in some rare cases with the Montanists.

By comparing the two kinds of classification, certain remarks can be made. What is missing from the lists of the Church Fathers are the Priscillianists and the Donatists, which is understandable since these two religious groups were active in the western part of the Empire. In the lists of the laws, the Marcionites and the Valentinians are missing; this is also explicable since these sects were active at an earlier stage, thus they did not constitute a threat to the state at the time the *CTh* was composed (fifth century).

Together with docetic, dualistic, Gnostic sects

In general, the lists of the Church Fathers categorized the Manichaeans together with the docetic, dualistic, and Gnostic sects, when the focus of the classification is the genealogy of the Manichaean heresy.⁵⁷ In specific, the common *topoi* of their 'crime' are: the complex theology and cosmogony (parallel conflicting powers); the belief that emanations of the divine forces are entrapped inside the cosmos;⁵⁸ the docetic Christology (a consequence of dualism), according to which Jesus was never incarnated, had never assumed the flesh, but instead appeared as if he had a phantasmal body;⁵⁹ and the belief in reincarnation and metempsychosis (*μεταγγισμὸν τῶν ψυχῶν*).⁶⁰ Finally, like the Marcionites, the Manichaeans

⁵⁷ [Pseudo-Didymus], *Trin.* 6.19.2: ἀπὸ δὲ τῆς προαιρέσεως τοῦ ἐξοβλήτου καὶ ἀπερριμμένου Οὐαλεντίνου τοῦ μαριχαΐσαντος. Theodoret (*Haer.* PG 83:337.39-41) divides heretics into four groups, each one occupying one of the books of *haer.* The first book begins with Simon and ends with Mani: Τούτων δὲ τῶν δογμάτων πρῶτος μὲν εὐρετὴς Σίμων ὁ μάγος ὁ Σαμαρείτης, ἔσχατος δὲ Μάνης ὁ γόνος ὁ Πέρσης.

⁵⁸ Basil of Caesarea, *Hom. Hexaem.* 2.4.17-22 (370): Ἐμψυχος ἄρα ἡ γῆ; καὶ χώραν ἔχουσιν οἱ ματαιόφρονες Μαριχαῖοι, ψυχὴν ἐντιθέντες τῇ γῇ; Chrysostom, *Hom. Gen. A' Logos* (PG 54:584.55-57). Eriphanius, *Pan.* 42.11.17 (Sch.24.d): τοῖς οὕτω φρονοῦσιν ὅτι ἡ αὕτη ψυχὴ ἐν τοῖς ἀνθρώποις καὶ ζῴοις ὑπάρχει. τοῦτο γὰρ παρὰ πολλαῖς τῶν πεπλανημένων αἰρέσεων μάτην ὑπολαμβάνεται. καὶ γὰρ καὶ Οὐαλεντίνος καὶ Κολόρβασος, Γνωστικοὶ τε πάντες καὶ Μαριχαῖοι [...].

⁵⁹ Severianus of Gabala, *c. Manichaeos* 16-23; Chrysostom, *Hom. Matt.* 49 (PG 58:498.33-37): Ἐμφράττων τὸ Μαρκίωνος καὶ Μαριχαίου στόμα, τῶν τὴν κτίσιν ἀλλοτριούντων αὐτοῦ; *Hom.* 82 (PG 58:739.35-39): Ὅρᾳς ὅση γέγονε σπουδὴ, ὥστε ἀεὶ ἀναμνηνίσκεσθαι, ὅτι ἀπέθανεν ὑπὲρ ἡμῶν; Ἐπειδὴ γὰρ ἔμελλον οἱ περὶ Μαρκίωνα καὶ Οὐαλεντίνον καὶ Μαριχαῖον φύεσθαι, ταύτην ἀρνούμενοι τὴν οἰκονομίαν, διηνεκῶς ἀναμνηνίσκει τοῦ πάθους καὶ διὰ τῶν μυστηρίων. Chrysostom, *Hom. 2 Tim.* (PG 62:607.9-13): Ὅρα γοῦν Μαρκίωνα καὶ Μάνην καὶ Οὐαλεντίνον [...] τὰ τοῦ Θεοῦ μετρήσαντες ἡσχύνθησαν ἐπὶ τῇ οἰκονομίᾳ. Cyril of Alexandria, *Inc.* 9-10 (PG 75:1428-1433); *Comm. Isaiam* (PG 70:253): Παιδίον δὲ λέγων γεγενῆσθαι, διελέγχει σαφῶς τῆς τῶν Μαριχαίων δόξης τὸ ἀδρανὲς, οἱ παραιτοῦνται λέγειν, ὅτι γέγονε σὰρξ ὁ Λόγος; *Comm. Jo.* 2.318: μετὰ δὲ τὴν ἐνανθρώπησιν, εἰ οὕτως εἰρήσθαι φήσομεν, εἰκὼν ἦν ἄρα, καὶ δόκησις, καὶ σκιά, καὶ οὐ κατὰ ἀλήθειαν ἄνθρωπος, κατὰ τὸν ἄθεον Μάνην. *In illud: Pater, si possibile est, transeat* (against Marcionites and Manichaeans), attributed to Chrysostom but according to Severus of Antioch is a work of Severianus of Gabala (PG 51:37.61-38.5): στόμα διὰ Μαρκίωνος τοῦ Ποντικοῦ καὶ Οὐαλεντίνου, καὶ Μαριχαίου τοῦ Πέρσου, καὶ ἐτέρων πλειόνων αἰρέσεων ἐπεχείρησεν ἀνατρέψαι τὸν περὶ τῆς οἰκονομίας λόγον, λέγων, ὅτι οὐδὲ ἐσαρκώθη, οὐδὲ σάρκα περιβάλετο, ἀλλὰ δόκησις τοῦτο ἦν καὶ φαντασία, καὶ σκηνὴ καὶ ὑπόκρισις, καίτοι τῶν παθῶν βοῶντων, τοῦ θανάτου, τοῦ τάφου, τῆς πείνης. Theodoret, *Eranistes* 66: Βαλεντινιανῶν αὕτη καὶ Μαρκιωνιστῶν καὶ Μαριχαίων ἡ δόξα. Ἡμεῖς δὲ ὁμολογουμένως ἐδιδάχθημεν σαρκωθῆναι τὸν θεὸν λόγον, 117: Ἐγὼ τοῦτο ἐρῶ. Σίμων καὶ Μένανδρος καὶ Κέρδων καὶ Μαρκίων καὶ Βαλεντίνος καὶ Βασιλίδης καὶ Βαρδισάνης καὶ Μάνης ἡρνήθησαν ἄντικρυς τὴν ἀνθρωπότητα τοῦ Χριστοῦ, 128: Τοὺς οὖν ἀρνούμενους τοῦ κυρίου τὴν ἀνθρωπότητα, Μαρκιωνιστὰς φημι, καὶ Μαριχαίους, καὶ τοὺς ἄλλους, ὅσοι ταύτην νοσοῦσι τὴν νόσον, πῶς ἂν πείσαις. SC, ch.4: Χριστὸν Ἰησοῦν καὶ φέγγος προσονομάζουσιν ἐν σχήματι ἀνθρώπου φανέντα.

⁶⁰ Eriphanius, *Pan.* 29.6.6, 42.11.17 (Sch.24.d): πάσας τὰς αἰρέσεις, Μαριχαίους τέ φημι καὶ Μαρκιωνιστὰς Γνωστικούς τε καὶ ἄλλους [...] Οὐαλεντίνος καὶ Κολόρβασος, Γνωστικοὶ τε πάντες καὶ Μαριχαῖοι καὶ μεταγγισμὸν εἶναι ψυχῶν φάσκουσι καὶ μετεσσωματώσεις τῆς ψυχῆς.

were accused of rejecting the OT and of making only fragmentary use of the NT, and misrepresenting it (e.g. Paul's letters and similes like the parable of two trees).⁶¹

Together with Greeks (pagans) and Jews

The Manichaeans are classified together with the pagans and the Jews when it is necessary to emphasise their atheism.⁶² They were seen to be of the same type of religious deviancy and severity. Further, the common *topoi* with the Greeks (pagans) were many. According to the church historian Socrates, Manichaeism is a camouflage of the religion of the Hellenes, a Hellenized Christianity (a pseudo-religion).⁶³ In specific, the Manichaeans are paralleled to the Greeks for: their mythologies and sophisms;⁶⁴ because they believe in many gods (polytheism);⁶⁵ for worshiping the sun and the moon;⁶⁶ because they support the view that matter is eternal (*αἰδιος*: without beginning, not generated by God) and that the souls are pre-existent;⁶⁷ because they deny the resurrection⁶⁸ (like Gnostics and Jews), whereas they accept

⁶¹ Serapion, c. *Manichaeos* 39: καὶ Οὐαλεντινιανοὶ μὲν ὧδε, Μανιχαῖοι ὧδε, ἐτέρωθι δὲ Μαρκίων πτύσματα καὶ οὐ ῥήματα κατὰ τοῦ νόμου μαρτυροῦσι. Athanasius, *Ep. Aeg. Lib.* 4.(1): Ἐπεὶ πόθεν Μαρκίων καὶ Μανιχαῖω τὸ εὐαγγέλιον ἀρνούμενοις τὸν νόμον; Chrysostom, *Hom.* 2 *Cor.* 21 (PG 61:545.33-36): Καίτοι γε πολλοὶ κατατέμνουν αὐτὸν [Παῦλο] ἐπεχείρησαν αἰρετικοί· ἀλλ' ὅμως κατὰ μέλος ὡς πολλὴν ἐπιδείκνυται τὴν ἰσχύν. Κέχρηται μὲν γὰρ αὐτῷ καὶ Μαρκίων καὶ Μανιχαῖος, ἀλλὰ κατατέμνοντες; Pseudo-Chrysostomus, *In sancta lumina sive In baptismum et in tentationem* 3.7: Μαρκιωνιστῶν καὶ Μανιχαίων [...] οἱ αἰρετικοὶ οὗτοι περιτρώγοντες τὰς γραφάς, τὰ μὲν περικόπτοντες, τὰ δὲ ἑῶντες, νομίζουσι φυγεῖν τὸν ἔλεγχον.

⁶² Gregory of Nyssa, *Ep. Letoium* (PG 45:221-236, 225): εἴ τις ἠρνήσατο τὴν εἰς Χριστὸν πίστιν, ἢ πρὸς Ἰουδαϊσμόν, ἢ πρὸς εἰδωλολατρείαν, ἢ πρὸς Μανιχαϊσμόν, ἢ πρὸς ἄλλο τι τοιοῦτον ἀθεΐας εἶδος. Chrysostom, *Sac.* 4.28-30. ⁶³ Socrates, *HE* 1.22: Παρεφύη γὰρ μικρὸν ἔμπροσθεν τῶν Κωνσταντίνου χρόνων τῷ ἀληθεῖ χριστιανισμῷ ἐλληνίζων χριστιανισμός, δόγμα διὰ τοῦ Μανιχαίου χριστιανισμὸν ὑπεκρίνατο [...] 3. ὁ Μανιχαῖος [...] τὴν Ἐμπεδοκλέους καὶ Πυθαγόρου δόξαν εἰς τὸν χριστιανισμὸν παρεισήγαγεν [...] 8. Τῶν βιβλίων τοίνυν τούτων αἱ ὑποθέσεις χριστιανίζουσι μὲν τῇ φωνῇ, τοῖς δὲ δόγμασιν ἐλληνίζουσιν.

⁶⁴ Nilus of Ankara, *Ep.* 321 (to presbyter Philon): τοὺς ματαίους συλλογισμοὺς τε, καὶ σοφισμοὺς τῆς τῶν Ἑλλήνων σοφίας, οὐσπερ εἰσφρήσαι τετόλμηκας τῇ σεπτῇ Ἐκκλησίᾳ [...] Πέπαυσο τοίνυν ἐν προσποιήσει δῆθεν (10) διδασκαλίας πνευματικῆς τὰ Μανιχαίων μυθεύματα.

⁶⁵ Mark the Deacon, *Vit. Porph.* 85: Θεοὺς γὰρ πολλοὺς λέγουσιν, ἵνα Ἑλλῆσιν ἀρέσωσιν; Socrates, *HE* 1.22: καὶ γὰρ θεοὺς πολλοὺς σέβειν ὁ Μανιχαῖος προτρέπεται <αὐτὸς> ἄθεος ὢν.

⁶⁶ Alexander of Lycopolis, *Tract. Man.* 5.1-8: "Such are their chief tenets, Sun and moon they honour most of all ..." (τὰ μὲν κεφαλαιωδέστερα ὧν λέγουσιν ἐστὶν ταῦτα. τιμῶσι δὲ μάλιστα ἥλιον καὶ σελήνην). Cyril, *Catech.* 15.3: παιδευέσθωσαν οἱ ἐκ Μανιχαίων ἐπιστρέψαντες, καὶ τοὺς φωστῆρας μηκέτι θεοποιεῖτωσαν, μηδὲ τὸν σκοτισθισμένον τοῦτον ἥλιον τὸν Χριστὸν εἶναι δυσσεβῶς νομίζετωσαν. Chrysostom, *Hom. Gen.* 1 (PG 54:58148-59). Theodore, *Haer.* (PG 83:380.12-14): συντόμως ἐρῶ τῆς δυσσεβοῦς αἰρέσεως τὰ κεφάλαια. Οὗτοι τὸν ἥλιον καὶ τὴν σελήνην θεοὺς ὀνομάζουσι; Socrates, *HE* 1.22: καὶ τὸν ἥλιον προσκυνεῖν διδάσκει. SC, ch. 5: τοὺς τὸν ἥλιον λέγοντας εἶναι αὐτὸν καὶ τῷ ἡλίῳ εὐχομένους ἢ τῇ σελήνῃ ἢ τοῖς ἀστροῖς καὶ θεοὺς φανωτάτους αὐτοὺς ἀποκαλοῦντας ἢ πολλοὺς ὁλως εἰσάγοντας θεοὺς καὶ τούτοις εὐχομένους. [John of Caesarea or of Damascus?], *Disputatio cum Manichaeo* 45-46: Απόκριται δέ μοι, διὰ τί τὸν ἥλιον προσκυνεῖτε; 46. MAN. Ὅτι φωστῆρ ἐστὶ τοῦ κόσμου, τοῦ ἀγαθοῦ θεοῦ γέννημα. From this excerpt of the dialogue Bennett (2009, 33-34) concludes that the text is addressed to the Manichaeans rather than to Paulicians or other dualists.

⁶⁷ Gregory of Nazianzus, *De filio (orat. 29)*, 11.4: ὁ δὲ μόνου θεοῦ καὶ ἴδιον, τοῦτο οὐσία. οὐκ ἂν μὲν συχωρήσαιεν εἶναι μόνου θεοῦ τὸ ἀγέννητον οἱ καὶ τὴν ὕλην καὶ τὴν ἰδέαν συνεισάγοντες ὡς ἀγέννητα. τὸ γὰρ Μανιχαίων πορρωτέρω ρίψωμεν σκότος. Chrysostom, *Hom. Gen.*¹⁻⁹ 1 (PG 54:581. 48-51): Εἰ περὶ κτίσεως ἤδειςαν φιλοσοφεῖν Μανιχαῖοι καλῶς, οὐκ ἂν τὴν ἐξ οὐκ ὄντων, τὴν φθειρομένην, τὴν ῥέουσαν, τὴν ἀλλοιουμένην τοῖς τῆς ἀγεννησίας πρεσβείοις ἐτίμησαν. Εἰ περὶ κτίσεως ἤδειςαν Ἑλληνες φιλοσοφεῖν [...]; *Hom. Gen.*¹⁻⁶⁷ 2 (PG 53:29.55-57): Κἂν γὰρ Μανιχαῖος προσέλθῃ λέγων τὴν ὕλην προϋπάρχειν, κἂν Μαρκίων, κἂν Οὐαλεντίνος, κἂν Ἑλλήνων παῖδες.

⁶⁸ Eriphanius, *Pan.* 78.3.2 (3: 453). Cosmas Indicopleustes, *Top.* 6.30.1-7: Οὐδεμία τοίνυν θρησκεία, οὐκ Ἰουδαῖος, οὐ Σαμαρεῖτης, οὐχ Ἑλλήν, οὐ μανιχαῖος, πιστεύει ἢ ἐλπίζει ἀνάστασιν ἀνθρώπων. Chrysostom, *Hom. Gen.*¹⁻⁹ 7 (PG 54:613.38-614); *Hom. 1 Cor.* (homiliae 1-44), 38: τί λέγουσιν ἐνταῦθα οἱ τὰ Μανιχαίων νοσοῦντες

the reincarnation of Empedocles and Pythagoras;⁶⁹ because they hold pantheist views and argue that the one universal soul of the cosmos is divided and exists in every part of the natural world;⁷⁰ because they believe in fate (invoke the *εἰμαρμένη*); because they highly esteem astrology;⁷¹ and because they apply magical practices.⁷²

The Manichaeans are also classified along with Greeks and Jews because they both (each one for their own reason) challenge the incarnation of Christ.⁷³ At some times, the problematic Christology of Manichaeism is paralleled with the docetic views of Gnosticism, and at some others with the denial of the divinity of Christ by the pagans and Jews.⁷⁴

The Manichaeans are often grouped or even identified with several ascetical sects, like the Encratites, Apotactites, Hydroparastates, or Saccophori for their extreme asceticism, which is considered a social threat.⁷⁵ The same classification is reflected also in the laws.⁷⁶ In some laws Manichaeans were identified with these extreme ascetics, and in some other laws they coexisted as separate groups. The rationale behind their persecution was the fear of a disturbance to civil communities. Manichaean asceticism was criticized heavily by many Christian authors (Catholics, Arians, etc.), who pointed out its side-effects on anthropology, ethics, and social life (these will be further examined in ch.[5]).

Finally, as in the laws, Church authors sometimes rank Montanists and Manichaeans in the same category.⁷⁷

[...] Θάνατον ἐνταῦθα, φησὶν, οὐδὲν ἄλλο λέγει ὁ Παῦλος, ἢ τὸ ἐν ἁμαρτίᾳ γενέσθαι, καὶ ἀνάστασιν τὸ τῶν ἁμαρτιῶν ἀπαλλαγῆναι.

⁶⁹ Theodoret, *Haer* (PG 83:380.39-41): Ψυχῶν δὲ μετενσωματώσεις λέγουσι γίνεσθαι, καὶ τὰς μὲν εἰς πτηνῶν, τὰς δὲ εἰς κτηνῶν, καὶ θηρίων, καὶ ἐρπετῶν σώματα καταπέμπεσθαι. SC, ch. 6: καὶ τοὺς μετεμψύχωσιν, ἦν αὐτοὶ καλοῦσι μεταγγισμόν, εἰσηγουμένους, καὶ τοὺς τὰς βοτάνας καὶ τὰ φυτὰ καὶ τὸ ὕδωρ καὶ τὰ ἄλλα ἄψυχα πάντα ἔμψυχα εἶναι ὑπολαμβάνοντας.

⁷⁰ Basil of Caesarea, *Hom. Hexaem.* 8.1: Ἐξαγαγέτω ἡ γῆ ψυχὴν ζῶσαν. Ἐμψυχος ἄρα ἡ γῆ; καὶ χώραν ἔχουσιν οἱ ματαιόφρονες Μανιχαῖοι, ψυχὴν ἐντιθέντες τῇ γῇ; Chrysostom, *Natal.* 1 (PG 49:358.55-359.50). Chrysostom, *Hom. Gen.*¹⁻⁹ 1 (PG 54:581.48-582): κτίσεως [...] ἀγεννησίας πρεσβείας ἐτίμησαν. Theodoret, *Haer* (PG 83:380.42-43): Πάντα δὲ νομίζουσιν ἔμψυχα, καὶ τὸ πῦρ, καὶ τὸ ὕδωρ, καὶ τὸν ἀέρα, καὶ τὰ φυτὰ, καὶ τὰ σπέρματα. SC, ch. 6: καὶ τοὺς τὰς βοτάνας καὶ τὰ φυτὰ καὶ τὸ ὕδωρ καὶ τὰ ἄλλα ἄψυχα πάντα ἔμψυχα εἶναι ὑπολαμβάνοντας.

⁷¹ Mark the Deacon, *Vit. Porph.* 85.13-19: Ἐκ διαφόρων γὰρ αἰρέσεων καὶ δογμάτων Ἑλληνικῶν συνέστησαν ταύτην αὐτὴν τὴν κακοδοξίαν, [...] καὶ εἰμαρμένην καὶ ἀστρολογίαν φάσκουσιν, ἵν' ἀδεῶς ἁμαρτάνωσιν, ὥς μὴ ὄντος ἐν ἡμῖν τοῦ ἁμαρτάνειν, ἀλλ' ἐξ ἀνάγκης τῆς εἰμαρμένης. John of Caesarea, *Adv. Manichaeos*, hom. 2: ἀστρονομίαν γὰρ δῆθεν ἀσπάζονται καὶ κίνησιν τοῦ παντός ὑποτίθενται.

⁷² Mark the Deacon, *Vit. Porph.* 85.2-6, 88.22-23: Ἰουλία, ἥτις ὑπῆρχεν τῆς μισαρᾶς αἰρέσεως τῶν λεγομένων Μανιχαίων, [...] ὑπέφθειρεν αὐτοὺς διὰ τῆς γοητικῆς αὐτῆς διδασκαλίας, πολλὰ δὲ πλεόν διὰ δόσεως χρημάτων [...] φαρμακὸς Ἰουλία.

⁷³ SC, ch. 4: σύν Ἑλλήσι καὶ Ἰουδαίοις ἀπιστοῦντες τῷ μυστηρίῳ τῆς θείας ἐνανθρωπήσεως.

⁷⁴ Severianus of Gabala, *On the Nativity of Our Lord*. Theodoret, *Eranistes* 143.20-23: Ἐγὼ τὴν θεότητα λέγω μεμενηκέναι, καταποθῆναι δὲ ὑπὸ ταύτης τὴν ἀνθρωπότητα. {ΟΡΘ.} Ἑλλήνων ταῦτα μῦθοι καὶ Μανιχαίων λῆροι. Chrysostom, *Anom.* 7 (PG 48:759.48-53): Οὐκ ἀκούεις ἔτι καὶ νῦν Μαρκίωνος ἀρνούμενου τὴν οἰκονομίαν, καὶ Μανιχαίου, καὶ Οὐαλεντίνου, καὶ πολλῶν ἐτέρων;

⁷⁵ Chrysostom, *Hom. 1 Tim.* 12 (PG 62:557.47-49): Περί Μανιχαίων, καὶ Ἐγκρατιτῶν, καὶ Μαρκιωνιστῶν, καὶ παντὸς αὐτῶν τοῦ ἐργαστηρίου τὰ τοιαῦτά φησιν. Macarius of Magnesia, *Apocriticus* 25: Τοιοῦτοι δὲ Μανιχαίων παῖδες ἐξεφοίτησαν· [...] Ἐγκρατηταὶ γὰρ καὶ Ἀποτακτῆται καὶ Ἐρημίται καλοῦνται, οὐ Χριστιανοὶ τινες. Theodoret, *Haer.* 1.20 (PG 83:369.35-372): Κ'. Περί Τατιανοῦ καὶ Υδροπαραστατῶν, ἧτοι Ἐγκρατιτῶν.

⁷⁶ CTh 16.5.7 (381); 16.5.9 (382).

⁷⁷ As Basil explains in his letter to Amphilocheus (ep. 188), the Montanists, as the Manichaeans, blaspheme against the Holy Spirit, a crime identical to infidelity to God. See above in 4.2.1 and ch.[3], section 3.3.1 (Grouping Heretics). Didymus the Blind, *Trin.* 18.

The worst of the worst

The Manichaeans usually either lie at the top of such lists or are the last ones in them, in order to emphasise that they are the worst of the religious groups with which they are classified. As the Church authors explain, the Manichaeans are worse than Gnostics, docetics, dualists, pagans and Jews not because they are the last heresy to appear, but because their system is a synthesis of all the deluded dogmas and practices of all previous heresies. The newfangledness (*καινοτομία*), which they are accused of by the authors, is their unoriginality, their ‘copy-paste’ assemblage of the worst doctrines and practices of the other religions.⁷⁸

Compared to the Gnostics, docetics, and dualists, they are the worst in deceiving the faithful, pretending that they are Christians,⁷⁹ as well as for their blasphemy against the Holy Spirit. During his debate with Mani, bishop Archelaus argues before the pagan judges that Marcion, Valentinian and Basilides are saints in comparison to Mani, who claims that he is the Paraclete.⁸⁰

Compared to the pagans (Greeks), the Manichaeans are considered to be worse: not only did they not reject the Greek myths, but they also fabricated myths that were far worse.⁸¹

⁷⁸ Eusebius, *HE* 7.31.2: δόγματά γε μήν ψευδῇ καὶ ἄθεα ἐκ μυρίων τῶν πρόπαλαί ἀπεσβηκότων ἀθέων αἰρέσεων συμπεφορημένα καττύσας. Pseudo-Athanasius, *Sermo contra omnes haereses* (PG 28:513.1-2): Εἶπωμεν καὶ πρὸς τοὺς ἀσεβεστάτους Μανιχαίους, τοὺς τρυγιοὺς τῶν κακῶν. Cyril, *Catech.* 6.20-21: Καὶ μίσει μὲν πάντας αἰρετικούς, ἐξαιρέτως δὲ τὸν τῆς μανίας ἐπώνυμον [...] Ἀλλ’ οὐχ ὅτι πρὸ ὀλίγου χρόνου ἦν, διὰ τοῦτο μίσει· ἀλλὰ διὰ τὰ δυσσεβῆ δόγματα μίσει τὸν τῆς κακίας ἐργάτην, τὸ δοχεῖον παντὸς ρύπου, τὸν πάσης αἰρέσεως βόρβορον ὑποδεξάμενον. Φιλοτιμούμενος γὰρ ἐν κακοῖς ἐξαίρετος γενέσθαι, τὰ πάντων λαβὼν, καὶ μίαν αἵρεσιν πεπληρωμένην βλασφημιῶν καὶ πάσης παρανομίας συστησάμενος, λυμαίνεται τὴν ἐκκλησίαν [...] κλέπτει γὰρ ἐστὶν ἄλλοτριῶν κακῶν, ἐξειδικιούμενος τὰ κακά.; 16.9: Μάνης ὁ τὰ τῶν αἰρέσεων πασῶν κακὰ συνειληφώς. καὶ οὗτος τελευταῖος βόθρος ἀπωλείας τυγχάνων, τὰ πάντων συλλέξας; Epiphanius, *Pan.* 67.1.1 (v.3 p. 132-133, Williams, 316): “After the savage onset of this rotten, poisonous teaching of Mani, the worst of all heresies and like that of a snake [...]” (Μετὰ τὴν μοχθηρὰν ταύτην καὶ ἰοβόλον ὑπὲρ πᾶσαν αἵρεσιν καὶ ἐρπετώδη τοῦ Μάνη βαρβαρικὴν θηριοβολίαν τῆς διδασκαλίας). Basil of Caesarea, *Hom. Hexaem.* 2.4: ἡ βδελυκτὴ τῶν Μανιχαίων αἵρεσις, ἣν σηπεδὸνα τις τῶν Ἐκκλησιῶν προσειπὼν οὐχ ἁμαρτήσεται τοῦ προσήκοντος; Amphilochius of Iconium, *c. Haer.* 715: ἀλλὰ καὶ τῆς βδελυρᾶς καὶ ἀκαθάρτου αἰρέσεως τῶν Μανιχαίων. Cyril of Alexandria, *Inc.* Cyril of Scythopolis, *Vit. Euth.* 39: ἀπεστρέφετο, ἐξαιρέτως δὲ τὰς ἐξ ταύτας αἰρέσεις τέλειον μῖσος ἐμίσει. τὴν τε γὰρ Μανιχαϊκὴν βδελυρίαν ἐμυσάττετο. Severus of Antioch, *Homiliae Cathedrales cxxiii*: “the Manichaeans, who are more wicked than any other”. Oecumenius, *Commentarius in Apocalypsin* 60: τὸ κατάρατον καὶ βδελυρὸν τῶν Μανιχαίων φύλον. Peter of Sicily, *Hist. ref. Man.* (ἱστορία χρειώδης ἐλεγχός τε καὶ ἀνατροπὴ τῆς κενῆς καὶ ματαίας αἰρέσεως τῶν Μανιχαίων, τῶν καὶ Παυλικιάνων λεγομένων) ch. 33: Ἡ δὲ ἐσκοτισμένη καὶ βορβορώδης καὶ στασιώδης καὶ παμμίαρος καὶ αἰσχροουργὸς τῶν Μανιχαίων αἵρεσις, ὑπὸ πάντων ἐθνῶν διωκομένη διὰ τὸ ἀνίατον αὐτὴν ὑπάρχειν καὶ πάσης βδελυρίας ἀνάμεστον [...]. The same opinion about the Manichaeans expressed in the laws: *CTh* 16.5.65 (428): “and the Manichaeans, who have attained to the lowest villainy of crimes [...]”.

⁷⁹ Serapion, *c. Manichaeos* 3: τελευταῖον δὲ ἔκτρωμα τῆς πονηρίας πάσας τὰς τῶν ἄλλων πονηρίας ἐλαττώσασα καὶ μειζονι πονηρία τὰς τῶν ἄλλων πονηρίας δευτέρας ἀποδείξασα ἡ τοῦ Μανιχαίου προήλθε μανία.

⁸⁰ AA 42.1-3 (Vermes, 108): “Indeed I would beatify Marcion, Valentinian and Basilides and other heretics, in comparison with this fellow”. See Gardner and Lieu 2004, 10: “It seems certain that Mani himself came to understand his Twin to be the Paraclete, foretold by Jesus, the ‘comforter’ and ‘Spirit of Truth’ who would be sent afterwards according to the divine will. Since Mani asserts that with the Paraclete, ‘I have become a single body, with a single Spirit! (*Keph.* 15: 23–24)’, he himself came to be proclaimed as the Paraclete. This then became one of the most characteristic assertions of the Manichaeans, and one of the most offensive to their catholic opponents; however, it was not intended to mean that Mani was the Holy Spirit, as that equation is part of catholic not Manichaean tradition”. About Mani as the *Paraclete* in the Manichaean sources, see ch.[2], 2.2.2, fn.51.

⁸¹ Titus of Bostra, *c. Manichaeos* 3.1: Παρ’ Ἑλλῆσι μὲν οὐ τὰ ἐκείνων ἀνατρέπων, [...] κακοθεώτερον ἐλληνισμόν ὀφηγείται.

Manichaeans surpassed even the pagans in idolatry. With their theory that the divine substance is entrapped in every plant and in every animal, they came to honour everything; deifying all creatures, “they became more Greek than the Greeks (Ἑλληνες Ἑλλήνων γεγονότες).”⁸² They are worse than pagans, who do not accept, hence they are not occupied with the Christian Scriptures; unlike them, the Manichaeans use the texts of the Gospels selectively while distorting their meaning; they also say that some Gospel passages belong to matter (i.e. Evil).⁸³ A typical example, and the repeated target of harsh criticism by Christian authors, was what Augustine claimed to be the favourite passage of Manichaeans: “For our knowledge is imperfect and our prophecy is imperfect; but when the perfect comes, the imperfect will pass away” (1 Cor 13:9-10). According to the ecclesiastical writers, Mani claimed that he himself and his apocalypse were the ‘perfection’ that Paul was referring to. In other words, as the authors criticize with irony, Paul left room for Mani to complete the knowledge that Paul did not possess.⁸⁴

For the Church Fathers, Manichaeans were worse than Jews because while Jews considered some foods as unclean, the Manichaeans abhorred the whole creation.⁸⁵ The Manichaeans were considered worse than pagans, Samaritans, Jews and fornicators (!) for their occult rituals, which were considered as an insult to the divine and a sacrilege.⁸⁶

The extent to which Manichaeans were demonized is well illustrated in the following narrative of Athanasius. The Arian bishops Leontius, George, and Narcissus, realizing that the majority of clergymen took Athanasius’ side, visited the Emperor Constantius, to persuade him to persecute (by issuing an edict?) the Catholic faith (and of course Athanasius); otherwise, as they emphasized, there was a fear that both the Arians and the Emperor would be accused as heretics, and “if this come to pass”, in their words, “you must take care lest we be classed with the Manichaeans”.⁸⁷

Taxonomical lists in the canons for the converted heretics

The taxonomical lists of the converted heretics organized according to the procedure for their reception into the Church are also illuminating for our inquiry into the status of Manichaeism as a Christian heresy or not.

The church canons entitled “How to receive those who return from heresies” determine the procedures to be followed for the reception of the converted heretics into the Church. Depending on the type of heresy to which the former heretics belonged and the degree of its deviation from the official religion, the converted heretics were classified into separate categories. The procedure to be followed was different for each of these categories. The closer a heresy was to the official faith, the simpler the procedure was. Respectively, the

⁸² Serapion, *c. Manichaeos* 42.17.

⁸³ Serapion, *c. Manichaeos*: ἔδει γὰρ αὐτοῦς, εἶγε τὰ εὐαγγέλια ἐτίμων, μὴ περιτέμνειν τὰ εὐαγγέλια, μὴ μέρος τῶν εὐαγγελίων ἐξυφελεῖν. Titus of Bostra, *c. Manichaeos* 4.33-38 (That John participated in Matter!). Cf. Augustine, *Conf.* 5.11.21 (the same aspect supported by Faustus).

⁸⁴ Titus of Bostra, *c. Manichaeos* 3.10-11 & 4.86-89. Epiphanius, *Pan.* 66.61.2 (Williams, 285): “And he claims that what St. Paul said leaves room for him”. Cf. AA 15.3 & 41.

⁸⁵ Chrysostom, *Hom. 1 Tim.* (PG 62:558).

⁸⁶ Cyril, *Catech.* 6.33: Ὁ δὲ Μανιχαῖος θυσιαστηρίου μέσον, οὗ νομίζει, τίθησι ταῦτα, καὶ μιαίνει καὶ τὸ στόμα καὶ τὴν γλῶσσαν.

⁸⁷ Athanasius, *H. Ar.*, 30.2: ἡμεῖς δὲ ἐμείναμεν μόνοι. καὶ φόβος μὴ καὶ ἡ αἵρεσις γνωσθῇ καὶ λοιπὸν ἡμεῖς καὶ σὺ χρηματίζωμεν αἰρετικοί. κὰν τοῦτο γένηται, σκόπει μὴ μετὰ Μανιχαίων λογισθῶμεν (trans.: <http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/28154.htm>, altered). Did Constantius finally issue an edict? Could that be one of the edicts issued by ‘heretic’ emperors, which were not included in the *CTh*? About whether Constantius was finally associated with Manichaeism by his Catholic opponents, see Rohrbacher 2005, 326.

more a heresy deviated from the official faith, the more complex and time consuming the procedure was.⁸⁸

The oldest known source which makes reference to the corresponding procedure for converted Manichaeans is the letter of Basil of Caesarea to Amphilochius of Iconium in 374.⁸⁹ Basil's letter was very soon recognized as canonical, and as such, it was incorporated into the body of Eastern Church canons. In this letter, Basil, as an authoritative senior bishop, responds to the questions of the new and inexperienced bishop Amphilochius; he treats issues concerning the administration of penance, including the procedure for the reception of repentant heretics into the Church. In this context, Basil defines the content of the term heresy, differentiating it from the corresponding meaning of the terms schism and *παρασυναγωγή* (*conventicle*). In the category of heretics Basil incorporates Manichaeans, Valentinians, Marcionites, and Montanists (*old* heretics). According to the canon, the converted heretics had to be baptized, unlike schismatics and participants in *conventicles*, for whom it was sufficient to repent.

After the CP (380), according to which heretics were considered to be all those whose faith differed from the faith of Nicaea, the situation changed dramatically with regard to heretics. Thereafter, the state used its *carrot-and-stick* policy (i.e. privileges to Catholics and penalties to heretics) to press the heretics to convert, and the Church systematized the canons and the procedures for the reception of the converted. These church canons were also sanctioned by the decisions of the Ecumenical Councils.

Thus, the *new* (*noble*) heretics were added to the *old* heretics, and separate procedures gradually formed for the converted from the various kinds of heresies. So, in the seventh canon of the second Ecumenical Council in Constantinople (381), apart from the procedure for the *old* heretics, a second one for the heretics of the Trinitarian debate was added; later, after the Ecumenical Council of Chalcedon a third category for the heretics on the Christological dogma was further added. As depicted in the 95th canon of the Quinisext Council (692), which recapitulates the previous canons, the converted heretics were categorized into three groups, which corresponded to three different procedures:⁹⁰

(1) the first procedure, the simplest, was applied to the heretics (according to the Synod of Chalcedon) who had appeared after the Christological debate (e.g. Nestorians, Eutychians, Severians, and the like). For them it would suffice to anathematize their previous heresy and its heresiarch.

⁸⁸ The Greek title: *Περὶ τοῦ πῶς δεῖ δέχεσθαι τοὺς ἐξ αἵρέσεως ἐπιστρέφοντας*. The latin title: *"Quomodo recipiendi sint qui ex haeresibus accedunt"*.

⁸⁹ Basil of Caesarea, *Ep.* 188, cf. Joannou 1963, 2: 92-99. Although according to Gelasius of Cyzicus and Evagrius the Scholastic, Manichaeism was condemned at the first Ecumenical Council, the only relevant canons that have survived concern Cathars and Paulicians (followers of Paul of Samosata). Cf. Gelasius' *HE* 2.27.8: *Αὕτη ἐστὶν ἡ πίστις, [...] ἐν Νικαίᾳ ... κατὰ Ἀρείου ... καὶ κατὰ Σαβελλίου καὶ Φωτεινοῦ καὶ Παύλου τοῦ Σαμοσατέως καὶ Μανιχαίου καὶ Οὐαλεντίνου καὶ Μαρκίωνος καὶ κατὰ πάσης δὲ αἵρέσεως*. According to Evagrius' *HE* (2.88.17-23) Manichaeism was condemned in both the first and fourth Ecumenical Councils. As the bishops of Egypt in the fourth declare: *Φρονούμεν καθὼς καὶ οἱ ἐν Νικαίᾳ τριακόσιοι δέκα ὀκτώ ἐξέθεντο καὶ ὁ μακάριος Ἀθανάσιος καὶ ὁ ἐν ἀγίοις Κύριλλος, ἀναθεματίζοντες πᾶσαν αἵρεσιν, τήν τε Ἀρείου, καὶ Εὐνομίου, καὶ Μάνου, καὶ Νεστορίου, καὶ τῶν λεγόντων ἐξ οὐρανοῦ τὴν σάρκα τοῦ Κυρίου ἡμῶν ὑπάρχειν, καὶ μὴ ἐκ τῆς ἀγίας καὶ θεοτόκου καὶ ἀειπαρθένου Μαρίας, καθ' ὁμοιότητα πάντων ἡμῶν, χωρὶς ἁμαρτίας*. The seventh canon of the second Ecumenical Council (381), entitled "How to receive those who return from heresies", does not refer by name to the Manichaeans neither to Marcionites nor to Gnostics.

⁹⁰ *ACO (Constantinopolitanum quinisextum 691/2)*. Cf. Joannou 1963, 1.1: 230-33.

(2) the second procedure was applied to the heretics of the Trinitarian debate (e.g. Arians, Macedonians, Apollinarians), Sabbatianoï and Cathars, who apart from the anathema had to be anointed with holy oil on their forehead, eyes, nose, lips and ears.⁹¹

(3) the third procedure, the strictest, was applied to two categories of heretics. The first comprised the Eunomians,⁹² Montanists, Sabellians and many other unnamed heretics which sprung from Galatia. The second comprised the Manichaeans, Valentinians and Marcionites. The procedure—identical for both—was strenuous and long-lasting. As the canon postulates, these heretics should be received into the Church as if they were Greeks/pagans. In brief, the stages of the procedure were as follows: first they had to anathematize their heresy and its heresiarch, then they had to be exorcized, and then to be anointed with holy oil. Thereupon, after a long period of attending Christian catecheses to be instructed in the Christian doctrine, they had to be baptized (or re-baptized).

The same procedures (and classification) are also attested at the turn of the seventh century by Timothy the Presbyter (of Constantinople). Timothy categorizes converted heretics into three groups: (1) those who had to be baptized (he ranks Manichaeans here), (2) those who had to be anointed with holy oil, and (3) those for whom it would suffice to anathematize their previous fallacy and any other heresy. Presumably, those in the first category had to pass through the other two steps before being baptized.⁹³

That the procedure for the repentant Manichaeans was long-lasting is illustrated by Mark the Deacon in his *Life of Porphyry of Gaza*. The converted *Electi* and *Electae* who accompanied the Manichaean missionary Julia (after her bitter defeat during the debate with Porphyrius, the bishop of Gaza), first confessed their repentance and anathematized Mani and, after being catechized for many days by the bishop Porphyrius, were baptized.⁹⁴

However, as early as the time of the Second Ecumenical Council, Gregory of Nyssa, in his letter to the bishop of Melitene Letoius (383/390), seems to add a new procedure for the reception of the converted apostates to Judaism, paganism and Manichaeism. Gregory's letter was a response to Letoius' letter which raised a series of issues (similar to those asked by Amphilochius to Basil) concerning the administration of penance in the Church. In his letter, Gregory is indeed especially severe in arguing that for the apostate to Manichaeism (or to Judaism, or to paganism) who converts to Christianity, the duration of penance should be the whole of his life, and that he would be permitted to receive the Holy Communion only at the moment of his death.⁹⁵

In conclusion, as is reflected in the canons of the Church, the converted Manichaeans are always placed in the group for which the most austere and time-consuming measures are

⁹¹ Saying: 'Signaculum doni spiritus sancti' (σφραγίς δωρεάς πνεύματος ἁγίου).

⁹² As one can observe, the heresy of the Eunomians—though new—was the only one classified among the old. The same harsh treatment was also given to Eunomians by the law. This is because, first, they had a different type of baptism (one immersion instead of three) and, secondly, because it was considered as the most threatening of the new heresies (in the eastern part of the Empire).

⁹³ Timothy the Presbyter, *Recept. Haer.* (PG 86A.11-74 [13, 69]).

⁹⁴ Mark the Deacon, *Vit. Porph.* 91 (Lieu 2010, 101): "Now all those who heard about what happened were seized with great astonishment, not only those of our faith, but also the foreigners, and the two men and two women who accompanied Julia and all those who had been beguiled by her, rushed to throw themselves at the feet of the most blessed bishop, crying: 'We have been led astray!' And they asked for pardon. The blessed one made all of them anathematize Mani, the founder of their heresy, the one after whom they were called Manichaeans. And, having duly instructed them for very many days, he admitted them to the holy catholic church".

⁹⁵ Gregory of Nyssa, *Ep. Letoium* 225. The letter, written a few years after the Council of Constantinople, seems like a commentary on and completion of the seventh canon of the Council. For this letter see also Silvas 2007, 211-25.

postulated. The rationale of the whole procedure for their reception into the Church can be reduced to two words: converted Manichaeans had to be received ‘as Greeks’ (ὡς Ἕλληνες).

To recapitulate, as has been demonstrated by the examination of (1) the opinion of the specialists, (2) the ecclesiastical lists of heretics, and (3) the taxonomical lists of the converted heretics, although Manichaeans are often named by the authors as heretics, it seems they constituted for them a distinctive *heretical* category entirely outside of Christianity. Furthermore, the fact that the Manichaean issue and doctrines had never been addressed in any of the ecumenical synods (beyond its mere inclusion in the lists of anathematized heretics) shows that the Church’s authorities in no way regarded Manichaeism as a form of Christianity. Neither relevant synodic tomes, nor epistles, canons, or definitions clarifying the failure of the Manichaean doctrine were ever issued. Wherever there is a reference to Manichaeism in the proceedings of the Synods, it is to emphasize that the adversaries of the conflicting parties think as *μανιχαῖζοντες* or *μανιχαϊόφρονες*, something that would advocate for the condemnation of their views.

It is also important to note, that in all the above cases, the word *Manichaean* concerns real Manichaeans because it exists in parallel with and is distinguished from other heresies, either *new/noble* or *old*.

4.2.2 Heretics as ‘Manichaeans’ (Imagined Manichaeans)⁹⁶

How did *noble* heretics see Manichaeans? What was the relationship between them? Many patristic texts give the impression that there was a close relationship between Manichaeism and the *noble* heresies of the era. To be specific, Manichaeism is often presented as the root of all Triadological and Christological heresies.

For example, Athanasius of Alexandria links Arianism to Manichaeism due to the notion of *subordinatio*. According to him, the Arians introduce two *Logoi* as the Manichaeans introduce two Gods. This is because, as for the Manichaeans the creator of this world is not the one God but another whom their imagination invented, similarly for the Arians the Logos of God (Word, Wisdom) is different from the incarnated Logos (Son).⁹⁷

For Basil of Caesarea and his brother Gregory of Nyssa, the doctrine of the Anomians (extreme Arians) is verging on Manichaeism because they could not distinguish between *γενητός* (‘created’) and *γεννητός* (‘begotten’), introducing likewise two first principles: the *κτιστόν* (‘created’) and the *ἄκτιστον* (‘uncreated’). As Gregory argues, Eunomius (Anomoean) premising that the terms *ἀγενησία* (ingenerateness) and *γέννηση* (generation) signify two different substances, and identifying the essence of God as *ἀγενησία* (ingenerateness) and the essence of the Son as *γέννηση* (generation), deduced that the Father and the Son are of two different substances. In this way, he argues, the Manichaean doctrine of the two principles intruded into the Church.⁹⁸

⁹⁶ This section is an extended version of Matsangou 2017b, 163-65.

⁹⁷ Athanasius, c. Ar. (*Oratio I* 53. 3-4 and *Oratio II* 39-41; *Oratio III contra Arianos*, (35. 2-3) [347]; *Ep. Aeg. Lib.*, (16. 1-2) [55-56]; *Ep. Adelp.* col. 1073.

⁹⁸ Basil of Caesarea, *Adv. Eunomium*, II. 34 (PG 29:652): Εἰ μὲν οὖν, δύο ἀρχὰς ἀντιπαρεξάγων ἀλλήλαις, ταῦτά φησι, μετὰ Μανιχαίου καὶ Μαρκίωνος συντριβήσεται. Gregory of Nyssa, c. *Eunomium* Cap.1.35 (Book I, 1, §§503-523): πρὸς τὸν μανιχαϊσμόν ῥέπειν τὸ δόγμα τῶν Ἀνομοίων [...] μὴ δύο ἑτερογενῆ πράγματα ἐν τῷ τῆς ἀρχῆς λόγῳ ὑπολαμβάνοιτο καὶ διὰ τούτου πάροδον λάβοι τῶν Μανιχαίων τὸ δόγμα. τὸ γὰρ κτιστόν καὶ τὸ ἄκτιστον ἐκ διαμέτρου πρὸς ἀλλήλα τὴν κατὰ τὸ σημαινόμενον ἐναντίωσιν ἔχει. εἰ οὖν τὰ δύο <ἐν> ταῖς ἀρχαῖς ταχθεῖη, κατὰ τὸ λεληθὸς ἡμῖν ὁ μανιχαϊσμός εἰς τὴν ἐκκλησίαν τοῦ θεοῦ εἰσφθαρήσεται. On this see also Lieu 1994, 107.

Arius on the other hand, defending his faith in the one God, considers that, by attributing the term *ὁμοούσιος* ('homoeousios') to the Logos, the Catholics introduced the Manichaean emanations.⁹⁹ Arians considered that the content of the term *ὁμοούσιος* and the principle of consubstantiality were analogous to the Manichaean tenet that Jesus was an "emanation of the Father of Greatness".¹⁰⁰ As some Arian clerics argued in a letter addressed to Alexander (the bishop of Alexandria), the term *ὁμοούσιος* (Father's emanation according to them), which is used by both Catholics and Manichaeans, renders the essence of God composite, dividable, and mutable, which in turn leads to polytheism.¹⁰¹ According to the church historian Philostorgius (who was himself an Anomoean), the Arian orator Aetios, whom he considered a teacher *par excellence*, regarded Manichaeism as an overt polytheism, while seeing Catholicism as a covert one.¹⁰²

In the next step of the development of Christian theological debates, the Christological, Manichaeans still remained the negative paradigm for all. According to Socrates the Scholastic, representatives of the Antiochene School (dyophysites) dogmatized as did the Manichaeans.¹⁰³ In contrast, Theodoret of Cyrrhus (accused of being a dyophysite and Nestorian by his Catholic and Monophysite opponents) systematically correlates Monophysite Christology to Manichaean docetism.¹⁰⁴ As is reflected in his letter to Eusebius of Ankara, he considered that the Monophysite theses strengthened and renewed the Manichaean heresy.¹⁰⁵ In general, testimonies linking Monophysitism and Manichaeism are many and from all sides.¹⁰⁶ Theodorus of Raithou considered Eutyches as successor and defender of Mani's and Apollinarius' dogma.¹⁰⁷ Nestorius, in an epistle he addressed to Cyril, bishop of Alexandria,

Chrysostom, *Anom. (homilia 7)* (PG 48:758-59): Οὐκ ἀκούεις ἔτι καὶ νῦν Μαρκίωνος ἀρνούμενου τὴν οἰκονομίαν, καὶ Μανιχαίου, καὶ Οὐαλεντίνου, καὶ πολλῶν ἑτέρων;

⁹⁹ Arius, 'Epistle ad Alexandrus', in Epiphanius, *Pan.* 69.7-8 (pp. 157.20-159.13), esp. 69.7.6 (158.11-14). See also Lieu 1994, 102 and Edwards 2015, 141.

¹⁰⁰ Lieu 1992, 126.

¹⁰¹ Athanasius, *De synodus Arimini in Italia et Seleucia in Isauria* 16.3-5: ὡς Οὐαλεντίνος προβολὴν τὸ γέννημα τοῦ πατρὸς ἐδογμάτισεν, [...] Μανιχαῖος μέρος ὁμοούσιον τοῦ πατρὸς τὸ γέννημα εἰσηγήσατο [...] εἰ δὲ τὸ 'ἐξ αὐτοῦ' καὶ τὸ 'ἐκ γαστρὸς' καὶ τὸ 'ἐκ τοῦ πατρὸς' ἐξῆλθον καὶ ἦκω' ὡς μέρος αὐτοῦ ὁμοοῦσιου καὶ ὡς προβολὴ ὑπὸ τινων νοεῖται, σύνθετος ἔσται ὁ πατήρ καὶ διαιρετὸς καὶ τρεπτὸς [...].

¹⁰² Philostorgius, *HE* 3.15. Cf. Amidon 2007, xvii, 54 fn. 57. Philostorgius (who was Eunomius' encomiast) in his *Ecclesiastical History* (425-433), records a debate that took place in Alexandria ca. 356, between two mighty orators, the Manichaean Aphthonius and the Arian Aetius. I will discuss this in ch.[7].

¹⁰³ Socrates, *HE* 7.32.20.

¹⁰⁴ Theodoret, *Ep. Sirm.* 82. 3-10.

¹⁰⁵ Theodoret, *Ep. Sirm.* 82, in 449. According to his letter his religious opponents, who renew the Manichaean heresy, calumniated him to the emperor as heretic because he combats them. Presumably by 'those who renew the Manichaean heresy' he meant the Monophysites: Οἱ γὰρ τὴν Μαρκίωνος καὶ Βαλεντίνου καὶ Μάνητος καὶ τῶν ἄλλων δοκητῶν αἵρεσιν ἐπὶ τοῦ παρόντος ἀνανεοῦμενοι, δυσχεραίνοντες ὅτι τὴν αἵρεσιν αὐτῶν ἀντικρυς στηλιτεύομεν, ἐξαπατήσαι τὰς βασιλικὰς ἐπειράθησαν ἀκοάς, αἰρετικούς ἡμᾶς ἀποκαλοῦντες.

¹⁰⁶ Justinian, c. *monophysitas* 93: οἱ Ἀκέφαλοι [...] δικαίως κληρωσάμενοι προσηγορίαν τὰ τῶν εἰρημένων ἀθέων φρονοῦντες ἀνδρῶν [Ἀπολλιναρίου τοῖνον καὶ Μανιχαίου], εἰ καὶ τὰς προσηγορίας αὐτῶν δολερῶς ἀπωθοῦνται. According to Gardner and Lieu (2004, 174) since the above "fragments are all cited in polemics against Monophysites by Orthodox writers [...] are very likely to be fabrications".

¹⁰⁷ Theodorus of Raithou, *Praeparatio* 2-7 (pp. 187-91). Ephraim of Antioch, *Capita xii*, 262: Κατὰ πάσης μὲν αἱρέσεως τῇ ἀληθείᾳ μαχομένων, ἐξαίρετως δὲ κατὰ τῆς Νεστοριανῆς ἡτοῦ Ἰουδαϊκῆς αἱρέσεως καὶ Μανιχαϊκῆς τρυγίας τοῦ πεπλανημένου Εὐτύχεως.

blames Cyril and his clerics as Manichaeian-minded (*μανιχαϊόφρονες*), apparently due to their Monophysite wording on Christology.¹⁰⁸

The case of Severus of Antioch, a moderate Monophysite himself, who “stigmatized his extreme Monophysite opponents as ‘Manichaeans’ on Christological issues” is characteristic.¹⁰⁹ For Severus, the Manichaeans were “more wicked [heretics] than any other”¹¹⁰ Severus in turn, “himself was accused by Antiochene monks of being a Manichaeian in the Synod of 536 for not believing that Mary was the Mother of God”.¹¹¹ For the seventh-century author whose works have been passed on under the name of the (later) authority Oecumenius of Tricca, the followers of Eutyches (extreme Monophysites) argue like the Manichaeans since they support the docetic view of incarnation.¹¹²

Origenists of the meta-Chalcedonian controversy are also considered as Manichaeian-minded due to their protology (pre-existence of the souls) and eschatology (apocatastasis, final restoration).¹¹³

As can be deduced from the above, not only the Catholics but also the *noble* heretics compared their religious opponents to Manichaeans and considered that a fundamental part of their theology connected them directly and substantially to Manichaeism.

Furthermore, the different Christian parties are (in most cases) not identified with, or accused of being Manichaeans. Instead, it is their theology, Triadology, and Christology that is compared to Manichaeism, and is underlined that they think as the Manichaeans do (*μανιχαϊόφρονες*). I have the impression that the tone in many texts is more admonitory and exhortative, rather than denunciatory. Their aim is pastoral (i.e. caring for believers), because the correct wording of the dogma had soteriological dimensions. In such a context, Nilus the bishop of Ankara addressed a letter to the presbyter Philon, in which he rebukes Philon because he dissimulated the Manichaeian teachings as Christian when preaching to his flock.¹¹⁴

Even in some cases where the word *Manichaeian* is used, it seems from the context that it is not used literally. Through their letters, many Catholic bishops, among them Pamphilus of Abydus and Quintianus of Ausculanum, call the Monophysite bishop of Antioch Petrus Cnapeus, to the correct Christology:

¹⁰⁸ Nestorius, *Ad Cyrillum Alexandrinum* II 180; ep. 5; ACO (*Ephesenum anno 431*), 1.1.1, 32⁹⁻¹¹: γίνωσκε δὲ πεπλανημένον σαυτὸν ὑπὸ τῶν τῆς σῆς ἰσως διαθέσεως κληρικῶν, ὑπὸ τῶν ἐνταῦθα ἀπὸ τῆς ἀγίας συνόδου καθηρημένων, ὡς τὰ Μανιχαίων φρονούντων.

¹⁰⁹ Lieu 1994, 110.

¹¹⁰ Lieu 1994, 110. Severus of Antioch, *Homiliae Cathedrales cxxiii*, in Gardner and Lieu 2004, 161.

¹¹¹ *Acta Synodus (Constantinopolitana et Hierosolymitana anno 536)*, 3.72.9-10 & 16-17. Cf. Lieu 1994, 110 fn. 361.

¹¹² Oecumenius, *Commentarius in Apocalypsin* 13.2 (p. 60) (Suggit, 46): “He has become a human being, without discarding his divinity, and he is truly a human being [...] This has nothing to do with analogy, as Nestorians say, nor with semblance or appearance, as Eutychians say and the accursed and disgusting tribe of the Manichaeans”. About the identity of the author see Suggit 2006, 3-16.

¹¹³ Cyril of Scythopolis, *Vit. Sab.* 124. Justinian, *Epistula ad synodum de Origene* 122-124. Evagrius, *HE* 188.28-189.5: Ἰουστινιανὸς [...] συζητάς καὶ τοῦ λιβέλλου τὸ ἴσον ἀτὰρ καὶ τὰ πρὸς Βιγίλιον περὶ τούτων ἐπεσταλμένα. Ἐξ ὧν ἀπάντων ἔστιν ἐλεῖν ὅπως ἐσπουδάσθη τῷ Ὀριγέnei Ἑλληνικῶν καὶ Μανιχαϊκῶν ζιζανίων ἐμπλήσαι τῶν ἀποστολικῶν δογμάτων τὸ λιτόν. As Perczel (2004, 205-36) argues, the reason that the Origenists were associated with the Manichaeans by anti-Origenist authors is that they used a common vocabulary, mythical schemes and motifs. Origenists of the sixth century, appealing to the same audience as Manichaeans, combat Manichaeian dualism using its own means. To his question of whether finally “this similarity of language testifies to any direct influence of Manichaeian thought on the Origenists”, Perczel answers “I think it does”.

¹¹⁴ Nilus of Ankara, *Ep.* 321 (book 2) (PG 79:356-57). Cf. Kyrtatas (2005, 67) on the Christian “belief that salvation depended on orthodox dogma”.

Pamphylos: [...] arguing likewise in your writings [...] wouldn't I call you a Manichaean?

Quintianus: When you claim that Christ has only one nature, how do you mean this? Created as Arius says, or phantasmal as Manichaeus does?¹¹⁵

Athanasius' rhetorical question to Adelphius can be interpreted from the same point of view:

Why then, [Arians] who adopt their [Valentinian, Marcionite, Manichaean] beliefs, do not also inherit their names? For it is reasonable, since they hold their misbeliefs, to also have their names, so as to be called Valentinians, Marcionites and Manichaeans.¹¹⁶

Athanasius' question is revealing for the use of the term 'Manichaean' as a label, and as a religious abuse in the Triadological debate during the fourth century.

A further illustration of how insulting it was considered for one to be called a Manichaean is his next sentence:

Perhaps then they will become ashamed because of the bad odour of these names and so they will be enabled to perceive into what depth of impiety they have fallen.¹¹⁷

A corresponding question in the Christological debate during the fifth century is that of Eutheries of Tyana, the leader of the Nestorian party at the third Ecumenical Council of Ephesus in 431. Eutheries blames Monophysites as apostates to Manichaeism and wonders "how not to call you Manichaeans since you have the same misbeliefs?"¹¹⁸

To sum up: in the above cases, even when the word *Manichaean* is used, it acquires the meaning of *μανιχαῖζων* or *μανιχαϊόφρων*. Furthermore, for both Catholics and *noble* heretics, Manichaeism constituted the worst heresy *par excellence*, which became the benchmark for calculating the degree of heresy.¹¹⁹ The latter indicates that Manichaeism was active as a missionary religion and reflects the trouble that it caused. In the words of Serapion of Thmuis, Manichaeism makes the rest of the heresies appear harmless.¹²⁰

Because the Manichaeans were considered the worst of the worst heretics by all the Christian parties, the term 'Manichaean' with the meaning of *μανιχαῖζων* became a label of abuse very early (i.e. during the Arian controversy) and continued to exist long after the period covered in this study. Therefore, in the literature under examination, alongside the real Manichaeans, there appeared the imaginary ones.

¹¹⁵ *Acta Synodus (Constantinopolitana et Hierosolymitana anno 536)*, 3.9.31-33 (Pamphylos: ἀλλ' ἐν τοῖς συγγράμμασιν ἔφησιν [...] οὐ Μανιχαῖόν σε λέξω;) & 3.15.23-24 (Quintianus: εἰ δὲ φύσεως μιᾶς ἐστὶν ὁ Χριστὸς καὶ οὐ δύο, τί οὐ λέγεις τὸν Χριστὸν κτιστὸν ὡς ὁ Ἄρειος ἢ ἄκτιστον ὡς ὁ Μανιχαῖος;).

¹¹⁶ Athanasius, *Ep. Adelph.* col. 1073: Διὰ τί οὖν, τὰ τούτων φρονούντες, οὐχὶ καὶ τῶν ὀνομάτων αὐτῶν γίνονται κληρονόμοι; Εὐλόγον γὰρ ὦν τὴν κακοδοξίαν ἔχουσι, τούτων ἔχειν καὶ τὰ ὀνόματα, ἵνα λοιπὸν Οὐαλεντινιανοὶ καὶ Μαρκιωνισταὶ καὶ Μανιχαῖοι καλῶνται.

¹¹⁷ Athanasius, *Ep. Adelph.*, col. 1073.20-30 (NPNF² 4:1381, altered): Τάχα κἄν οὕτως διὰ τὴν τῶν ὀνομάτων δυσωδίαν αἰσχυρόμενοι κατανοῆσαι δυνηθῶσιν, εἰς ὅσον βάθος ἀσεβείας πεπτῶκασι. See also the episode with Constantius and the Arian bishops (section 4.2.1), Athanasius, *H. Ar.* 30.4-7 (358).

¹¹⁸ Eutheries of Tyana, *Confutationes quarundam propositionum* 14.45-50: πρὸς Μανιχαίους ἡτομολήσατε, καὶ πῶς φεύγετε τὴν ἐκείνων προσηγορίαν, ὧν φαίνεται κληρονόμοι τῆς ἀφορήτου κακοδοξίας;

¹¹⁹ It has been argued that both Arius and the Antiochian School developed their Triadology and Christology, respectively, in response to the Manichaean docetism. See Lyman 1989, 493-503 (esp. 501-03); Perczel 2004, 205-36.

¹²⁰ Serapion, *c. Manichaeos* 3.21-23, p. 30.

4.3 Manichaeism Religious Profile According to the Pagan Authors

The most important testimony for the Manichaeism religious profile which comes from the pagan world is the work of the philosopher Alexander of Lycopolis, *Contra Manichaei opiniones disputatio*. Alexander's work is the oldest treatise against the Manichaeism. Around 300, at the time Alexander wrote it, the Manichaeism missionary activity in Egypt must have caused a general disturbance and alarm, as illustrated by the decree of Diocletian (302) and the circular letter attributed to Theonas, the bishop of Alexandria (282-300).¹²¹

The Manichaeism religious identity, as depicted by Alexander, has been much discussed by scholars. As the translators of the text (van der Horst and Mansfeld) commented in their introduction, "very interesting for the students of Manichaeism is the fact that so early a witness as Alexander presents Mani as a Christian heretic".¹²² This remark, which is also important for the question of the origin of Manichaeism, has attracted a lot of attention and has been repeatedly quoted in later works.¹²³

The opinion of the translators was based mainly on the two opening chapters of Alexander's text. Alexander starts his work on Manichaeism by presenting Christian philosophy. He says that, although 'simple', it was effective in stimulating moral progress by instigating people to desire what is good. According to him, this 'simple' Christian philosophy was rendered decadent within the systems of thought of later heretics, worst of all Mani (εἰς ἀνήνυτον πρᾶγμα τὴν ἀπλὴν ταύτην ἐμβελήκασιν φιλοσοφίαν). Reading the two first chapters this way, it could indeed be inferred that Alexander presents Manichaeism as a Christian heresy. This thesis conforms also to Gardner's theory. Alexander met Manichaeism at an earlier stage of the religion's development, earlier than the Church Fathers; hence it is probable that the Manichaeism he faced was more Christian than the Manichaeism described by later Church Fathers.

However, I believe that the importance attributed to this first image of Manichaeism in Alexander's introduction has been overstated. Furthermore, the thesis that Alexander regarded Manichaeism as one of the Christian heresies is reinforced by the translation of the text; it presupposes such an interpretation, and is in turn derived from the conviction of the translators of the Christian origin of Manichaeism. They worked on the translation in the period immediately after the discovery of the CMC, when the hypothesis of the Christian origin of Manichaeism was convincing to most researchers. In the words of the translators "the Christian origin [of Manichaeism] has now been definitely proved by the new codex of Cologne".¹²⁴ The new translation and the emphasis on the importance of this specific part of Alexander's discussion of Manichaeism led later scholars to regard it as highly significant for the discourse concerning the origins of Manichaeism; this stimulated interpretations of the text from this perspective. Thus, Alexander's criticism (in another chapter of his text) that

¹²¹ All the three sources were firstly discussed in ch.[2], 2.2.1.

¹²² van der Horst and Mansfeld 1974, 6.

¹²³ Gersh 1976, 211: "but the writer [Van der Horst] draws attention to the important point that the pagan philosopher presents Mani as a Christian heretic (p. 6 and n. 11)". Lieu, 1994 158: "Alexander [...] regarded [Manichaeism] as an eccentric form of Christianity". Lieu (2010, 162), slightly modifying his previous opinion, states: Alexander "saw Manichaeism as a 'complex' off-shoot of the Christian school". van Oort 2013, 277: "In modern research, Alexander's *Against the Doctrines of Manichaeism* is important for two main reasons. Firstly, because it is a highly significant source for our knowledge of early Manichaeism. A major characteristic of Alexander's description is that he considers it to be a form of Christianity. In the past decades, this assessment of Mani's religion has been confirmed by several discoveries of Manichaeism texts".

¹²⁴ van der Horst and Mansfeld 1974, 6 fn. 11.

Manichaean teachings relied on the voice of the prophets instead of being based on the reason of the apodictic principles of the Greek philosophers, was interpreted as a criticism of Christianity.¹²⁵ As Lieu argues, for “a pagan philosopher like Alexander [...] the Manichaeans were no different from the Christians”, in that both relied on the prophets.¹²⁶ This interpretation, however, is incompatible with his position on Christianity, as will be shown below.

My thesis does not intend to challenge the translators’ opinion regarding the origin of Manichaeism. As was made clear from the outset, the origin of Manichaeism does not fall within the scope of my research. What I doubt is the suggestion that Alexander presents Mani as a Christian heretic, or that Alexander’s whole treatise represents Manichaeism as a Christian heresy. It is interesting to note here that the older translation by James Hawkins did not stimulate relevant discussion concerning the origin.¹²⁷ I quote below the two translations of the same passage:¹²⁸

The philosophy of the Christians is termed simple. [...] But this being divided into many questions by the number of those who come after, there arise many, just as is the case with those who are devoted to dialectics [...] so that now they come forward as parents and originators of sects and heresies [...] wish to become the heads of the sects [...] 2. So in these matters also, while in novelty of opinion each endeavours to show himself first and superior, they brought this philosophy, which is simple, almost to a nullity. Such was he whom they call Manichaeus, Persian by race [rest is missing from translation].¹²⁹

The philosophy of the Christians is a simple philosophy [...] Since this simple philosophy has been slit up into numerous factions by its later adherents, the number of issues has increased just as in sophistry [...] some of these men [...] wanted to be leaders of the sects [...] 2. as each of them strove to surpass his predecessor by the novelty of his doctrines, they converted the simple philosophy into a hopelessly complicated and ineffectual thing. An example of this tendency is the man named Manichaeus, a Persian by birth, whose astonishing doctrines, in my opinion, far surpass those of all the others.¹³⁰

What makes the difference is that according to the translation of Hawkins, Christian philosophy was “divided into many questions by the number of those who come after [in life] (ἐπιγενομένων)”,¹³¹ while, according to the translation of van der Horst and Mansfeld, Christian philosophy was “split up into numerous factions by its later adherents”. The literal

¹²⁵ Alexander, *Tract. Man.* 5.30-33 (Van der Horst and Mansfeld, 59): “The role attributed by the philosophers of the Greeks to the postulates, namely the underived propositions upon which proofs are based is represented among these people by the voice of the prophets”.

¹²⁶ Lieu 1994, 170.

¹²⁷ See ANF 6:411-35.

¹²⁸ Alexander, *Tract. Man.* 1-2: Ἡ Χριστιανῶν φιλοσοφία ἀπλὴ καλεῖται [...] Εἰς πλεῖστα δὲ ταύτης ὑπὸ τῶν ἐπιγενομένων μερισθείσης ζητήσεις συνέστησαν πλείονες καθάπερ ἐν τοῖς ἐριστικοῖς [...] καὶ τινες ἤδη καὶ αἰρέσεων προὔστησαν [...] τῶν αἰρέσεων ἡγεῖσθαι ἤξιουν [...] οὕτω δὲ καὶ ἐπὶ τούτων τῇ καινότητι τῶν δοξῶν ἐκάτερος τὸν πρὸ αὐτοῦ υπερβάλλεσθαι σπουδάζων εἰς ἀνήνυτον πρᾶγμα τὴν ἀπλὴν ταύτην ἐμβεβλήκασιν φιλοσοφίαν· ὥσπερ ὁ λεγόμενος Μανιχαῖος, ὃς Πέρσης μὲν τίς ἐστιν τὸ γένος, κατὰ γε τὴν ἐμὴν δόξαν πάντας ὑπερβαλὼν τῷ θαυμάσιᾳ λέγειν.

¹²⁹ ANF 6:413-14.

¹³⁰ van der Horst and Mansfeld 1974, 48-52.

¹³¹ Translation of ‘ἐπιγενομένων’, ἐπιγενόμενος= to be born after, come into being after, οἱ ἐπιγινόμενοι ἄνθρωποι posterity, Id.9.85; οἱ ἐπιγενόμενοι τούτῳ σοφισταὶ who came after him, the following, the next, become or come into being afterwards.

translation is the first. The second requires an interpretative proposal.¹³² Thus, according to a more literal and neutral translation, Alexander says that Manichaeism is a heresy, but he does not say that it is a Christian heresy. The content of the term heresy during the period under investigation, as has been indicated above, was broad and polysemous.¹³³ Especially at the time Alexander wrote his treatise and in the context of pagan philosophy, the term still had the meaning of ‘school of thought’, a ‘system of philosophical principles, etc. Indeed, in a subsequent chapter of his treatise Alexander himself uses the term *αἵρεσις* in the sense of philosophical school.¹³⁴

Consequently, I will argue that in the rest of Alexander’s treatise, comprising his whole argumentation refuting the Manichaean doctrines, nothing suggests that he believes that he is confronting a Christian heresy. I would rather say that he seems to consider it as a ‘pagan/Hellenic’ heresy.

The Manichaean missionaries that Alexander met, among them Papos and Thomas, instead of using quotations from the Christian Scriptures (NT) in their propaganda, are said to have used fables from Greek mythology as supporting arguments. For example, they invoke the battle of the Giants to prove that the Greek poets were aware of the rebellion of matter (= evil principle) against God. They present the dismemberment of Dionysus by the Titans as supporting evidence for their doctrine of the dispersal of divine light particles in matter.¹³⁵ Alexander is especially critical. Manichaeans, he writes, have surpassed the poets. Their stories are of the same kind as those of the Greek poets; however, while for the poets they were allegories aiming to teach moral lessons, Manichaeans meant them literally. Alexander confesses that he himself knows such persons who mix together and quote material from poetry in order to support their arguments and doctrines.¹³⁶ As he testifies, the Manichaean missionaries, applying such methods, succeeded to convert even some of his fellow-philosophers.

I, for one, do not wish to deny that these doctrines are capable of influencing the minds of those who uncritically accept this theory, especially since deceitful expositions of this kind were successful in making converts out of certain fellow-philosophers of mine.¹³⁷

¹³² Similar is the critique concerning the translation by Gersh (1976, 212): “in some ways the authors may be felt to be prone to excessive diligence in this respect [trans.] [...] perhaps the interpretation of the sentence [...] might well have been left to the reader’s own ingenuity”.

¹³³ See section 4.1 (*Methodological ruminations*).

¹³⁴ Alexander, *Tract. Man.* 24.20: εἰ δὲ κατ’ αὐτῶν τὴν καλλίστην αἵρεσιν ὁ νοῦς κατ’ αὐτοῦς ἐστὶν τὰ ὄντα πάντα. The expression ‘καλλίστην αἵρεσιν’ is translated by van der Horst and Mansfeld (1974, 93) as ‘best school’. Moreover, the Catholic writers themselves, from the beginning to the end of the period under investigation, repeatedly stressed that Manichaeism is a heresy that claims to be Christian. According to the testimony of Epiphanius, even in the 370s there were people (Christians) who considered Manichaeans as Christians. It is thus expected that when Manichaeism first appeared in Roman territories to be considered by the pagans as a form of Christianity. John of Damascus (*Haer.*) also classifies Islam (the Ismailite religion, θρησκεία τῶν Ἰσμηλιτῶν) as a Christian heresy, the last of his time. Was it?

¹³⁵ Alexander, *Tract. Man.* 5 (van der Horst and Mansfeld, 57): “The more cultivated among them, who are not unfamiliar with Greek mythology, call to our memory parts of our own tradition. They quote the mysteries, comparing the dismemberment of Dionysus by the Titans to the dividing up, in their own teachings, of the divine power over matter. They also refer to the battle of the giants as told in our poetry, which to their mind proves that the poets were not ignorant of the insurrection of matter against God”.

¹³⁶ Alexander, *Tract. Man.* 10 (van der Horst and Mansfeld, 70-71): “They surpass by far the mythographers [...] Their stories are undoubtedly of the same sort, since they describe a regular war of matter against God, but they do not even mean this allegorically, as e.g. Homer did [...]”. For the presentation of the Manichaean mythology in Alexander, see Widengren 1985, 830.

¹³⁷ Alexander, *Tract. Man.* 5.15-19 (van der Horst and Mansfeld, 58).

In addition to Greek myths, according to Alexander, Manichaeans took ideas from Greek philosophers (e.g. Plato, Aristotle, Pythagoras) which, however, they distorted. They talked about matter, but they did not mean it as Plato and Aristotle, but as “the random motion within each individual thing”, which is something completely different.¹³⁸ Elsewhere, Alexander criticizes Manichaean pantheistic views¹³⁹ and the Manichaean misconception of Pythagoras’ theory.¹⁴⁰ Thus, Alexander’s work is a confirmation of the Church Fathers’ claim that the Manichaeans in their propaganda to pagans/Greeks “set out to prove that [...] [their] message accords with their traditions”.¹⁴¹

The Manichaean prophets, as described by Alexander, look like decayed Greek poets and philosophers, rather than Christian prophets. Their teachings are presented as a parody and a caricature of Greek mythology and philosophy. As Mansfeld comments, Alexander “argues against the Manichaeans from a Platonist point of view, often treating his opponents as if they were some sort of crypto-Stoics”.¹⁴² The latter is also illustrated in his presentation of the Manichaean doctrines, which are recorded in “their old and new scriptures (γραφάς παλαιάς τε καὶ νέας)”.¹⁴³ These are doctrines that had nothing in common with Christianity, and were later combated by the Church writers. Both Alexander and Christian authors like Titus of Bostra and Serapion of Thmuis developed the same rationale in their treatises against Manichaeans. Apart from the main target of their criticism, which was dualism and its consequences for anthropology and ethics, there are many other parallels in their rhetoric.¹⁴⁴ For example, a recurrent target of both the Church Fathers’ and Alexander’s criticism is the Manichaean theory of the construction of the salvific machinery for the pumping of the souls from matter, through the sun and the moon:

The sun and the moon [...] continually separate the divine power from matter and send it on its way toward God.¹⁴⁵

They say that both sun and moon separate the divine power from matter bit by bit and transmit it to God, the moon receiving it within itself from the time when it is new until when it is full, and then giving it to the sun, which sends it on towards God.¹⁴⁶

¹³⁸ Alexander, *Tract. Man.* 2.18-26 (van der Horst and Mansfeld, 52-53).

¹³⁹ Alexander, *Tract. Man.* 22.15-19.

¹⁴⁰ Alexander, *Tract. Man.* 6.

¹⁴¹ Titus of Bostra, c. *Manichaeos* 4.2.

¹⁴² van der Horst and Mansfeld 1974, 47. Cf. Stroumsa and Stroumsa 1988 & Stroumsa 1992.

¹⁴³ Alexander, *Tract. Man.* 5. Cf. ch.[2], 2.3.3.

¹⁴⁴ See for example chs 13 and 14. As Alexander states (13.14-18), according to the Manichaean theory, natural disasters should “belong to the domain of the good”, because they “would render possible the return to God of a great part of the power which has been confined within matter”. Similarly Titus of Bostra (c. *Manichaeos* 2.24-29), ca. 70 years later, points out that Manichaeans contradict themselves arguing, on the one hand, that matter’s increase is harmful and that the birth of children increases matter, while, on the other hand, they consider matter’s destruction through natural disasters as evil, and massive deaths through calamities as human woes.

¹⁴⁵ Alexander, *Tract. Man.* 3.30-33 (van der Horst and Mansfeld, 55): ἥλιον καὶ σελήνην ταῖς [...] τὴν δύναμιν τὴν θεῖαν τῆς ὕλης ἀποχωρίζοντας καὶ πρὸς τὸν θεὸν παραπέμποντας. For the whole procedure of the pumping of light particles from matter, through the sun and the moon, see Ch. 4.4-12: “For at each increase the moon receives the power which is separated from matter and during this time it is filled with it; and when it has become full, it transmits it to the sun as it wanes. The sun, again, passes it on to God; and when it has done this, again receives that part of Soul which has migrated towards it since the last full moon”.

¹⁴⁶ Alexander, *Tract. Man.* 22.1-6 (van der Horst and Mansfeld, 86): Λέγουσι δὲ ὅτι καὶ ἥλιος καὶ σελήνη τὴν θεῖαν δύναμιν κατὰ μικρὸν διακρίναντες ἀπὸ τῆς ὕλης πρὸς τὸν θεὸν ἀποπέμπουσιν, τῆς σελήνης ἐν ταῖς νομηνίαις μέχρι τῆς πανσελήνου εἰς ἑαυτὴν δεχομένης ταύτην εἶτα τῷ ἡλίῳ <δι>δόσης, τοῦ δὲ πρὸς τὸν θεὸν παραπέμποντος.

This notion is denounced as absurd and a “scientific” explanation is provided:

They would not have been in this plight, had they, at least occasionally, attended the lectures of astronomers; then they would not have been unfamiliar with the fact that the moon (which according to some does not possess a light of its own) is illuminated by the sun.¹⁴⁷

For Alexander, the Manichaean idea that Man was created by matter according to the image of an icon of Man that appears in the sun, is beyond any imagination.

Is it not more fantastic than any myth when they say that man is a product of matter copied from the image which is visible in the sun?¹⁴⁸

In general, Alexander’s whole argumentation does not give the impression that he refutes a Christian heresy. On the contrary, in his argumentation, he commends and adopts Christian theses to refute the Manichaean theories and doctrines, which is a surprising choice from a pagan philosopher.¹⁴⁹ He juxtaposes the correctness of Christian teaching to the problematic theses of Manichaeism, especially in the topics of anthropology and ethics (free will).

Our first question should be: what then, is the use of all the effort which is spent on education? For we could become good even when asleep. Or what reason do these people hold out to their own catechumens the highest hope for reaching the good? For these would be in possession of their proper good even when spending their time in whoring.¹⁵⁰

He criticizes the elitist division of the members of the sect into two classes and compares it with the corresponding Christian teaching on the equality between all men.

This was, I believe, correctly understood by Jesus, and this is why, in order that farmers and carpenters and masons and other skilled workers should not be excluded from the good, he instituted a common circle of all these people together, and why, by means of simple and easy conversations, he [...] helped them to achieve a desire for the good.¹⁵¹

He is shocked, as Stroumsa comments, by the elitist approach of salvation in Manichaeism only for the few Elect, and criticizes the closed Manichaean communities from a social perspective.¹⁵²

Finally, Alexander accuses Manichaeans of talking about Christ, while in fact, they do not know him; they change even his name, instead of *Χριστός* (the anointed, from *chrism*), he says, they call him *Χρηστός* (good).

¹⁴⁷ Alexander, *Tract. Man.* 22.6-14 (van der Horst and Mansfeld, 86-87): εἰ δ’ ἦσαν κατὰ μικρὸν εἰς ἀστρονόμων θύρας φοιτήσαντες, οὐκ ἂν ταῦτα πεπόνθεσαν οὔτε ἠγνόησαν ἂν ὅτι ἡ σελήνη—κατὰ τινος ἄμοιρος οὔσα ἰδίου φωτός—ὑπὸ τοῦ ἡλίου καταλάμπεται.

¹⁴⁸ Alexander, *Tract. Man.* 23.10-12 (van der Horst and Mansfeld, 88): Τίνας δὲ μύθους οὐχ ὑπερβέβηκεν τῷ ἀπιθάνῳ καὶ ταῦτα, ὅτε κατὰ τὴν ὀφθεισαν ἐν ἡλίῳ εἰκόνα τῆς ὕλης τὸν ἄνθρωπον δημιουργήμα εἶναι λέγων. See in 23.10-67 the whole section about the <The Origin of Man> (van der Horst and Mansfeld, 88-91).

¹⁴⁹ This is one of the reasons why Edwards (1989 and 2015) challenged the pagan identity of Alexander. See below in this section.

¹⁵⁰ Alexander, *Tract. Man.* 16.12-17 (van der Horst and Mansfeld, 79): πρῶτον μὲν τίς χρεια τοῦ περὶ τὴν παιδευσιν πόνου; γενοίμεθα γὰρ ἂν καθεύδοντες σπουδαῖοι. ἢ διὰ τί μάλιστα τοὺς ἀκρωμένους αὐτῶν οἱ τοιοῦτοι ἄνδρες εἰς ἐλπίδα ἄγουσι τοῦ καλοῦ; καὶ γὰρ καλινδούμενοι σὺν ταῖς ἐταίραις τὸ οἰκεῖον ἔχοιεν ἂν ἀγαθόν.

¹⁵¹ Alexander, *Tract. Man.* 16.29-35 (van der Horst and Mansfeld, 80): ὁ δοκεῖ μοι κατανενοηκέναι ὁ Ἰησοῦς καὶ ἵνα μὴ ἀπεληλαμένοι ὦσι τοῦ ἀγαθοῦ γεωργοί τε καὶ τέκτονες καὶ οἰκοδόμοι καὶ οἱ ἄλλοι ἀπὸ τῶν τεχνῶν, κοινὸν συνέδριον καθίσαι πάντων ὁμοῦ καὶ διὰ ἀπλῶν καὶ εὐκόλων διαλέξεων καὶ εἰς θεοῦ ἔννοιαν αὐτοὺς ἀπεννοηκέναι καὶ τοῦ καλοῦ εἰς ἐπιθυμίαν ἐλθεῖν ποιῆσαι.

¹⁵² Stroumsa and Stroumsa 1988, 50.

Christ (Christos) however, whom they do not even know, but whom they call chrestos (good), introducing a new meaning instead of the generally received one by changing the ‘i’ into ‘e’, they hold to be the Intellect.¹⁵³

Alexander’s testimony that Manichaeans use to call Jesus Chrestos instead of Christos is attested by an original Manichaean letter found in Kellis (probably Mani’s canonical epistle?). In the greetings in the introductory paragraph of the epistle we read: “Manichaios, apostle of Jesus Chrestos, and all the brothers who are with me... Peace through God the Father, and our lord Jesus Chrestos”.¹⁵⁴ Moreover, Alexander’s testimony shows that he had access to original Manichaean texts, since the difference in the pronunciation between the vowels ‘i’ (ióta) and ‘η’ (eta) did not exist in his time.¹⁵⁵

In any case, Alexander’s statement is impressive for a pagan, who seems to defend the Christ of the Christians. For Alexander, even the Christ of the Manichaeans, a figure who is supposed to be the crucial point for ranking Manichaeans among Christians, is completely different from the Christ of the Christian Churches.¹⁵⁶ Alexander’s assertion is reminiscent of remarks made by Gregory of Nyssa and Augustine, that the name of Christ on the lips of the Manichaeans was just a sound, empty of meaning.¹⁵⁷

Continuing his critique, Alexander wonders why then, if they mean the same Christ as the Churches do, they do not accept the Old Testament.¹⁵⁸ Here, unlike his previous criticism that Manichaean missionaries rely on their prophets’ voice, he seems to reproach them because they reject the OT. It is really astonishing that Alexander’s arguments seem to become an advocate of Christianity against Manichaeism. As Edwards points out, it is strange that a pagan philosopher adopts and supports so many Christian theses. Edwards considers it unexpected that Alexander uses the Greek term *ἐκκλησία*, which has a political meaning, with the religious content that the Christians ascribed to it. “We should not, however, expect a pagan author to designate the concourse of the faithful by the name which they [Christians] had stolen from the vocabulary of political affairs”.¹⁵⁹ According to Edwards, what Alexander is trying to prove is that the doctrine of Manichaeans is self-contradictory, in that they contradicted themselves in claiming that they were Christians. Edwards, however, does not exclude the possibility that such parts of the text could be a later addition, by the hand of a Christian author.¹⁶⁰

¹⁵³ Alexander, *Tract. Man.* 24.1-4 (Jesus as *Noûs*) (van der Horst and Mansfeld, 91-92): Τὸν δὲ χριστὸν οὐδὲ γινώσκοντες, ἀλλὰ χρηστὸν αὐτὸν προσαγορεύοντες τῇ πρὸς τὸ στοιχεῖον μεταλήψει ἕτερον σημαϊνόμενον ἀντὶ τοῦ κυρίως περὶ αὐτοῦ ὑπειλημμένου εἰσάγοντες νοῦν εἶναι φασιν.

¹⁵⁴ Gardner and Lieu 2004, 167. According to Pedersen (2013b, 190) “it is highly probable that” this spelling “is a Manichaean self-designation”.

¹⁵⁵ Suetonius also calls Jesus Chrestos.

¹⁵⁶ Alexander, *Tract. Man.* 24.4-8: εἰ μὲν τὸ γινωστὸν καὶ τὸ γινώσκον καὶ τὴν σοφίαν αὐτὸν λέγοντες, ὁμόφωνα οὕτως τοῖς ἀπὸ τῶν ἐκκλησιῶν περὶ αὐτοῦ λέγουσι διαταττόμενοι οὕτω γε ἁλώσονται. See fn. 38 in this chapter, for Pedersen’s opinion about the Manichaean Jesus.

¹⁵⁷ Augustine, *Conf.* 3.6 (10) (Chadwick, 44). See also Gardner and Lieu 2004, 131. Cf. ch.[4], 4.2.1.

¹⁵⁸ Alexander, *Tract. Man.* 24.4-9.

¹⁵⁹ Edwards 1989, 484. As Edwards also states (1989, 484): “only political senses of *ἐκκλησία* and *ἐκκλησιαστικός* are attributed by Liddell and Scott to any pagan source”.

¹⁶⁰ Edwards 1989, 486: “The difficulties of the passage are more readily discernible than their causes, but we have ample reasons for doubting its integrity in its present form unless we believe that the author was a pagan who adopted Christian assumptions and vocabulary at points where the argument moved him to more than ordinary passion”. In a later publication Edwards challenges, more decisively the prevailing view that Alexander was a pagan (justifying likewise the tradition of the Church and Photius). After examining the arguments that Alexander draws from the Platonic tradition, Edwards (2015, 140) characteristically states: “In short we cannot

Summarizing the basics of the Manichaean religious profile as presented by Alexander, it is clear that apart from the initial link he makes between Manichaeism and Christianity, in the remaining twenty-four chapters of his treatise, the Manichaeism he presents is a heresy that one cannot seriously argue was considered as Christian. It is a heresy which in its missionary propaganda used Greek fables instead of the New Testament, and whose doctrines are grounded on an erroneous understanding of Greek philosophy. It was a heresy, moreover, which had no moral rules unlike Christianity, and was a heresy which did not speak about the Christ that Christian Churches proclaim.

Some other brief pagan testimonies concerning the religious profile of Manichaeans must be discussed here. Around the middle of the fourth century (364), the famous orator Libanius, in a letter addressed to Priscianus (governor of Palaestina Prima under Constantius), pleaded for the Manichaeans, requesting their protection from [Christian] abusers. It is notable, that this is the only testimony we have that speaks in favour of Manichaeans. In his brief description, nothing suggests that he saw Manichaeism as a Christian heresy.

Those who venerate the sun without (performing) blood (sacrifices) and honour it as a god of the second grade and chastise their appetites and look upon their last day as their gain are found in many places of the world but everywhere they are only few in number. They harm no one but they are harassed by some people. 2. I wish that those of them who live in Palestine may have your authority for refuge and be free from anxiety and that those who wish to harm them may not be allowed to do so.¹⁶¹

In his *Commentary on the Manual of Epictetus*, the pagan philosopher Simplicius (sixth century, ca. 530) echoes Alexander's criticism of the Manichaean myths. In a much more derogatory tone than Alexander, he states that these kinds of myths do not even deserve to be called mythology.

Why do I quote their views at length? For they fabricate certain marvels which are not worthy to be called myths. However, they do not use them as myths nor do they think that they have any other meaning, but believe that all the things which they say are true.¹⁶²

As Simplicius confesses, a Manichaean teacher had informed him that the Manichaeans interpret these myths literally, something which coincides with Alexander's testimony.¹⁶³ In refuting the Manichaean doctrines, Simplicius uses neo-platonic argumentation, just as Alexander does.¹⁶⁴ Pedersen argues for an influence from Alexander on Titus and from Titus on Simplicius. As he notes, this would be interesting because it shows that "it was not only Christian writers of Late Antiquity who were influenced by the Platonists, but that the opposite

maintain, without a battery of ancillary hypotheses, that our author was a pagan. More probably he was a Christian who had been to school with the Platonists, and was resolved to defeat the Manichees by a priori reasoning without appeal to any contested word of revelation". Cf. ch.[2], 2.2.1, fn.32.

¹⁶¹ Libanius, *Epist.* 1253 (Lieu 2010, 43): (τ.) Πρισκιανῷ. (1.) Οἱ τὸν ἥλιον οὗτοι θεραπεύοντες ἄνευ αἵματος καὶ τιμῶντες θεὸν προσηγορία δευτέρᾳ καὶ τὴν γαστέρα κολάζοντες καὶ ἐν κέρδει ποιοῦμενοι τὴν τῆς τελευτῆς ἡμέραν πολλαχοῦ μὲν εἰσι τῆς γῆς, πανταχοῦ δὲ ὀλίγοι. καὶ ἀδικοῦσι μὲν οὐδένα, λυποῦνται δὲ ὑπ' ἐνίων. (2.) βούλομαι δὲ τοὺς ἐν Παλαιστίνῃ τούτων διατρίβοντας τὴν σὴν ἀρετὴν ἔχειν καταφυγὴν καὶ εἶναι σφισιν ἀδειαὶ καὶ μὴ ἐξεῖναι τοῖς βουλομένοις εἰς αὐτοὺς ὑβρίζειν.

¹⁶² Simplicius, *Comm. Man. Epict.* 35 (105-07) (Lieu 2010, 105): Καὶ τί ταῦτα μηκύνω; τέρατα γὰρ πλάττοντές τινα, ἅπερ μηδὲ μύθους καλεῖν ἄξιον, οὐχ ὡς μύθοις χρῶνται, οὐδὲ ἐνδείκνυσθαι τι ἄλλο νομίζουσιν.

¹⁶³ Simplicius, *Comm. Man. Epict.* 35 (90-92): οὐ γὰρ ἀξιοῦσι μυθικῶς τινὸς τῶν λεγομένων ἀκούειν ἀλλ', ὅποιας τις τῶν παρ' αὐτοῖς σοφῶν ἐξέφηεν, ἐκ κραταιοῦ λίθου καὶ ἀναγλύφους αὐτὰς νομίζουσι ("they do not think it right to listen to any of the things they say allegorically, but they are thinking of those things which are made or solid stone and carved, as one of their wise men informed me", in Lieu 2010, 105).

¹⁶⁴ Cf. Lieu 1994, 193 and 2010, 162.

was also now and again the case”.¹⁶⁵ Along the same lines of criticism, full of irony, moves another philosopher of the sixth century, Asclepius of Tralles.¹⁶⁶

4.4 Conclusions

The examination of a variety of sources (treatises, lists, canons, Synod’s minutes, etc.) has shown that although Manichaeans are often called heretics by the authors, both Christian (of all denominations) and pagan sources regarded Manichaeism as a religious category distinct from Christianity. This is also illustrated in some of the Manichaean texts, especially in the *Kephalaia*. Apart from the term heresy, the authors describing and classifying Manichaeism used the terms ‘religion’ and ‘dogma’. Furthermore, the term ‘heresy’ itself had a broad meaning during the investigated period and also signified religion. However, in the process of time, it becomes gradually more and more apparent that our sources treated Manichaeism as another religion, this being also reflected in the increased use of the term religion. A corresponding evolution is also noted in the legal codes (from the *CTh* to *CJ*).

Thus, it seems that for the specialists (Christian writers of different confessions and pagans) the ‘Manichaean Church’ was not one of the many Christian Churches. However, simple people considered Manichaeism as a Christian heresy, and it was therefore an option for those who searched for an alternative choice within Christianity. As Edwards remarks, Manichaeism probably survived for centuries in the Roman Empire in contrast to Persia where it was extinguished, “because it had the status of a heresy and not a new religion, so that those who wished to escape the hegemony of the Catholic Church could adopt it without divorcing themselves entirely from the faith in which they were reared”.¹⁶⁷ The latter explains why Church Fathers insisted so much on pointing out that the Manichaeans were not Christians but merely pretended to be. Indeed, the high appeal of Manichaeism to ordinary people, in combination with the fact that the autonym Christian was mainly used by the Manichaeans for their communication with the surrounding Christianized world, partly explains the claim of Christian authors that their self-designation as Christians served tactical and missionary reasons.

Because the Manichaeans were considered the worst of the worst heretics by all the Christian parties, the term ‘Manichaean’ with the meaning of *μανιχαῖων* became a label of abuse very early (during the Arian controversy), and continued to exist long after the period covered in this study. So, in the literature under examination, imaginary Manichaeans appeared alongside the real ones.

In his treatise, Alexander challenges the Christianness of the Manichaeans to the same degree as ecclesiastical (Christian) authors. It is true that the first two introductory paragraphs of Alexander’s treatise initially give the impression that he regards Manichaeism as a form of decadent Christianity. However, when one reads the whole text, it becomes clear that Alexander mainly juxtaposes Christianity with Manichaeism, treating Manichaeism and Christianity as two different religious categories which he compares. The emphasis of

¹⁶⁵ Pedersen 2004, 68.

¹⁶⁶ Asclepius of Tralles, *In Aristotelis metaphysicorum* 292: οἱ ἀτυχεῖς Μανιχαῖοι, ἐπειδὴ ἠπόρουσαν πόθεν τὰ κακά, μὴ ἰσχύσαντες ἐπιλύσασθαι ταύτην τὴν ἀπορίαν εἰρήκασιν ὅτι ἔστιν ἀρχὴ τῶν κακῶν, ὥσπερ καὶ τῶν ἀγαθῶν [...] τί ἐστὶ τὸ λεγόμενον ὑπ’ αὐτῶν ὥς ὅτι τοιαύτη ἐστὶν ἡ φύσις τῶν ὄντων, ὥστε συντρέχειν τὴν κατάφασιν τῇ ἀποφάσει, καθάπερ φασὶν οἱ θεολόγῳ Μανιχαῖοι; τοῦτω γὰρ τῷ ὀνόματι προσηγόρευσεν αὐτοὺς ὁ ἡμέτερος φιλόσοφος Ἀμμώνιος.

¹⁶⁷ Edwards 2015, 142.

Alexander's critique is that whereas Manichaeans are self-identified as Christians, they differ radically from Christians on a number of substantial issues. At this point, his aspect coincides fully with that of the Christian specialists.