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

Matsangou, R.

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Author: Matsangou, R.
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Chapter 5: Manichaean Beliefs and Practices[1]

> "If anyone is able to demolish the unbegotten dualism [...] he would at the same time cut down the entire forest of his words". (*Acta Archelai*)[2]

5.1 Introduction

As the previous chapters underlined, both the anti-heretical legislation and Byzantine literature (Christian and Pagan) regarded the Manichaeans as the 'worst of the worst' heretics. Manichaeism itself constituted the worst heresy *par excellence*. But what, exactly was the *nature* of their crime according to Christian and pagan authors?

Unlike the laws, which targeted the Manichaean gatherings, the main object of both Christian and pagan anti-Manichaean literature were Manichaean doctrines. This is to be expected, since that was the work of the teachers, i.e. the "priests of God"[3] and the philosophers. References to the Manichaean assemblies, testimonies concerning the Manichaean rituals, or allusions to what was happening during them, are quite rare in reality. The three main doctrinal issues that predominate in the discourse are: (1) Manichaean (ontological) dualism, namely the idea of two first principles, one good (the light/spirit) and one evil (darkness/matter); (2) docetic Christology, which is seen as a consequence of that same dualism. Since matter is identified with the principle of evil, Christ could not have acquired a material (physical) body; and (3) the Manichaean attitude towards the Bible and the use of the Christian Scriptures, a theme connected with missionary practices.

The biggest part of the discussion in literature concerns the Manichaean tenet of the two principles; the authors found this unacceptable and absurd and saw it as the source of a series of contradictions in Manichaean dogma, ethos, and praxis. They placed great emphasis on the theoretical discourse because, as Hegemonius argues, if the unbegotten ontological dualism would be demolished, then at the same time the whole Manichaean edifice would be deconstructed.[4] However, the discourse regarding dualism, for both Christian and pagan authors, was not just a theoretical discussion at a theological level, but also focused on the implications that dualism had on cosmology and anthropology. In turn, this formed an ethos that for the authors entailed problematic behaviour. It is exactly the latter which is the focus of this chapter: this behaviour had an obligatory character for the Manichaeans and also had serious religious and social consequences for the Christian and pagan anti-Manichaean authors. Thus, the target of this chapter is not the contradictions of dualism and its 'fatal' consequence on dogma (e.g. docetic Christology, etc.), but the effect dualism had on the Manichaean ethos, and on the observable behaviour on everyday Manichaean life.

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[1] This chapter relies on the excellent work of Jason BeDuhn with regard to the collection of original Manichaean sources (Syriac, Arabic, Coptic, Iranian, Turkic, Chinese, etc.) that he provides in his *The Manichaean Body in Discipline and Ritual*, a reworking of his doctoral dissertation. Without these sources this work would have been much more difficult. Of course, the interpretation and argumentation are entirely my responsibility.

[2] *AA* 68.2 (Vermes, 150-51).

[3] As is emphasized in *Sirm.* 12 (Pharr, 482): "The heretics [Donatists, Manichaeans, Priscillianists] and the superstition of the pagans ought to have been corrected by the solicitude alone of those religious men, the priests of God [...] by their sedulous admonition and by their authoritative teaching".

[4] *AA* 68.2 (Vermes, 150-51).

In order to reconstruct a more comprehensive and reliable picture, I consider it necessary to conduct a comparative examination per subject of all the sources at our disposal (Greek, Semitic, Latin). So, the information and argumentation culled from the East-Roman anti-Manichaean sources will be complemented and compared to the influential anti-Manichaean writings of Augustine, without whose detailed observations little would be known about Manichaeism in the West. Finally, both the Greek sources and Augustine will be assessed in light of the authentic Manichaean sources. In this way, three different perspectives on the same issues will be presented and compared.

5.2. Manichaean Beliefs and their Implications in Religious Everyday Life

5.2.1 The Manichaean Cosmogonic Myth

The two first principles

There are numerous versions of the Manichaean cosmogonic narrative, which vary according to time and place.[5] Yet, the core of the myth remains common in all versions and in all narrative means through which it is expressed (e.g. writings, sermons, hymns). Before proceeding to examine the implication of dualism, I consider it appropriate to present very briefly the core of the myth.

All start from the Manichaean premise that there are two distinct co-eternal principles: the good (identified with the light) and the evil (identified with darkness and matter). In 'pre-cosmic' time they combated each other and this led these two separate principles to be mingled; in specific, a part of the light was swallowed by /trapped in matter, or according to some, the light 'sacrificed' itself for this very purpose. At an ontological level, a consequence of this mixture was the cosmological and anthropological mixture. Since the primordial mixture took place, the two principles conducted a series of stratagems on a macrocosmic and microcosmic scale, in order to gain control of the situation and of the universe; the good trying to free itself from the mixture, and the evil trying to maintain its sovereignty through the mixture.[6]

At the macrocosmic level, the stratagem of the powers of light was to create the cosmos (from the mixed material, i.e. matter containing divine particles) which operates "as a huge machine" that liberates the captured light from the mixture with evil.[7] On the other hand, the stratagem of evil was for the powers/archons of Darkness, to 'engineer' the creation of man. Man, as cosmos, is also a product of a mixture of matter with the encapsulated divine

[5] According to BeDuhn (2000b, 72-73), this testifies on the one hand that "the details of Manichaean cosmogony were negotiable in the Manichaean proselytization process" and, on the other hand, the "inability or disinterest" of the "centers of Manichaean authority" to control the modifications of the myth.

[6] Sources for the narrative of primordial combat between good and evil and primordial mixture: (1) Greek Sources: (a) *CMC* 132.11–13, (b) Epiphanius, *Pan*. 66.25 (Turbo's narrative) (c) Abjuration formulas, *SC* 1.9-25, 3, 4; (2) Latin Sources: (a) *AA 7.1-2*, (b) Augustine: (b1) *Faust.*, (b2) *Ep.236 to Deuterius* 2, (b3) *Nat. bon.*, (b4) *Duab*., (b5) *Haer*. 46.114-132, (b6) *Mor. Manich*., (b7) *Fund*.; (3) Semitic sources: (a) Theodore bar Konai (*Scholia*), (b) Al-Nadim (*Fihrist*), (c) Ephrem (*Prose Refutations* cxii), (d) Severus of Antioch (*123 Cathedral Homily*, esp. pp. 164.10-166.15); (4) Coptic Sources: *1Keph*. 7 (concerning the Five Fathers 34.13–36.26), *1Keph*. 63 (156.29-30), *1Keph*. 72 (177.6 - 178.23), *1Keph*. 85, *1Keph*. 109. (262.25-27), *1Keph*. 59, *2PsB* 155.20-39, *2PsB* 86.27-30, , *2PsB* 54.8ff. (Psalm 246), *2PsB* 9.3–11.32 (Psalm 223); (5) Iranian Sources: M801, Turfan treatises, M442 + M555 + M5361, M33 (6) Turkic Sources: TIIK2a.I.R, (7) Chinese Sources: *Compedium*. See BeDuhn 1995b. Cf. Boyce 1975, 3-10.

[7] Indicatively see: *2PsB* 9.3–11.32 (Psalm 223); Al-Nadim, *Fihrist* ch. 9 (Dodge, 782); Augustine, *Haer.* 46. See also BeDuhn 2000b, 76.

element. Thus, both the cosmos and humans consist of a mixture of matter (evil/darkness) and divine particles (good/light). Until the end of time, which is the third moment according to the eschatology of Manichaean myth, two parallel and opposite processes are in progress. On the one hand is the liberation of light and thus the destruction of matter through the draining of the light imprisoned in it, and on the other hand is the counter-attack by matter, which aims to keep light contained within it.

Despite the variety of versions of the narrative of primordial combat (between good and evil) and the resulting primordial mixture, these differ only in their details; what exists in all versions, and must be kept in mind given its direct relevance to the question of the present chapter, is the presence of the divine element (sometimes referred to as the *Soul* or *Living Self*) in both man and the material world, as a consequence of the primordial mixture. Further, there are two additional key features of the narrative attested in the sources and underlined by several researchers, which are also important for my question:

(1) *The literal instead of the allegorical interpretation of the mythic narrative.* According to BeDuhn, the preference of some researchers for a metaphorical rather than a literal interpretation merely helps the interpreter not to feel that he offends the "culturally other" as being inferior. As BeDuhn points out, "in the Manichaean case, the tradition insists upon a literal interpretation".[8] Manichaean "literary devices contribute to the characterization of a universe which, however, is not itself a metaphor or poetic representation. [...] Such a universe must really exist; it must be there literally".[9] The literalness of the Manichaean myth was, as we have seen, one of the recurrent targets of attack by their opponents, like Alexander, Serapion, Epiphanius, Augustine, Simplicius, etc.[10]

(2) *The correspondence between macrocosm and microcosm*: It is a common feature of religions that divine beings serve as exemplars which the faithful are called to imitate. However, in Manichaeism this macrocosm-microcosm relationship is more direct and substantial. In Manichaeism, "the universal macrocosm and the human microcosm both derive from a primordial mixture of antithetical substances, and both exist as battlegrounds of opposing forces".[11] Thus, the structure of the human body is analogous to the body of the Universe[12] and human attitudes and actions should be an imitation of divine beings to ensure a positive ending.[13] At the level of the microcosm, the acceptance of this narrative entailed certain behaviours which could be classified in the following groups according to their purpose:

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[8] BeDuhn 2000b, 261-62.

[9] BeDuhn 2000b, 70.

[10] Alexander, *Tract. Man.* 10. Serapion, *c. Manichaeos* 33: ἐνταῦθα λοιπὸν πολὺς ὁ γέλως καὶ μεγάλη ἡ χλεύη, [...] μῦθος Ἑλληνικός [...] λέγονται γὰρ μῦθοι οἱ μῦθοι, ἀλλ' ὡς μῦθοι πιστεύονται· [...] νῦν δὲ [...] πιστεύεται δὲ παρὰ τοῖς ἄφροσιν ὡς ἀλήθεια. *Epiphanius Pan.* 66.46.11-12 (Williams, 273): "(11) Raise your mask, Menander, you comedian! That is what you are, but you conceal yourself while you recite the deeds of adulterers and drink. For you say nothing original—you mislead your dupes by introducing the Greeks' works of fiction in place of the truth. (12) Hesiod, with his stories of the theogony, probably had more sense than you, and Orpheus, and Euripides. Even though they told ridiculous stories, it is plain that they are poets and made things up that were not real. But to compound the error, you tell them as though they were". Augustine characterized the "Manichaeans as materialists who treat spiritual realities in terms of physical properties", cf. BeDuhn 2000b, 115. Simplicius, *Comm. Man. Epict.* 71.44-49 & 72.12. Cf. ch.[4].

[11] BeDuhn 2000b, 117.

[12] Cf. Turbo's Narrative in *AA* 9.4 (Vermes, 52); Epiphanius, *Pan*. 27.4 (Williams, 256): "For this body of ours may be called a < miniature* > world which answers to < this > great world, and all people have roots below which are fastened to the realms on high".

[13] I will analyse this further in section 5.2.3 (rituals).

(1) Protective purpose: Behaviours aiming at the non-injury of the entrapped divine element in matter (practiced by fasting and almsgiving).
(2) Preventive purpose (the barring): Behaviours that aim to prevent further entrapment of the divine element in matter (e.g. through procreation).
(3) Liberative purpose: Behaviours (practiced during rituals) aimed at releasing the divine element entrapped in matter.

The creation of the Cosmos by the demiurge (stratagem of light)
"All sources agree the world is crafted by the forces of light [usually by the Living Spirit], although various deities play the role of demiurge according to the different versions" of the myth.[14] Yet, the world's status is mixed,[15] and is simultaneously material (evil) and divine. Part of the divine substance is dispersed and bound in all kinds of plant and animal life. All plants, animals, and men have divine elements trapped within them. By the creation of the cosmos the forces of light had as their aim the cosmic separation of light from darkness:

> The King of the World of Light commanded one of his angels to create this world and to build it from those mixed particles, so as to rescue the particles of Light from those of Darkness.[16]

Patristic sources are not always clear as to who (in the Manichaean myth) is the creator of cosmos. Some of them correctly attribute the creation of the cosmos to the forces of light, while others apparently attribute it to Satan, Devil, etc., who is identified with matter or the archon of matter.[17]

According to the narration of Turbo, the world was created by the Living Spirit, one of the forces of light:

> Then the Living Spirit created the world, and equipped with three other powers it went down and led out the princes and fixed them to a cross in the firmament, the sphere which is his body. And again that Living Spirit created the heavenly bodies, which are remnants of the soul, and made them circle the firmament, and again he created the earth; there are eight of them.[18]

Yet, "The world itself is not of God, but formed from the material [archons'] element, and for that reason everything in it is destroyed".[19] In the *SC* too, it is clear that the Manichaean creator of the world belongs to the forces of light and creates the sky, the earth and the sea with raw material from the evil powers:

> (I anathematize) the (god) who flayed the evil gods, as he postulates in his myths, and from their skins and sinews made the heavens and from their knees, the earth, and from their sweat, the sea, (namely), the (god) who is called the Demiurge by Mani himself.[20]

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[14] BeDuhn 2000b, 76. Cf. Ephrem, *Prose Refutations*, xxxiv-xxxv. In some sources the machinery for the pumping of the light particles consists of three wheels. In the narrative of Turbo it consists of one wheel with twelve jars, see *AA* 8.5.
[15] Colditz 2015, 55.
[16] Al-Nadim, *Fihrist* 9.1 (Dodge, 781).
[17] Theodoret, *Haer*. (PG 83.380.28-30): Τὸν δὲ διάβολον ποτὲ μὲν Ὕλην καλεῖ, ποτὲ δὲ τῆς Ὕλης ἄρχοντα.
[18] *AA* 8.1 (Vermes, 48-49); Epiphanius, *Pan.* 66.25.8-26.3 (Williams, 254).
[19] *AA* 11.1 (Vermes, 55); Epiphanius, *Pan*. 66.29.1. See also *AA* 12.3 (Vermes, 56): "He says that God has no part in the world and does not rejoice over it, because in the beginning he suffered theft by the princes and trouble was caused to him"; Epiphanius, *Pan*. 66.31.1.
[20] *SC*, ch. 3 (Lieu 2010, 119, altered): τὸν ἀποδείραντα τοὺς πονηροὺς θεούς, καθὼς αὐτὸς μυθολογεῖ, καὶ ἐκ τῶν βυρσῶν αὐτῶν καὶ τῶν νεύρων ποιήσαντα τοὺς οὐρανοὺς καὶ ἐκ τῶν γονάτων αὐτῶν τὴν γῆν καὶ ἐκ τῶν ἱδρώτων τὴν θάλασσαν, τὸν λεγόμενον παρ' αὐτοῦ τοῦ Μάνεντος Δημιουργόν. See also fourth anathema.

In the *SC* we also find the Manichaean conviction that the creation of the world by the forces of light was a necessity (the stratagem of light), in order that the light captured by the matter would be freed:

> I anathematize those who say that the human souls are consubstantial with God and, being part of (the) good (principle) were swallowed up by the Hylē and out of this necessity the world was created.[21]

Some sources, like Theodoret, identify the forces of light with God (and the forces of darkness or matter with the Devil), while they clearly state that: (1) "the parts of the world do not come from him but are the works of Hylē", as well as that (2) "God was forced to create the world". In other words, the world's creation was his stratagem in order to liberate "the light which was mingled with the Hylē".[22]

However, some other sources are ambiguous as to whether God (the Christian equivalent to the forces of light) was the demiurge. Here, the aspect that the cosmos (or part of it) is created 'by' and not 'from' Satan/the Devil seems to prevail.

> they call the sun, Christ. If then the world, according to them, was made by the evil God, and the sun is in the world, how is the Son of the good God an unwilling minister in the works of the evil God?[23]
>
> Manichaeans […] declare that not the whole world is God's creation, but [only] part of it.[24]
>
> As for the Manichaeans and other heretics, some of them claim that it [the world] is not the work of a good God, while others cut off a part of it and ascribe it to some kind of self-acting matter, judging that it is not worthy to be included in God's creation.[25]

As Chrysostom explicitly states, the Manichaeans use Paul's saying "the God of this world" to argue that "the devil is here intended, desiring from this passage, very foolishly, to introduce another creator of the world besides the true one".[26] This confusion of the sources is justified because, as BeDuhn aptly remarks, "although this mixture is depicted as a stratagem for the victory of good, it definitely entails negative consequences".[27]

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[21] *SC,* ch. 6 (Lieu 2010, 123): Ἀναθεματίζω τοὺς τὰς ἀνθρωπίνας ψυχὰς λέγοντας ὁμοουσίους εἶναι τῷ θεῷ καὶ μοῖραν οὔσας τοῦ ἀγαθοῦ ὑπὸ τῆς ὕλης (165) καταποθῆναι καὶ ἐκ τῆς ἀνάγκης ταύτης τὸν κόσμον γεγενῆσθαι.

[22] Theodoret, *Haer.* (PG 83.377D, Lieu 2010, 95): Ἐντεῦθεν ἀναγκασθῆναί φασι τὸν Θεὸν δημιουργῆσαι τὸν κόσμον. Τὰ δὲ τοῦ κόσμου μέρη οὐκ αὐτοῦ λέγουσιν, ἀλλὰ τῆς Ὕλης εἶναι ποιήματα. Ἐδημιούργησε δὲ, διαλῦσαι αὐτῆς τὴν σύστασιν βουληθεὶς, καὶ εἰς εἰρήνην ἀγαγεῖν τὰ μαχόμενα, ὥστε κατὰ βραχὺ καὶ τὸ ἀνακραθὲν τῇ Ὕλῃ Φῶς ἐλευθερῶσαι. See also Titus of Bostra and Severus of Antioch.

[23] Cyril, *Catech*. 6.13.20-23 (LFHCC, 67): τὸν δὲ Χριστὸν τὸν ἥλιον τοῦτον καλοῦσιν. Εἰ τοίνυν ὁ κόσμος κατ' αὐτοὺς ὑπὸ τοῦ Πονηροῦ ἐγένετο, ὁ δὲ ἥλιος ἐν κόσμῳ, πῶς ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ Ἀγαθοῦ ἐν τοῖς τοῦ Πονηροῦ ἄκων δουλεύει;

[24] Epiphanius, *Anacephalaiosis* 66.2 (Williams, 215): Μανιχαῖοι, [...] κόσμον δὲ οὐ τὸν πάντα, ἀλλὰ μέρος ἐκ θεοῦ γεγενῆσθαι ὁριζόμενοι; John of Damascus, *Haer*. 66.

[25] John Chrysostom, *Scand.* 4.12: Μανιχαῖοι δὲ καὶ ἕτεροι πάλιν αἱρετικοί, οἱ μὲν οὐκ ἀγαθοῦ θεοῦ ἔργον ἔφησαν αὐτὴν [creation] εἶναι, οἱ δὲ ἓν αὐτῆς ἀποτεμόντες μέρος, αὐτομάτῳ τινὶ προσέρριψαν ὕλῃ καὶ ἀναξίαν ἔκριναν τῆς τοῦ Θεοῦ δημιουργίας εἶναι.

[26] John Chrysostom, *Hom. 2 Cor.* (*Hom*. 8) (PG 61:455): Μανιχαῖοι δέ φασι τὸν διάβολον ἐνταῦθα λέγεσθαι, ἐκ τούτου δημιουργὸν τῆς κτίσεως ἕτερον ἐπεισαγαγεῖν παρὰ τὸν ὄντα βουλόμενοι, σφόδρα ἀνοήτως. Cf. John of Damascus, *c. Manichaeos*, 67.17-20: Ἀκούσατε δὴ πρὸς θεοῦ, ὦ ἄνδρες, ἀκούσατε, τί φησιν ὁ θεώλεστος Μάνης. Οὐκ ἔστι, φησίν, ὁ κόσμος τοῦ θεοῦ, ἀλλὰ τοῦ διαβόλου. Ἀπαλλοτριῶσαι ἡμᾶς βούλονται τοῦ θεοῦ ἡμῶν.

[27] BeDuhn 2000b, 75.

The Living Self/Soul

The sum total of the light-elements enslaved in matter and in the cosmos comprised the *Living Self*, which is something like the universal soul. The concept of the *Living Self* is crucial to interpret Manichaean behaviours and attitudes (religious and social) and to comprehend the relevant criticism by anti-Manichaean sources. According to the Manichaean sources, the *Living Self* is spread, divided, and bound in the whole cosmos (i.e. in all living plants and animals). Sometimes, it is identified with the Soul of the cosmos, sometimes with Jesus, and it is consubstantial with God. Other synonymous terms for the *Living Self* found in the Manichaean literature are the *Cross of Light* and *Jesus Patibilis* (Suffering).[28] The psalms that the Manichaean believers chant in their congregations often speak in the voice of the *Living Self*:

> Since I went forth into the darkness I [...] am in the midst of my enemies [...] The strangers with whom I mixed [...] I am the life of the world; I am the milk that is in all trees; I am the sweet water.[29]

Finally, another guise of the *Living Self* is the five elements of nature (air, light, good fire, good water, good wind) which are also its constituents.[30]

The mixture of the cosmos and the concept of the *Living Self* in combination with (1) the literalness of the Manichaean myth and (2) the correspondence between macrocosm-microcosm, constitute the basis of Manichaean religious behaviour in ascesis and rituals. The belief of the presence of the *Living Self* throughout the natural world entailed the adoption of behaviours that had protective, preventive, and liberative purpose, and led to the creation of very specific and strict codes of behaviour and rules for everyday life. The most discussed commands in both Manichaean and anti-Manichaean literature are the so called "three seals" (particularly applicable to the Elect), which are: "the seal of the mouth", which means fasting; "the seal of the breast", which bans marriage and procreation; "the seal of the hands", the command to avoid injury to the *Living Self*.[31]

However, not surprisingly, the above commands could not be followed by all Manichaeans and for this reason the Manichaean community and Church were divided from the beginning into two classes of believers: the Elect and the catechumens (also called hearers or auditors). The catechumens had to observe two other sets of commandments. The first set comprised fasting (only on lord's day), prayer (to the sun and the moon) and alms-giving to

[28] The Living Self identified with the Soul of cosmos: *1Keph*. 72, 177.6 - 178.23. The Living Self identified with Jesus: *1Keph*. 55, 135.17-21; *2PsB* 121.32-33; *2PsB* 155.20-39. The Living Self as the Cross of Light: *1Keph*. 63.156.29-30; *1Keph*. 72.177.6-178.23. The Living Self as *Jesus Patibilis*: Augustine, *Faust.* 2.4. For more sources on the Living Self, cf. BeDuhn 2000b, esp. 72-88; BeDuhn 1995b, 170-196.

[29] *2PsB* 54.11ff.

[30] *2PsB* 201.13ff; *1Keph*. 85; *2PsB* 54.8ff; Augustine, *Haer*. 46.7.

[31] One can find explicit references to the "three seals" in the *2PsB* 115.28-116.16-18: "The seal (σφραγίς) of the mouth for the sign of the Father, the rest of the hands for the sign of the Son, the purity of virginity (παρθενία) [for the] sign of the holy Spirit […] Let us seal our mouth that we may find the Father, and seal (σφραγίζειν) our (?) hands that we may find the Son, and guard our purity that we may find the Holy Spirit". For Manichaean sources on fasting cf. *1Keph*. 79: Concerning the Fasting of the Saints (Gardner 1995, 200); *1Keph*. 80: The Commandments of Righteousness (Gardner 1995, 201-02); *1Keph. 81*: The chapter of fasting, for it engenders a Host of Angels (Gardner 1995, 202-05). See also Augustine, *Mor. Manich*. 39.

the Elect; the second set obliged them (1) to 'offer' someone to the service of the church (e.g. a child, a relative) and (2) to construct or donate church edifices.[32]

Manichaean asceticism, as well as the dualistic structure of the Manichaean Church, was criticized by both Christian and pagan authors. It is true that ascetic practices existed in Christianity from the beginning and also existed in the pagan world before Christianity. However, what bothered the anti-Manichaean critics in terms of Manichaean asceticism was the perversion of the meaning of ascesis; according to the anti-Manichaean authors, this was the result of Manichaean cosmological and anthropological dualism.

5.2.2 Manichaean Ascesis: "The Seal of the Mouth" (Fasting)

The major point of criticism concerning the Manichaean ascesis is devoted to the Manichaean fasting, otherwise known as "the seal of the mouth". Manichaean fasting was attacked and criticized by both Christian and pagan authors.

There are two different lines of attack, based on two contradictory interpretations: contempt for creation versus deification of creation. These, in turn, are based on two contradictory Manichaean assumptions: the materiality of food versus foods containing divinity (light particles). Thus, on the one hand the Manichaean fasting is considered as an insult to God while, on the other, it is seen as pantheism (i.e. a form of idolatry).

First interpretation of Manichaean fasting: the materiality of food

According to the first interpretation (i.e. contempt for creation), which is perceived as an insult against creation and therefore against God, Manichaeans abstain from food because they consider it full of matter (evil). Titus of Bostra says that Mani "blames the fruits that come from the earth altogether as nourishment of matter".[33] Amphilochius of Iconium connects Manichaean with Encratite attitudes in his work *Concerning False Asceticism*, declaring:

> The leaders of the Manichaeans have ordained, once and for all, to abstain from eating living beings, because of the impiety that dwells in them, and have said at the same time that things that grow from the earth are living beings.[34]

According to Macarius of Magnesia, who also links Manichaeans with other extreme ascetics (Encratites, Apotactites, etc.), the followers of the Manichaeans do not eat meat, and do not drink wine, because they consider these loathsome and abominable.[35]

As Augustine explains, the Manichaean Elect: "do not eat meat on the grounds that the divine substance has fled from the dead or slain bodies, and what little remains there is of such quality and quantity that it does not merit being purified in the stomachs of the Elect"; they "do not drink wine either, claiming that it is the gall of the princes of darkness, when they eat grapes".[36] Augustine also attacks the theory of his former coreligionists about the impurity

[32] *Keph*. 80, 192.3–193.22 (Gardner 1995, 201-02). As Gardner and Lieu (2004, 74) comment: "The practice of lay families giving a child to the church was well established in Manichaeism, and indeed counted as one of the essential religious acts of the catechumenate". Cf. Sims-Williams 1985, 573-82. Cf. ch.[3], fn. 217 & ch.[6], fn. 38.

[33] Titus of Bostra, *c. Manichaeos* 2.55.2-4: τοὺς καρποὺς τοὺς ἀπὸ γῆς ἅμα διαβάλλει ὡς θρεπτικοὺς τῆς ὕλης.

[34] Amphilochius of Iconium, *c. Haer.* 1067-71: Ἐκείν<ων [τῶν Μανιχαίων] γ>ὰρ <οἱ> ἔξαρχοι ἅπαξ νομοθετήσαντες ἐμψύχων ἀπέχεσθαι διὰ τὴν ἐνοικοῦσαν ἐν αὐτοῖς ἀσέβειαν, καὶ τὰ φυόμενα ἐκ τῆς γῆς ἔμψυχα εἶπον.

[35] Macarius of Magnesia, *Apocriticus* 3.25, 27: Τοιοῦτοι δὲ Μανιχαίων παῖδες [...] Οἴνου δὲ γεῦσιν καὶ κρεῶν μετάληψιν μυσαρὸν εἶναι λέγει.

[36] Augustine, *Haer*. 46.11 (Lieu 2010, 89).

of the foods: "You neither eat meat nor drink wine. You say that some foods are unclean," and that "flesh is composed of nothing but filth".[37]

Especially for the Elect the "contact with any profaning substance must be strictly avoided, hence the prohibition on the consumption of "dead" meat or "polluting" wine.[38] Hearers on the other hand, as Augustine informs us, could eat meat but should not kill the animals:

> You, as a concession, allow your followers, as distinct from the priests, to eat animal food.[39]
>
> They warn these same Auditors … if they eat meat, not to kill the animals. From them [the princes of Darkness], they claim, all flesh has its origin.[40]

Yet, they considered that eating the wrong food—especially consuming meat—wakes the carnal impulse to concupiscence and causes the desire for procreation. As Mani, in presenting his doctrine during the debate in Carchar, said before the judges:

> Thus you men have intercourse with your wives arising from an occasion such as follows: when one of you has been satiated with meats and other foods, then the impulse of concupiscence is aroused within him and so is increased his enjoyment in procreating a son; so that it is not from some virtue, or philosophy or from any other rational process, but only from satiety with food, and lust and fornication.[41]

We note that there was a correlation between fasting and sexual abstinence, nutrition and procreation, gluttony and concupiscence.[42] The consumption of food with a high 'matter' content, such as meat, should be avoided, because its materiality, when consumed, is like reinforcing the dark (the material) side of the self; it is like adding to the congenital evil forces within man. "Specifically, meat and wine were regarded as dominated by the dark elements that would re-infect the believer striving for personal purification and lead directly to sensuality and ignorance".[43] Indeed, as BeDuhn notes, there are various Manichaean texts that show the relationship between the 'evil' substance in food and the 'evil' congenitally present in the human body and their mutual reinforcement when they come into contact.[44] According to *Kephalaia*:

> [a] difficult part comes into him by the nourishment that he has eaten [...] or in the water that they have drunk. Again, trouble and confusion and anger (will) increase in him, a[nd / l]ust multiplies upon him together with depression and grief; becau|se of the nourishment of the bread he has eaten and the water he has drunk, | which are full of bothersome parts, a vengeful counsel. They shall | enter his body, [mixed in] with these foods, and they even become joined in with the wicked parts of the body and | the sin that is in him; transferring the anger and the lust and | the depression and the grief, these wicked thoughts of the body.[45]

[37] Augustine, *Mor. Manich*. 27, 35 & 37 (BeDuhn 2000, 35).
[38] Durkheim (1915/1954, 342-552) in Beduhn 2000b, 124.
[39] Augustine, *Faust.* 30.5-6 (*NPNF*[1] 4:566).
[40] Augustine, *Haer*. 46.
[41] *AA* 16.7 (Vermes, 63-64).
[42] Cf. van Oort, 1987.
[43] Gardner and Lieu 2004, 22.
[44] BeDuhn 2000b, 222. Cf. M801; *1Keph*. 104, 114.269.17-270.24, 86.215.1-216.13.
[45] *1Keph*. 86, 215.12-215.23.

Critique of the 'seal of the mouth' based on the interpretation of fasting as 'abstinence from the materiality of foods'

According to the Church Fathers, the above interpretation was a distortion of the real meaning of fasting, which constituted a divine hubris and for this reason was heavily criticized.

"Don't think", John Chrysostom warns his disciples, the fact that "the Manichaeans abhor wheat is the result of a high philosophy, or that they have defeated gluttony. They fast because they have taken a loathing for God's creation".[46] As Macarius notes, "All creation is accursed for them and suspect and harmful for everyone. So, by cursing and calumniating the beauty of the creatures, they blaspheme God".[47] For the Church Fathers, however, what is in fact blameworthy and harmful is not the material world, the "foods which God created to be received", but the false ascesis of the Manichaeans who ignore that "everything created by God is good, and nothing is to be rejected if it is received with thanksgiving" (1 Tim. 4:1-5). This verse was one of the statements that the converted Manichaean had to confess and recite during the anathema of his previous fallacy.[48]

Criticism comes from all Christian parties. As the neo-Arian ecclesiastical author Julian, in his *Commentary in Job* remarks, the saying of Job that:

> "a branch shall come forth out of his dung-heap"(Job 8:16LXX) does not mean that he disparages the seed as Manichaeans and Pseudo-Encratites do (because neither the human body is evil, nor foods are bad, nor their excretion is shameful. Because nothing that springs out of the good is bad).[49]

Furthermore, Church Fathers often blame the Manichaeans that they fast in pretence. For this reason, Cyril, trying to protect his catechumens, admonishes them

> not to offer food to Manichaeans because they pretend that they are fasting, taking sad faces; [not to offer food to Manichaeans] who calumniate the creator of food, while in fact they devour greedily the most delicious foods.[50]

Could these catechumens of Cyril be former Manichaeans offering food (alms service) to the Manichaean Elect? If this was the case, it would seem as if only the Elect were Manichaeans to Cyril.

As Augustine points out, the "great difference" between the meaning of Catholic and Manichaean fasting, is that while the character of the former is "symbolic" and aims at "the mortification of the body", the Manichaeans do not eat because they consider food "naturally, evil and impure".[51] In addition, Augustine testifies that the command which prohibited the consumption of meat applied only to the Elect.

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[46] John Chrysostom, *Hom. Matt.* (hom. 55), (PG 58:547.55-548): Ἵνα γὰρ μὴ, διὰ τὴν ἄκραν φιλοσοφίαν καὶ τὴν ὑπεροψίαν τῆς γαστρὸς, ὑποπτεύσῃς περὶ αὐτῶν ὡς τὰ σῖτα βδελυττομένων, οἷον περὶ ἐκείνων τῶν ἀπαγχονιζόντων ἑαυτοὺς, διὰ τῆς εὐχῆς σε παιδεύουσιν, ὅτι οὐ βδελυττόμενοι τὰ κτίσματα τοῦ Θεοῦ, τῶν πλειόνων ἀπέχονται, ἀλλ' ἡ φιλοσοφίαν ἀσκοῦντες.

[47] Macarius of Magnesia, *Apocriticus* 27: Τοιούτῳ γὰρ λόγῳ πᾶσα μὲν ἡ κτίσις κατ' αὐτὸν ἐπάρατος, πᾶσα δ' ὕποπτος ἡ ζωὴ καὶ πᾶσιν ἐπιβλαβής· ὅθεν οἱ τοιοῦτοι τῷ θείῳ προσέκρουσαν τῶν δημιουργημάτων τὸ κάλλος ὑβρίσαντες.

[48] *SC*, ch. 7 (Lieu 2010, 123).

[49] Julian Arianus, *comm. Job* 67.7-9.

[50] Cyril, *Catech*. 6.31: Μηδεὶς προσφερέσθω τοῖς ψυχοφθόροις Μανιχαίοις, τοῖς ἀχύρων ὕδασι τὸ στυγνὸν τῆς νηστείας προσποιουμένοις· τοῖς διαβάλλουσι μὲν τὸν τῶν βρωμάτων ποιητὴν, τὰ κάλλιστα δὲ τῶν βρωμάτων λαιμαργοῦσι·

[51] Augustine, *Faust.* 30.5-6 (*NPNF*[1] 4:565-67). In the same manner Cyril (*Catech*. 4.27) pointing out the meaning of true fasting as opposed to the false, explains: we abstain "from wine and meat" not "as from things abominated" but "as good things" which we transcend in the quest of a spiritual banquet. Augustine (*Mor.*

Second interpretation of Manichaean fasting: divinity within foods

According to the second line of interpretation, which is the very antithesis of the first, Manichaeans abstain from food because they believe that divine particles are trapped in the food. In the words of Turbo "every soul and every animal that moves, has its share of the substance of the good Father".[52]

As Titus of Bostra characteristically comments, the Manichaeans accuse all those who kill animals in order to eat them, because they believe that the animals contain part of the divine soul. They say that the power of good is trapped within them.

> Therefore, they strongly accuse those who kill quadrupeds and birds, who are useful to humans as sustenance, because (they think that) these too are animated by that same power of good, and contain (it) within themselves.[53]

They abstain from eating animated foods, and they consider as such even the plants, Amphilochius adds.[54] And not only this, but as Theodoret of Cyrrhus complements: "They consider everything as animate: fire, and water, and air, and plants, and seeds".[55]

Augustine's reports on the same subject are similar: the Manichaeans "think that the souls of men as well as of beasts are of the substance of God and are, in fact, pieces of God. […] God […] left a part of himself mingled with the Prince of Darkness".[56] "They say that this part of the divine nature permeates all things in heaven and earth and under the earth; that it is found in all bodies, dry and moist, in all kinds of flesh, and in all seeds of trees, herbs, men and animals".[57] Manichaeans "say that earth, and wood, and stones have sense [*sensum*]".[58]

As is indicated by the abjuration formulas, the converted Manichaean had, among others, to anathematize "those who suppose that grass and plants and water and other things without souls in fact all have them [souls]".[59] At the turn of the seventh century, Timothy the Presbyter, in his instructions concerning the reception of the converted Manichaeans, attributes to his contemporary Manichaeans the same beliefs and attitudes: "and they say that fire, air, earth, water, plants, trees and seeds have souls".[60]

Manich.16.51, *NPNF*[1] 4:106/144), also criticizes Manichaeans' rigidity and irrationality when someone does not observe their fasting: "is it not most unreasonable, to expel from the number of the elect a man who, perhaps for his health's sake, takes some animal food without sensual appetite; while, if a man eagerly devours peppered truffles, you can only reprove him for excess, but cannot condemn him as abusing your symbol?".

[52] *AA* 8.7 (Vermes, 51).

[53] Titus of Bostra, *c. Manichaeos* 2.61.1-4: (61) Ἐντεῦθεν δὴ καὶ τὰ τετράποδα καὶ τὰ πετεινά, ὅσα (1) χρήσεις ἀνθρώποις ἔχει τροφῆς, βαρέως αἰτιᾶται τοὺς θύοντας, ὡς ἐκείνης τῆς δυνάμεως τοῦ ἀγαθοῦ καὶ ταῦτα ψυχούσης καὶ ἐν αὐτοῖς κατεχομένης.

[54] Amphilochius of Iconium, *c. Haer.* 1067-71.

[55] Theodoretus, *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. Cf. Nemesius of Emesa, *De natura hominis* 2.17.10-15 & 2.32.20-33.19, 2.32.20-33.2: Ἐξῆς ἐπισκεψώμεθα καὶ τὴν δόξαν τῶν Μανιχαίων, ἣν ἔχουσι περὶ τῆς ψυχῆς. φασὶ μὲν γὰρ αὐτὴν ἀθάνατον καὶ ἀσώματον, μίαν δὲ μόνην εἶναι τὴν τῶν πάντων ψυχὴν κατακερματιζομένην καὶ κατατεμνομένην εἰς τὰ καθ' ἕκαστα σώματα ἄψυχά τε καὶ ἔμψυχα, καὶ τὰ μὲν πλείονος αὐτῆς μετέχειν, τὰ δὲ ἐλάττονος·πλείονος μὲν τὰ ἔμψυχα, ἐλάττονος δὲ τὰ ἄψυχα, πολλῷ δὲ πλείονος τὰ οὐράνια, ὡς τῆς καθ' ὅλου ψυχῆς μέρη τὰς καθ' ἕκαστον εἶναι ψυχάς.

[56] Augustine, *ep*. 236.2 in Gardner and Lieu 2004, 244.

[57] Augustine, *Nat. bon.* 44.1 in BeDuhn 2000, 77.

[58] Augustine, *Faust.* 15.4 in BeDuhn 2000, 77.

[59] *SC*, ch. 6 (Lieu 2010, 123): τοὺς εἰσηγουμένους, καὶ τοὺς τὰς βοτάνας καὶ τὰ φυτὰ καὶ τὸ ὕδωρ καὶ τὰ ἄλλα ἄψυχα πάντα ἔμψυχα εἶναι ὑπολαμβάνοντας.

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

Critique of the 'seal of the mouth' based on the interpretation of fasting as 'protection of the divinity within foods'

The above Manichaean belief, which is grounded in the concept of the *Living Self*, is interpreted by the anti-Manichaean authors as pantheism (deification of nature) and idolatry.

According to the anonymous author of Alexandria, "the Manichaeans manifestly worship the creation (and that which they say) in their psalms is an abomination to the Lord".[61] In combating Manichaean pantheism, Basil of Caesarea in his eighth homily in *Hexaemeron* (ca. 370), entitled "On birds and those (living) in water" argues that the biblical verse (Gen 1.24) "Let the earth bring forth living creatures", does not mean that the earth is animated and that therefore the Manichaeans are right in putting the soul within earth. It is not that the earth brought forth something that was stored within it, but the creative logos of God did.[62]

Cyril of Jerusalem, in his sixth catechetical lecture, becomes particularly caustic comparing and criticizing pantheistic views with pagan idolatry:

> Wickedness flourished upon idolatry and cat and wolf and dog instead of God were venerated; and lion [...] (and) snake and dragon were worshiped. I am ashamed to say, but I will do so, that even the onions were worshiped by some [people].[63]

Similar are also the comments of John Chrysostom: "Many heretics dare to bring down God's substance to even more despised beings". Manichaeans are doing the same by "introducing the substance of God in dogs and apes and in beasts of all sorts (because as they argue the soul of all these beings originates from the same substance)".[64]

Indeed, according to Titus of Bostra the Manichaeans go so far as to say that even the stones and the woods have a soul.

> Mani [...] is not ashamed to say that even the stones have a soul and suggests that everything is animate even those which are clearly inanimate, because as he argues, […] the nature of the good is even bound to lifeless stones. [...] And he brings as proof of the soul of stones and trees the sound in the air of stone and tree as if it were their articulate voice that he once heard.[65]

The above text of Titus reminds us of Mani's testimony in the *CMC*, according to which Mani did not pick vegetables and did not cut wood, because he believed that they were alive. All plants and trees possess speech and talked to Mani. A date-palm tree began to speak and asked protection from him; vegetables lamented "like human beings, and as it were, like children" when they were cut.[66]

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[61] PRylands 3 Gr. 469 (Roberts 1938, 38-46, 42; Lieu 2010, 37).

[62] Basil of Caesarea, *Hom. Hexaem.*, 8.1-15.

[63] Cyril, *Catech*. 6.10.4-18: Ἐπεδαψιλεύσατο δὲ ἡ πονηρία τῆς εἰδωλολατρίας· καὶ αἴλουρος καὶ λύκος καὶ κύων ἀντὶ Θεοῦ προσεκυνήθησαν, καὶ λέων […] Ὄφις καὶ δράκων, προσεκυνήθησαν· […] Αἰσχύνομαι λέγειν, πλὴν λέγω· καὶ κρόμμυα γὰρ ἤδη παρά τισι προσεκυνήθη. Cyril's sixth *Catechesis* was mainly devoted to Manichaeans.

[64] John Chrysostom, *Natal.* (PG 49:359): πολλοὶ δὲ τῶν αἱρετικῶν καὶ εἰς ἔτι τούτων ἀτιμότερα τοῦ Θεοῦ κατάγειν τολμῶσι τὴν οὐσίαν […] καὶ οἱ τὰ αὐτὰ ἀσεβοῦντες αὐτοῖς Μανιχαῖοι, εἰς κύνας καὶ πιθήκους καὶ θηρία παντοδαπὰ τὴν οὐσίαν εἰσάγοντες τοῦ Θεοῦ (τὴν γὰρ ψυχὴν τούτοις ἅπασιν ἐκ τῆς οὐσίας ἐκείνης εἶναί φασιν).

[65] Titus of Bostra *c. Manichaeos* 2.60.1-8 & 10-28: Μάνης Οὐκ αἰσχύνεται καὶ τοὺς λίθους ἐψυχῶσθαι λέγων, καὶ τὰ πάντα ἔμψυχα καὶ τὰ σαφῶς ἄψυχα εἰσηγούμενος, ὡς, ἀπ' ἐκείνης δὴ τῆς τοῦ ἀγαθοῦ δυνάμεως ἔτι καὶ ἐν λίθοις κατεχομένης, ὥστε τὴν φύσιν τοῦ ἀγαθοῦ καὶ ἐν λίθοις ἀψύχοις φάσκειν πεπεδῆσθαι [...] Καὶ ποιεῖται τεκμήριον τῆς τῶν λίθων καὶ τῶν ξύλων ψυχῆς τὸν ἐν ἀέρι κτύπον λίθου τε καὶ ῥάβδου, ὥσπερ ἐνάρθρου φωνῆς αὐτῶν πώποτε διακούσας [...] Ὅπερ τοίνυν ἐχρῆν τεκμήριον ποιήσασθαι τῶν παντελῶς ἀψύχων ὡς κτυπούντων ἐξ ἀνάγκης εἰς ἀέρα —τοῦτο γὰρ μόνου σώματος οὐχὶ δὲ ψυχῆς—τοῦτο ψυχώσεως σημεῖον ἔλαβεν.

[66] *CMC* 8.1-10.12 (Cameron and Dewey, 13): ὅ[τε δὲ ὁ φοῖνιξ εἶπεν] […] μεθ' οὗ πάντα τὰ φ[υτ]ὰ λαλεῖ, [... κ]αὶ ἐτάκ[η ὁλοφυρό-]μενον παραπλησ[ίως ἀν-]θρωπείοις προσώ[ποις] καὶ ὡσεὶ παιδίοις. ὀ[ὐ]αὶ ο[ὐ-]αὶ δὲ τὸ αἷμα κατεκέχυτο τοῦ τόπου τοῦ κοπέντος διὰ τῆς δρεπάνης ἧς μετὰ χεῖρας εἶχεν. ἔκραζον δὲ καὶ ἀνθρωπείαι φωνῆι διὰ τὰς πλήξεις αὐτῶν.

Augustine was well aware of this Manichaean belief. In criticizing it, he becomes self-deprecating, since he had believed in the same things when he was a Manichaean hearer for nine years: "Gradually and unconsciously I was led to the absurd trivialities of believing that a fig weeps when it is picked, and that the fig tree, its mother, sheds milky tears".[67] Furthermore, Augustine in examining the pantheistic view which is based on the assumption that the divine substance resides within foods, highlights a distinction that the Manichaeans made between animal and plant food. As Augustine remarks, the Manichaeans believe that what is bright in colour, agreeable in smell and pleasant in taste encapsulates huge amounts of divine substance; all the above are qualities of plants, fruits, vegetables and flowers, but not of animals and of foods of animal origin. In this way, Augustine provides us with lists of approved and disapproved foods.[68]

As BeDuhn underlines, "the strict code of vegetarianism entails a qualitative distinction between the condition of light in plants vs. animals".[69] Indeed, the descriptions by the Manichaean sources of the presence of the *Living Self* in the material world and especially in plant life are very vivid and poetic, so it is logical that they did not escape Augustine's attention and his relevant comments. The *Living Self* is described as "treasure hidden in the field",[70] "milk that is in all trees",[71] the "sweetness of the fruits".[72] As Mani is presented to teach his disciples in the *Kephalaia*, the sun is the one that "gives a strength to the elements; and also it gives scent and a taste to the entire Cross of the Light".[73]

Seizing upon the latter, one should remember that in Manichaean sources the *Living Self* is identified with the *Cross of Light*, which is one dimension of the Manichaean Jesus.[74] According to a Manichaean psalm, the *Cross of Light* is a "sheep bound to the tree, […] Jesus that hangs to the tree"[75]. The concept of the *Living Self* represented as Jesus (*patibilis*) spread and imprisoned in the cosmos, is also illustrated in a Manichaean text cited by Theodore bar Konai. According to it, Jesus reveals to Adam and through him to all the Manichaeans that he was consumed, eaten, devoured by everything that exists in the natural world (e.g. panthers, dogs, elephants, men).[76]

Unlike Greek patristic sources Augustine's works clearly illustrate the above identification of the *Living Self* with Jesus (*patibilis*): "And Christ himself, they say, was crucified in the whole world".[77] In the words of Faustus "we believe [that] … the suffering

[67] Augustine, *Conf.* 10.18 (Chadwick 1991, 48-49).
[68] Augustine, *Mor. Manich*. 16.39-41, 39 (*NPNF*[1] 4: 139): "Tell me then, first, where you get the doctrine that part of God, as you call it, exists in corn, beans, cabbage, and flowers and fruits. From the beauty of the color, say they, and the sweetness of the taste; this is evident; [...] Why do you look upon a yellow melon as part of the treasures of God, and not rancid bacon fat or the yolk of an egg? Why do you think that whiteness in a lettuce proclaims God, and not in milk?"; *Duab.* 8. Cf. BeDuhn, 2000b, 37. Lieu 1981a, 153-173, 167: "A daily provision for 30 melons to be given to the main monastery and an equal number for its chapter house from the lands of the three Ordos (lines 79-81 AG) shows that the Manichaean preference for melons, because of the exceptionally large number of light particles which they were alleged to hold, was not only theological but culinary".
[69] BeDuhn 1995b, 191.
[70] *2PsB* 155.23.
[71] *2PsB* 54.28-29 (Psalm 246).
[72] *2PsB* 155.27.
[73] *1Keph*. 65.162.12-13 (Gardner 1995, 171).
[74] *1Keph*. 63.156.29-30.
[75] *2PsB* 155.22; *2PsB* 155.24.
[76] Theodore bar Konai, *Scholia* in BeDuhn 2000b, 73.
[77] Augustine, *Commentary on Psalm* 140.12 in Gardner and Lieu 2004, 245.

Jesus… hung from the tree for everyone".[78] Interesting also is the information, provided by Augustine and attested in Manichaean sources, that humans were considered by Manichaeans as the biggest depositories of divine substance.[79]

Furthermore, East-Roman sources do not provide us with any information concerning the fasting periods of the Manichaeans. Augustine, once more, is illuminating; according to him, the Elect abstain from meat and wine and eat only in the evening, while hearers fast only on Sundays (or Bema?).[80] The latter is testified by Manichaean sources. According to *Kephalaia*, the catechumens, "who have not strength to fast daily should make their fast [only] on the lord's day".[81]

The pagan philosopher Alexander of Lycopolis is the only one of the East-Roman authors who simultaneously points out and examines the two contradictory interpretations of Manichaean fasting. Alexander considers both of them equally incomprehensible and ridiculous. As he notes, "since" according to Manichaeans "it is God's decree that matter shall perish", according to their doctrine, they "abstain from eating any animals, and should rather eat vegetables and all the other things that are without feeling".[82] As Alexander critically comments on the above Manichaean attitude:

> They abstain from eating ensouled things. If they do so for some other reason, we need not bother. If, however, they do so because the divine power is either more absent from these or more plentifully present within them, this choice of theirs is ridiculous. For plants are either of a more material nature, and it is not reasonable to use that which is inferior as food and substance; or, on the other hand, the divine power is more plentiful within them, -why should such things be used in that case as food, since the nurturing and growth-fostering part of soul is of a more bodily nature?[83]

Some concluding remarks concerning the representation of the Manichaean "seal of the mouth" by the East-Roman anti-Manichaean sources

After comparing the testimonies provided by East-Roman sources with those provided by Augustine in the light of the authentic Manichaean findings, some remarks can now be made to illuminate two issues arising from the above analysis.

Firstly, I would like to further highlight an issue which concerns the problem of the incompatibility between the two interpretations of Manichaean fasting (contempt for creation versus deification of creation). Where does the problem lie? Is it due to the misinterpretation of Church Fathers or due to the Manichaean practice? In other words: could the two contradictory interpretations be explained by the Manichaean narrative and precepts? Secondly, I would like to highlight the additional information that Augustine gives that is absent from East-Roman sources.

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[78] Augustine, *Faust*. 20.2.536.9–24 and 20.11, 550.14–19 (in Gardner and Lieu 2004, 219; Lieu 2010, 13-16).

[79] Augustine, *Haer*. 46.6 in BeDuhn 2000b, 94: the Manichaeans "believe that this portion of the good and divine substance which is held mixed and imprisoned in food and drink is more strongly and foully bound in the rest of men, even their own Auditors, but particularly in those who propagate offspring". Cf. BeDuhn 2000b, 88.

[80] Augustine, *Ep.* 236,2.

[81] *1Keph*. 79: 191.32–192.1 (Gardner 1995, 200). About the Manichaean fasts see also Henning 1945, 146-64.

[82] Alexander of Lycopolis, *Tract. Man.* 4.25-27 (van der Horst and Mansfeld, 56-57): ἐπεὶ οὖν ἀπόλλυσθαι τὴν ὕλην ἐστὶ θεοῦ δόγμα, ἀπέχεσθαι μὲν ἐμψύχων πάντων, σιτίζεσθαι δὲ λάχανα καὶ πᾶν ὅ τι ἀναίσθητον.

[83] Alexander of Lycopolis, *Tract. Man.* 25.1-9 (van der Horst and Mansfeld, 94): Ἀπέχονται δὲ ἐμψύχων. εἰ μὲν γὰρ ἑτέρου τινὸς χάριν, οὐ περιεργαστέον· εἰ δὲ διότι ἡ δύναμις ἡ θεία τούτων ἄπεστι μᾶλλον ἢ ἐνυπάρχει πλείων, γελοῖον αὐτὴ αὐτῶν ἡ προαίρεσις αὕτη. εἴτε γὰρ τὰ φυτὰ ἔνυλα μᾶλλον, εἰς τροφὴν καὶ δίαιταν χρῆσθαι τῷ χείρονι πῶς εὔλογον; εἴτε πλείων ἐν τούτοις ἡ δύναμις ἡ θεία, τί πρὸς τὴν τροφὴν τὰ τοιαῦτα χρήσιμα, τοῦ θρεπτικοῦ καὶ αὐξητικοῦ μέρους τῆς ψυχῆς ὄντος σωματικωτέρου;

Concerning the first issue, this incompatibility is due to Manichaean premises. Both contradictory attitudes were meaningful according to the rationale of Manichaean discipline and are supported by the Manichaean narrative. The fundamental basis of the second interpretation (deification of creation) is the concept of the *Living Self* imprisoned in the natural world (divinity within foods). Whereas, the basis of the first interpretation (contempt for creation) is that the world is a mixture of divine and evil elements (materiality of food). Thus, the Manichaeans fasted because (some) foods are poisonous 'abominations', foul of 'deadly' matter. As BeDuhn points out:

> Manichaeans erect walls between themselves and the world not just to flee its poison, but also to restrain themselves from harmful action upon its goodness.[84]
> The Manichaean sources reflect apparently contradictory evaluations of the world. On the one hand, the world is identified as a locale of evil [...] from which Manichaeans strive to escape. On the other hand, the world is filled with a divine presence [...] which Manichaeans endeavor not to afflict by their actions. The abhorrence and reverence attested in the sources can be characterized as opposite reactions, attitudes or moods.[85]

Therefore, it could be said that the purpose of the Manichaean fasting ("seal of the mouth") was both protective, so as not to injure the entrapped divine substance within foods, and preventive, to limit the materiality rates inside humans. The latter was manifested by an abstinence from animal products, which was particularly important for the class of the Elect and their preparation for the ritual meal.

The second question concerns the comparisons with Augustine, namely (1) where Augustine differs from the authors of the eastern Empire, and (2) which further information he provides:

Concerning the first interpretation (materiality of foods):

According to East-Roman authors, the Manichaeans seem to argue that materiality pertains without exception to all foods, including plants. However, Augustine's testimony seems to be that impurity concerned mainly foods from animals and animal products. Animal food is poisonous, and this is because animals have been slain.

Concerning the second interpretation (divinity within foods):

Eastern patristic sources do not refer to the qualitative distinction that the Manichaeans made between animal and plant foods because of their high content either of matter or light. This is underlined and emphasized by Augustine. An exception is Alexander who, although not distinguishing between plants and animals, notes that the content of matter or light was a criterion for the suitability of food for the Manichaeans.

Thus, for East-Roman sources, all kinds of food, according to the first interpretation, whether plant or animal, are considered as abominations, whereas according to the second interpretation they are considered as containers of divine particles. On the contrary, Augustine, notes this distinction, presents the Manichaeans' argumentation for this distinction (brightness, colour, odour, etc.), and ridicules their rationale. Thus, according to Augustine, the reason why meat and foods from animal products are considered as abominations is that they contain high percentages of matter and correspondingly low

[84] BeDuhn 2000b, 230.

[85] BeDuhn 1995b, 437: "In the Manichaean case, therefore, abhorrence is only one part of a larger set of rationales supporting ascetic practices". As BeDuhn (2000, 208) concludes, "The Elect compressed their contact with the world, which is problematic for both its profanity and its sacrality, to the single point of ingestion. Their resolution of the problematized world, therefore, was metabolic", Cf. Brand 2019, 201.

percentages of divine substance. Nevertheless, at this point it should be highlighted that the Manichaean position on the issue is ambiguous.[86]

Moreover, particularly important is that Augustine's works clearly distinguish between the Elect and auditors. The "seal of the mouth" applies only to the Elect. Whereas hearers could eat meat (although deterred from doing so), the Elect who violated the "seal of the mouth" was expelled from the class of the Elect. Unlike Augustine, reports from East-Roman sources do not make this distinction, and they refer to Manichaeans in general. Further, Augustine is well aware of the Manichaean beliefs that inanimate things have articulated voices and of the identification of *Living Self* with the crucified Jesus. Lastly, Augustine provides us with some details concerning the everyday religious life of Manichaeans (e.g. days and time of fasting).

5.2.3 Manichaean Rituals

As underlined in the introduction, the acceptance of the Manichaean narrative entailed certain behaviours, which according to their purpose can be classified as protective, preventive, and liberative behaviours.

The purpose of the Manichaean fasting ("seal of the mouth") was both protective, and preventive. The purpose of the Manichaean rituals was liberative, and as such, they aimed to release the already entrapped divine element in the material world. On the macrocosmic level, the luminaries (sun and moon) were created by the powers of light to release the light from the material world. On the microcosmic level, this project was undertaken by the Elect Manichaeans, who released the divine particles entrapped within foods during the ritual meal.[87]

Furthermore, in order to analyse and correctly comprehend the discourse concerning Manichaean behaviours in rituals, it is important to stress once more the peculiarity of the macro-microcosmic relationship in Manichaeism. As underlined in the introduction, although it is common in many religions that divine beings serve as exemplars which the faithful are called to imitate, and that rituals could be interpreted as re-enactments of divine archetypes, in Manichaeism this macro-microcosmic relationship is more direct and substantial. This is because the Manichaean believer was not just asked to imitate the behaviour and deeds of the divine figures of his religion, but he himself, or rather his soul (as a part of the divine substance), was called to remember his own deeds which took place in a remote past (during the primordial struggle) and to act respectively, in the same way as then.[88]

Sun and moon worship

A constant target of attack and criticism by anti-Manichaean authors was the important role that the sun and moon had in the Manichaean narrative, as well as the attitude of Manichaean followers towards them. In brief, the main points of the anti-Manichaean criticism on this subject are: (1) the central position the luminaries have in Manichaean narrative as a part of the divine substance, and their role in distilling the particles of light from cosmos; (2) the

[86] See for example *Kephalaia* (*1Keph*. 86, 215.12-215.23), where water consumption may have the same effect.
[87] As Augustine wrote to his epistle to Deuterius (*Ep.* 236,2), the Manichaeans say that the part of God which was "mingled with the prince of darkness" and which is "spread over the world, defiled and bound, is purified by the food of the elect and by the sun and moon", see BeDuhn 2000b, 77; Gardner and Lieu 2004, 244-45.
[88] On this see BeDuhn 2000b, 82-83.

identification of Christ either with the sun or the moon; (3) the deification of the two luminaries by Manichaean sources; (4) the prayers and rituals devoted to their worship.

The two former issues, which concern Manichaean beliefs, will be discussed briefly. The two latter issues, which concern Manichaean attitudes, are the main questions to be examined in this section, by investigating whether according to the sources the Manichaeans worship the sun and the moon as gods, and what kind of information is recorded concerning the relevant rituals.

All kinds of sources, such as Christian (Greek, Semitic, Augustine), pagan, Muslim and Manichaean ones are unanimous about the important position and role which the two great luminaries had in the Manichaean cosmogonic myth. In specific, the key points of the narrative which were criticized are the following:

A. *The powers of light created the two luminaries of pure divine essence*: The demiurge (i.e. the *Living Spirit*) clears from the mixture that part of the light that had not been affected by matter and creates the sun and moon,[89] which as Turbo comments, are the remnants of the universal *Soul*.[90] The sun is made of good fire and the moon is made of good water.[91]

B. *The luminaries were created in order to capture the light from the world each day*: "The demiurge and his agents construct the world as a huge machine, distilling light from its unfortunate mixture with evil; each part functions towards this liberative purpose, from the rotation of the sun and moon to the exhalations of trees and plants".[92] The demiurge "created the sun and the moon for sifting out whatever there was of light in the world".[93] He "founded sun and moon, [and] he set them on high, to purify the soul".[94] This extraction, or pumping takes place on a daily basis. Thus, "every day through these luminaries, the sun and the moon [...] the whole cosmos and all creation is taken away". [95]

C. *The description of the construction of mechanical devices for the light-pumping, as well as of the way the light is transported from the earth to the moon and the sun and finally to the kingdom of Glory*: Then, the pumped souls are daily sent via the luminaries "to the aeons of

[89] Alexander, *Tract. Man.* 3.18-22 (van der Horst and Mansfeld, 55): "Then God […] sent another power which we call Demiurge. When this power had arrived and had put its hand to creating the universe, then that part of the other power which had suffered nothing untoward as a result of the mixture was separated from matter, and this first part of the other power became sun and moon".

[90] *AA* 8.1 (Vermes, 49): "And again that Living Spirit created the heavenly bodies, which are remnants of the soul". Epiphanius, *Pan*. 66.49.1: Εἶτα πάλιν φάσκει ὁ αὐτὸς ὅτι μετὰ τὸ ἐσταυρωκέναι τοὺς ἄρχοντας ἐν τῇ σφαίρᾳ ἔκτισε τοὺς φωστῆρας, ἅ ἐστι τῆς ψυχῆς λείψανα.

[91] Augustine, *Haer.* 46.7; *1Keph*. 136 (337.10–338.18) & *1Keph*. 145 (348.12–27), cf. Gardner and Lieu 2004, 227 (no 72). Al-Nadim, *Fihrist* ch. 9 (Dodge, 789). Ephrem, *Prose Refutations* 41 (Mitchell): "The moon is a vessel into whose midst the light is poured".

[92] BeDuhn 2000b, 76, cf. Ephrem, *Prose Refutations* (second discourse to Hypatius) 34-35.

[93] Al-Nadim, *Fihrist* ch.9 (Dodge, 782).

[94] *2PsB* 9.3–11.32 (Psalm 223).

[95] Epiphanius, *Pan*. 66.31.1 (Williams, 260): τούτου χάριν πέμπει καὶ συλᾷ ἀπ' αὐτῶν τὴν ψυχὴν αὐτοῦ καθ' ἡμέραν διὰ τῶν φωστήρων τούτων, ἡλίου καὶ σελήνης, ὑφ' ὧν ὅλος ὁ κόσμος καὶ πᾶσα ἡ κτίσις ἁρπάζεται. *AA* 12.3 (Vermes, 56): "For this reason he sends and steals from them every day the soul that is his by means of these heavenly bodies, namely the sun and the moon, by which the whole world and every creature is seized". Severianus of Gabala, *c. Manichaeos* 825.31-34: Ποῦ ἤκουσας ἐν τῷ Εὐαγγελίῳ Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ, ὅτι ὁ ἥλιος καὶ ἡ σελήνη δημιουργοί εἰσι; ποῦ εἶπεν ὁ Χριστός, ὅτι ταῦτα ἀντλοῦσι τὰς ψυχὰς, καὶ ἀνάγουσιν αὐτάς; ποῦ ἀνέγνωκας τοῦτο;

the Father",[96] in other words to the Kingdom of Light (God):[97] "The sun and moon [...] daily take up the refined part to the heights".[98] The "Light in the world ... [thus] rises up on a Column of Praise".[99] "The great luminaries, both the sun and the moon [...] [send over] (*διαπεμπούσας*) the victorious among the souls into the great aeon of light".[100]

For the pumping of light, a machine is usually postulated, described as an "instrument with twelve jars", a wheel through the rotation of which ("revolve by the sphere") the enlightened Manichaean souls (Elect) are sent to the moon. The luminaries are described as 'ships' or 'passage-boats' or 'palaces' carrying the souls of Elect: from the moon the souls travel to the sun and from the sun to the "pillar of glory, which is called the perfect air", or "the aeons of the Father". Thereby, the Manichaeans explained the monthly phases of the moon (full moon= full of souls, new moon= empty of souls) and the daily path of the sun from the east to the west (or rather the reverse).[101] What is drained and fills the moon and the sun,

[96] *AA* 8.7 (Vermes, 51): "So when the moon has handed the load of souls it carries to the aeons of the father, they remain in that Column of Glory, which is called the perfect man. This man is a column of light, for it is filled with pure souls, and this is the cause of the salvation of souls"; Epiphanius, *Pan*. 66.26.8: τῆς οὖν σελήνης μεταδιδούσης τὸν γόμον τῶν ψυχῶν τοῖς αἰῶσι τοῦ πατρός, παραμένουσιν ἐν τῷ στύλῳ τῆς δόξης, ὃς καλεῖται ἀὴρ ὁ τέλειος. ὁ δὲ ἀὴρ οὗτος στῦλός ἐστι φωτός ἐπειδὴ γέμει ψυχῶν τῶν καθαριζομένων. αὕτη ἐστὶν ἡ αἰτία δι' ἣς αἱ ψυχαὶ σῴζονται.

[97] Alexander, *Tract. Man.* 3.29-31 (van der Horst and Mansfeld, 55): "sun and the moon, [...] continually separate the divine power from matter and send it on its way toward God".

[98] *2PsB*, 10.30-11.2 (Allberry). See also Gardner and Lieu 2004, 178, Psalm 223 (9.3–11.32), no 56, entitled: *The community sings 'the knowledge of Mani'*.

[99] Al-Nadim, *Fihrist* ch. 9, 782.

[100] *P. Kellis GR. 98,* 60-70 in Gardner 2007a, 121-22 (*Prayer of the Emanations/Εὐχὴ τῶν Προβολῶν*): Προσκυνῶ καὶ δοξάζω τοὺς μεγάλους φωστῆρες ἥλιον καὶ σελήνην [...] διαπεμπούσας τὰς νικώσας τῶν ψυχῶν εἰς τὸν μέγιστον αἰῶνα τοῦ φωτὸς.

[101] The way of distilling the light (construction of an instrument): *AA* 8.5 (Vermes, 50): "When he [the son of the living Father/Jesus] had arrived, he set up a machine devised for the salvation of souls, that is a wheel, holding twelve jars. It rotates in this sphere, draining the souls of the dying which the greater heavenly body, the sun, takes away with its rays, purifies and hands on to the moon, which is how the disc of the moon, as we call it, is filled up. 6. He says those two heavenly bodies are ships or merchant boats, and when the moon is full, it carries souls to the eastern region, and so effects its waning or decline, by being relieved of its load. Then again the boats are refilled and once more loaded, as the souls are drained by means of the jars, until it releases its correct portion of souls. 7. […] So when the moon has handed the load of souls it carries to the aeons of the father, they remain in that Column of Glory, which is called the perfect man. This man is a column of light, for it is filled with pure souls, and this is the cause of the salvation of souls". The same text by Epiphanius, *Pan*. 66.59.5-60.26. Alexander of Lycopolis, *Tract. Man.* 4. *2PsB* 54.8ff: "as the sphere turns… as [the sun receives] the refined part of life". Cf. fn. 14 of this chapter. Sun and moon as ships: *AA* 8.6, 13.2 (Vermes 50, 57): "He says those two heavenly bodies are ships or merchant boats". Epiphanius, *Pan*. 66.26.6: πλοῖα γὰρ ἤτοι πορθμεῖα εἶναι λέγει τοὺς δύο φωστῆρας; 66.31.6: αἱ δὲ προβολαὶ πᾶσαι, ὁ Ἰησοῦς ὁ ἐν τῷ μικρῷ πλοίῳ καὶ ἡ μήτηρ τῆς ζωῆς καὶ οἱ δώδεκα κυβερνῆται καὶ ἡ παρθένος τοῦ φωτὸς καὶ ὁ † πρεσβύτης ὁ τρίτος ὁ ἐν τῷ μεγάλῳ πλοίῳ καὶ τὸ ζῶν πνεῦμα καὶ τὸ τεῖχος τοῦ μεγάλου πυρὸς καὶ τὸ τεῖχος τοῦ ἀνέμου καὶ τοῦ ἀέρος καὶ τοῦ ὕδατος καὶ τοῦ ἔσωθεν πυρὸς τοῦ ζῶντος * πρὸς τὸν μικρὸν φωστῆρα οἰκοῦσιν. Theodoret of Cyrrhus, *Haer.* 380.17-19: "And sometimes they said that are boats [the sun and the moon] carrying the souls of the dead from the Matter to the Light" (ποτὲ δὲ πλοῖα λέγοντες εἶναι τὰς τῶν τελευτώντων ψυχὰς ἀπὸ τῆς Ὕλης μετάγοντα πρὸς τὸ Φῶς). *SC* ch. 6 (Lieu 2010, 123): "out by means of the Sun and the Moon, which they also say are boats" (τὸν θεὸν καὶ ταύτας διὰ τοῦ ἡλίου καὶ τῆς σελήνης ἐξαντλεῖν, ἃ καὶ πλοῖα εἶναί φασιν). Ephrem, *Prose Refutations* in BeDuhn 2000b, 293-94: "they greatly magnify and call it 'the ship of light which ... bears away the burden of their refinings to the house of life' (cxvi); and they say, 'the moon receives the light which is refined, and during fifteen days draws it up and goes on emptying it out for another fifteen days' (xxxvi). Moreover, 'they say that the sun receives the light from the moon' (xxxviii); 'and it is the sun that goes and comes every day on account of its purity to the house of life, as they say' (xli). And elsewhere, 'they say concerning the sun that it purifies from evil, because it goes and comes every day to the domain of the good one, which is a purification' (lxxxiv)". Augustine, *Faust.* 20.6 (Lieu 2010: 79)**:**

is the divine substance that has been stolen during the primordial battle by the princes of Darkness from the powers of Light.[102]

D. *The identification of Christ sometimes with the sun*[103] *and sometimes with the moon*:[104] The reason the Manichaeans identify Christ with the sun, as Theodoret of Cyrrhus explains, is because the sun departed from the sky at the time of the crucifixion.[105] Criticism from all sides concerning the above Manichaean beliefs abounds.[106] Simplicius wonders:

> Then consider the enormous absurdity [...] They don't believe that the light of the moon is from the sun, either, but think it to be souls which the moon draws up in the period from the new to the full moon, and then channels towards the sun in the period from the full to the new moon.[107]

Divinization or just honour?

The Greek patristic sources are not entirely clear as to whether the Manichaeans considered and worshiped the two luminaries as gods or not. According to Cyril, the Manichaeans had made the sun and moon into gods.[108] According to Titus, Mani claims that the sun is consubstantial with God.[109] Theodoret of Cyrrhus states that they call the sun and the moon gods, while in the *SC* the converted Manichaeans anathematized those who "pray to the sun

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"Your statements about the sun himself are so false and absurd [...] First of all, you call the sun a ship [...] Next, [...] you maintain that he is triangular [...] Light shines … through a triangular window in heaven". Manichaean sources: *CMC* 34 (see esp.: 33-35 & 79-93): Τιμόθεος […] τοῦ φωτὸς πατέρων καὶ πάντα τὰ γιγνόμενα ἐν τοῖς πλοίοις ἀπεκάλυπτέ μοι. ἀνέπτυξε δ' αὖ πάλιν τὸν κόλπον τοῦ κίονος καὶ τοὺς πατέρας καὶ τὰ σθένη τὰ ἀλκιμώτατα. *1Keph*. 65.162.24-26 (Gardner 1995, 171). *2PsB* 134.24 (Allberry): "The ships are the sun and the moon", and 147.34-37: "Lo, the ships are moored for thee, the barks are in the harbor. Take thy merchandise aboard and sail to thy habitations".

[102] *AA* 11.2 (Vermes, 55): "However that which the princes stole from the first man is the very thing that fills the moon, which is purified every day from the world". Epiphanius, *Pan*. 66.29.2: ὃ δὲ ἐσύλησαν οἱ ἄρχοντες ἀπὸ τοῦ πρώτου ἀνθρώπου, αὐτό ἐστι τὸ γεμίζον τὴν σελήνην, τὸ καθαριζόμενον καθημερινὸν ἀπὸ τοῦ κόσμου.

[103] *AA* 60.1 (Vermes, 137): "you say that God transformed himself into a man or into the sun. You wish to prove by this that our Jesus was made man only in outward appearance". Cyril, *Catech*. 6.13: τὸν δὲ Χριστὸν τὸν ἥλιον τοῦτον καλοῦσιν; *Catech.* 15.3.29-32: παιδευέσθωσαν οἱ ἐκ Μανιχαίων ἐπιστρέψαντες, […] μηδὲ τὸν σκοτισθησόμενον τοῦτον ἥλιον τὸν Χριστὸν εἶναι δυσσεβῶς νομιζέτωσαν; *Catech*. 11.21: Φιμούσθωσαν οἱ λέγοντες τὸν ἥλιον εἶναι τὸν Χριστόν· ἡλίου γάρ ἐστι δημιουργὸς, οὐχ ὁ ἥλιος ὁ φαινόμενος. Theodoret, *Haer*. (PG 83:380B): Οὗτοι τὸν ἥλιον ..., ποτὲ μὲν αὐτὸν ἀποκαλοῦντες Χριστόν. *SC*, ch. 5: Ἀναθεματίζω τοὺς [...] τὸν κύριον ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦν Χριστὸν [...] ἥλιον λέγοντας εἶναι αὐτόν; *SC*, ch. 6: Ἀναθεματίζω οὖν καὶ καταθεματίζω τοὺς εἰρημένους Μανιχαίους καὶ τοὺς τὸν Ζαραδὴν καὶ τὸν <Βούδδαν καὶ τὸν> Χριστὸν καὶ τὸν Μανιχαῖον καὶ τὸν ἥλιον τὸν αὐτὸν εἶναι λέγοντας; *SC* ch. 7: Καὶ αὐτὸς γὰρ [Ἀριστοκρίτος] ἐν αὐτῇ κατὰ τὸν Μανιχαῖον τὸν Ζαραδῆ θεοποιεῖ, φανέντα, ὡς καὶ αὐτός φησι, παρὰ Πέρσαις, καὶ τοῦτον εἶναι λέγει τὸν ἥλιον καὶ τὸν κύριον ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦν Χριστόν.

[104] *SC*, ch. 4: Ἀναθεματίζω οὖν τοὺς ἀγέννητον ἀποκαλοῦσι Χριστὸν Ἰησοῦν καὶ φέγγος προσονομάζουσιν ἐν σχήματι ἀνθρώπου φανέντα, τὸν μὲν τῆς κακῆς ἀρχῆς, τὸν δὲ τῆς ἀγαθῆς μυθολογοῦντες.

[105] Theodoretus, *Haer*. (PG 83:380B.13-16): Οὗτοι τὸν ἥλιον [...] ποτὲ μὲν αὐτὸν ἀποκαλοῦντες Χριστὸν, καὶ τούτου τεκμήριον ἱκανὸν παρέχουσι, τὸ τὸν ἥλιον ἐκλείπειν· ἐν τῷ τοῦ σταυροῦ καιρῷ·.

[106] Epiphanius, *Pan*. 66.23.1-7; Severianus of Gabala, *c. Manichaeos*; Augustine, *Conf.* (Gardner and Lieu 2004, 132).

[107] Simplicius, *Comm. Man. Epict.* 35.99, 101-04 (Brennan & Brittain, 39): Πόση δὲ καὶ ἡ περὶ τοῦτο ἀλλοκοτία [...] καὶ τὸ φῶς τῆς σελήνης οὐκ ἀπὸ τοῦ ἡλίου νομίζειν, ἀλλὰ ψυχὰς εἶναι, ἃς ὑπὸ νουμηνίας ἕως πανσελήνου ἀπὸ τῆς γῆς ἀνασπῶσα, ἀπὸ πανσελήνου πάλιν ἕως νουμηνίας εἰς τὸν ἥλιον μεταγγίζει.

[108] Cyril, *Catch*. 4.6: Ἐπεὶ οὖν ἐπλανήθησαν ἀπὸ τοῦ ἑνὸς Θεοῦ διαφόρως πολλοί· καὶ οἱ μὲν ἥλιον ἐθεοποίησαν; 15.3.29: παιδευέσθωσαν οἱ ἐκ Μανιχαίων ἐπιστρέψαντες, καὶ τοὺς φωστῆρας μηκέτι θεοποιείτωσαν […].

[109] Titus of Bostra, *c. Manichaeos* 2.54: Ὁ τοίνυν Μάνης ἐκθειάζων, ὡς τῆς φύσεως ὄντα τοῦ ἀγαθοῦ, τὸν ἥλιον [...] Ὥστε καὶ οἱ πέμπτον στοιχεῖον ὁριζόμενοι εἶναι τὸν ἥλιον πρός γε τὰ σαφῆ μὴ φιλονεικούντων, καὶ οὕτως αὐτὸς ὁ χαλεπώτατα μανείς, τὸν τῶν ὅλων δημιουργὸν βλασφημῶν, ἥκιστα πιστευέσθω, ἥλιον συγκρίνων θεῷ καὶ ἐκ τῆς οὐσίας αὐτοῦ λέγων εἶναι τοῦτον.

or to the moon or to the stars and call them the brightest gods or, in short, introduce many gods to whom they pray".[110] Thus, for a number of sources, the Manichaeans deify the two luminaries or call them gods, whereas, in some cases the Manichaeans just honour the two luminaries as if they were gods. For example, Chrysostom in his first homily in *Genesis* argues that the Manichaeans (as the Greeks) honour created things as if they were Gods, attributing the privilege of ingenerateness to something that comes from non-existence, which will be destroyed and will be lost. Chrysostom uses the sun as an example. It is not the sun to be worshiped, but its creator. The sun is bright but was created to worship the one who created it, and not the sun itself.[111] As he stresses addressing his flock:

> Don't you see that this sun is a material body, subjected to decay and perishable? And let the Greeks and the Manichaeans get overwhelmed with grief listening to this. Not only sun, but earth, and sea and the whole creation [are perishable] are subjected to futility.[112]

Alexander too, seems to be ambivalent on the issue. Initially he is clear in explaining that for the Manichaeans, "Sun and moon they honour most of all, not as gods, but as the means by which it is possible to attain to God".[113] Commenting on this, Lieu argues that "Alexander of Lycopolis [...] probably comes closest to the Manichaean position when he says that the Manichaeans do not regard the sun and the moon as gods but as a way to reach God".[114] Indeed, as one reads in the Manichaean *Prayer of the Emanations*, "the great light-givers, both sun and moon" are praised, for through them the souls succeed to have access "into the great aeon of light".[115] However, further in his text, Alexander contradicts himself saying that "the sun and the moon, heavenly bodies which alone among the gods they profess to revere".[116] Van der Horst, in his footnotes, also refers to the above contradiction, without however commenting on it further.[117]

At this point, it is interesting to examine the opinion of the other pagan authors on the subject. According to Libanius (fourth cent.), the Manichaeans "venerate the sun […] and honour it as a god of the second grade".[118] Thus for Manichaeans, the sun is a god, yet a second class one. Contrary to Libanius, Simplicius, the pagan philosopher of the sixth century, speaks only about honour. The Manichaeans

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[110] Theodoret, *Haer*. (PG 83:380B.13.14): συντόμως ἐρῶ τῆς δυσσεβοῦς αἱρέσεως τὰ κεφάλαια. Οὗτοι τὸν ἥλιον καὶ τὴν σελήνην θεοὺς ὀνομάζουσι. *SC,* ch. 5: Ἀναθεματίζω οὖν τοὺς ... τῷ ἡλίῳ εὐχομένους ἢ τῇ σελήνῃ ἢ τοῖς ἄστροις καὶ θεοὺς φανοτάτους αὐτοὺς ἀποκαλοῦντας ἢ πολλοὺς ὅλως εἰσάγοντας θεοὺς καὶ τούτοις εὐχομένους. On this issue see also: Serapion, *c. Manichaeos* 42; Socrates, *HE* 1.22.8: καὶ γὰρ θεοὺς πολλοὺς σέβειν ὁ Μανιχαῖος προτρέπεται <αὐτὸς> ἄθεος ὢν καὶ τὸν ἥλιον προσκυνεῖν διδάσκει, καὶ εἱμαρμένην εἰσάγων.

[111] Chrysostom, *Hom. Gen.* (PG 54:581.48-58).

[112] Chrysostom, *Natal.* (PG 49:360.7-12): τὸν ἥλιον, οὗ τὸ σῶμά ἐστιν αἰσθητὸν καὶ φθαρτὸν καὶ ἐπίκηρον, κἂν μυριάκις ἀποπνίγωνται Ἕλληνες καὶ Μανιχαῖοι ταῦτα ἀκούοντες; Οὐχ οὗτος δὲ μόνον, ἀλλὰ καὶ γῆ, καὶ θάλασσα, καὶ πᾶσα ἁπλῶς ἡ ὁρωμένη κτίσις τῇ ματαιότητι ὑποτέτακται.

[113] Alexander of Lycopolis, *Tract. Man.* 5.1-8 (van der Horst and Mansfeld, 57): τιμῶσι δὲ μάλιστα ἥλιον καὶ σελήνην οὐχ ὡς θεούς, ἀλλ' ὡς ὁδὸν δι' ἧς ἔστιν πρὸς θεὸν ἀφικέσθαι.

[114] Lieu 1994, 288.

[115] *P. Kellis GR. 98,* 60-69 (Gardner 2007a, 111-128, esp. 121-22, *Prayer of the Emanations/ Εὐχὴ τῶν Προβολῶν*).

[116] Alexander of Lycopolis, *Tract. Man.* 7.8-9 (van der Horst and Mansfeld, 64): ὁ ἥλιος καὶ ἡ σελήνη, οὓς μόνους θεῶν αἰδεῖσθαί φασιν.

[117] Van der Horst and Mansfeld 1974, 57, fn. 207 and 64 fn. 241.

[118] Libanius, *Epist*. 1253 (Lieu 2010, 43): (t.) Πρισκιανῷ. (1.) Οἱ τὸν ἥλιον οὗτοι θεραπεύοντες ἄνευ αἵματος καὶ τιμῶντες θεὸν προσηγορίᾳ δευτέρᾳ.

> Out of all the heavenly bodies they honour only the two light-bearers, claiming that these alone belong the Realm of Good and despising the others as belonging to the Realm of Evil.[119]

The Manichaean sources are not entirely clear on this matter. The Manichaean Faustus (around 400), according to Augustine, "repels the charge of sun-worship and maintains that while the Manichaeans believe that God's power dwells in the sun and his wisdom in the moon, they yet worship one deity, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. They are not a schism of the Gentiles, nor a sect".[120] However, according to the *Kephalaia*, in recounting the benefits of the sun to his disciples, Mani stresses that "people [...] have not perceived its greatness and its divinity".[121]

From what has been advanced so far, an answer to the first question could be that the two luminaries were considered by the Manichaeans as divine beings, consisting of pure divine substance. Yet, as they were made from the first light (first principle), in the Manichaean pantheon they were classified at a lower level: in the words of Libanius, they were gods of the second grade. Although it is not clearly reflected in all sources, one could also say that according to earlier sources (e.g. Cyril, Libanius, etc.) the Manichaeans deified the sun and moon, while according to later sources (Simplicius) they simply honoured them. If this was the case, it seems that over time, and given their persecution from the late fourth century onwards, the Manichaeans would avoid confessing such a faith publicly. An example of this reticence can be seen in the reaction of Faustus and Secundinus.[122] On the contrary, in other more tolerant environments, they would not have a problem to confess this, as the following Manichaean prayer illustrates: "if somehow we have done things that displease the gods of the Sun and the Moon […] (then), Majesty, now we beg to be freed from these ten kinds of sins. Release my sins!"[123]

Sun and moon worshipping ceremonies

The anti-Manichaean corpus contains several references to the Manichaean worshipping and veneration of the two luminaries. Some of them linked Manichaean sun-worship with Hellenic idolatry and polytheism, the magoi (i.e. the priests of Zoroastrianism), the astrologers (mathematicians), and the cult of Mithras. For example, in the second debate between Archelaus and Mani, which was in Diodoris, Archelaus called Mani a "barbarian priest and conspirator with Mithras".[124] According to Epiphanius,

> Mani [is a pagan with the pagans and] worships the sun and moon, the stars and daemons, the man < is heathen* >, and his sect teaches heathen religion. < And besides this* > he knows the

[119] Simplicius, *Comm. Man. Epict.* 5 35.99-101 (Lieu 2010, 105): Πόση δὲ καὶ ἡ περὶ τοῦτο ἀλλοκοτία, ἐκ πάντων τῶν ἐν τῷ οὐρανῷ μόνους τοὺς δύο φωστῆρας τιμᾷν, τῆς τοῦ ἀγαθοῦ μοίρας λέγοντας αὐτοὺς, τῶν δὲ ἄλλων καταφρονεῖν, ὡς τῆς τοῦ κακοῦ μοίρας ὄντων;

[120] *NPNF*[1] 4: 435-453, 435, cf. Augustine, *Faust.* 20.2,536.9–24 and 20.11,550.14–19.

[121] *1Keph.* 65.159, p. 168.

[122] As Gardner and Lieu (2004, 194) point out commenting on the *Prayer of Emanations*: "The fact that the hymn did not try to disguise or modify its polytheism gives the impression that it was composed in the first half of the fourth century, viz. before the dominance of Christianity compelled the Manichaeans to veil their cult in a semblance of monotheism". Gardner in a later publication (2007a, 112 fn. 34) is sceptical of the above aspect: "I would probably not express this point in the same way".

[123] Excerpt from a manuscript in Turkic language dated from 8th-11th centuries and entitled *Xuastuanift* in BeDuhn 2000b, 54-55.

[124] *AA* 40.7 (Vermes, 105). The Manichaean Secundinus claimed that "Augustine's description of Manichaeism […] must be referring to Mithraism instead of Manichaeism" (Lieu in Vermes 2001, 105, fn. 213).

> lore of the magi and is involved with them, and he praises astrologers and practices their mumbo jumbo.[125]

In the fifth anathema, the converted Manichaean had to anathematise his former companions who prayed to the sun and the moon: "(I anathematize) those who […] pray to the sun or to the moon or to the stars and […] in short introduce many gods to whom they pray".[126]

What seems to impress our sources regarding this Manichaean ceremony was the obeisance of Manichaeans to the luminaries. "Tell me this: why do you prostrate yourselves before the sun?" John the Orthodox asked this question to a Manichaean and the Manichaean replied: "because the sun is a luminary begotten by the good God".[127] As Socrates the Scholastic comments, Mani teaches his disciples to kneel before the sun.[128]

As reflected in the seventh anathema of the *SC*, the Manichaeans prayed twice a day to the sun: in the dawn towards the rising and in the evening towards the setting sun. During these prayers they made specific gestures and movements.

> 7. (I anathematize) those who do not pray towards the east only but also towards the setting sun and follow its movement foolishly and maniacally in their abominable and magical prayers.[129]

That the Manichaeans assembled in order to pray to the luminaries is also attested by Augustine: all together (hearers and Elect) "they adore and pray to the sun and the moon".[130] Augustine provides us with some complementary information for the reconstruction of the sun and moon worship rituals.

> 6. [...] Hence it is that you bend your backs and bow your necks to the sun, while you worship not this visible sun, but some imaginary ship which you suppose to be shining through a triangular opening.[131]

> 18. In the daytime they offer their prayers towards the sun, wherever it goes in its orbit; at night, they offer them towards the moon, if it appears; if it does not, they direct them towards the north, by which the sun, when it has set, returns to the east. They stand while praying.[132]

The cult of the two luminaries is also testified by the Manichaean sources. As the *CMC* records, Mani himself taught a hairy ascetic—whom he found on a lofty mountain—the way to prostrate before the two luminaries (among other commandments).[133] A typical Manichaean

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[125] Epiphanius, *Pan*. 66.88.3 (Williams, 315-16): ὦ Μάνη, [...] ἥλιον προσκυνῶν καὶ σελήνην καὶ τὰ ἄστρα καὶ δαίμονας, * ὁ ἀνήρ, ἀγαπητοί, τυγχάνει καὶ ἡ αὐτοῦ αἵρεσις τὰ τῶν Ἑλλήνων ὑφηγεῖται, * τὰ μάγων ἐπίσταται καὶ ἐν αὐτοῖς ἐγκυλινδεῖται, ἀστρονόμους ἐπαινεῖ, τὰ αὐτῶν περιεργαζόμενος.

[126] *SC*, ch. 5 (lines 139-142) (Lieu 2010, 121): Ἀναθεματίζω […] καὶ τοὺς τὸν ἥλιον λέγοντας εἶναι αὐτὸν [Ἰησοῦν Χριστὸν] καὶ τῷ ἡλίῳ εὐχομένους ἢ τῇ σελήνῃ.

[127] [John of Caesarea], *Disputatio cum Manichaeo* (Διάλεξις Ἰωάννου Ὀρθοδόξου πρὸς Μανιχαῖον), 45-46.219-220: Ἀπόκριναι δέ μοι, διὰ τί τὸν ἥλιον προσκυνεῖτε; 46. ΜΑΝ. Ὅτι φωστήρ ἐστι τοῦ κόσμου, τοῦ ἀγαθοῦ θεοῦ γέννημα. Based on this reference, Bennett (2009, 33-34) supports the view that the text combats Manichaeans and not Paulicians or Bogomils. About the authorship of the work which earlier was attributed to John of Caesarea, see Bennet (2009).

[128] Socrates, *HE* 1.22.39-40: καὶ τὸν ἥλιον προσκυνεῖν διδάσκει.

[129] *SC*, ch. 7 (lines 213-16) (Lieu 2010, 125 & 1994, 7): Ἀναθεματίζω οὖν καὶ καταθεματίζω...τοὺς μὴ πρὸς ἀνατολὰς μόνας εὐχομένους, ἀλλὰ καὶ πρὸς δυόμενον ἥλιον, καὶ τῇ τούτου κινήσει συμπεριφερομένους ἐμπλήκτως καὶ μανικῶς ἐν ταῖς μιαραῖς αὐτῶν καὶ γοητευτικαῖς προσευχαῖς.

[130] Augustine, *Ep. 236.2* to Deuterius, in Lieu 2010, 91. See also Gardner and Lieu 2004, 244-45 (no 81, *Augustine on Manichaean ethics*).

[131] Augustine, *Faust.* 20.6 (*NPNF*[1] 4: 437).

[132] Augustine, *Haer.* 46.18, in Gardner and Lieu 2004, 191. See also Lieu 1994, 294.

[133] *CMC* 128.5–12: [ἐκήρυ]ξα δὲ αὐτῶι τὴν | [ἀνάπα]υσιν καὶ τὰς ἐντο-[λὰς κα]ὶ τὴν εἰς τοὺς φω-[στῆρα]ς προσκύνησιν. Cf. Colditz 2015, 55.

wonder story, in which many of the above discussed practices and beliefs are illustrated, is the account of the Manichaean missionary Gabryab.

> On the 14th, Gabryab together with his helpers stayed in prayer and supplication, and toward evening, when Jesus (= the moon) came up, then Gabryab stayed in prayer before Jesus and said to him,
> "You are a great god and a vivifier and a real waker of the dead. Help me this once, O beneficent lord, and give this girl improvement and help by my hand, so that both your divinity may be evident before all the people and also that we are in truth your real obedient followers." […]
> And the whole night Gabryab with his coworkers remained near that girl. And they sang hymns and turned about the praise [of the lord] until the morning [came and it became light] and the sun rose. And he stood before the glorious, great [sun god] in prayer and said with a loud voice, "You are the bright eye [of the] whole entire world and the great door to conveyance for all the escaping souls. *Unworthy and unhappy the dark beings who do not believe in you and have turned their eyes and look away from you! Help me, great light god, and by our hands give this girl help and improvement so that she may receive the goodness and also these souls for whom deliverance is prepared, that hereby they may reach the new door and the land of escape!"[134]

Apart from the Manichaean Elect and missionaries, the Manichaean catechumens had among their primary duties to pray to the sun and the moon. As we read in the *Kephalaia*:

> The first work of the catechumenate that he does is fasting, prayer, and almsgiving. Now, […] the pra[yer is this]: he can pray to the sun and the moon, the great li[ght-givers.[135]

According to the famous *Prayer of Emanations* the Manichaean believer prostrated and glorified all the divine beings of the Manichaean pantheon that were classified into ten groups. The classification followed "a kind of descent in the divine hierarchy from the eternal realm to the present and immediate".[136] The sixth prostration and prayer was devoted to the two luminaries.

> I worship and glorify the great light-givers, both sun and moon and the virtuous powers in them: Which by wisdom conquer the antagonists and illuminate the entire order, and of all oversee and judge the world, and conduct the victorious souls into the great aeon of light.[137]

It has been pointed out already by Jenkins (the first editor of the text), that the *Prayer of Emanations* had to be recited in a liturgical context. As Jenkins notes (1995), "to judge from the material and the contents, the text was in all likelihood prepared for liturgical purposes […] This argument for the liturgical use of the board is strengthened by its content".[138] Recently, Iain Gardner supported the view that the *Prayer of Emanations* was the daily prayers of the Manichaean catechumens, which they accompanied by physical prostrations. Indeed, as Gardner remarks, "the text must have been composed in Aramaic, and most probably by Mani himself".[139]

By combining the testimonies of our sources with modern research becomes apparent that what our authors describe was the daily prayers of the Manichaean catechumens. It is worth keeping in mind for the following discussion (because it touches on the question of Manichaean secrecy) that sun and moon worshiping is nearly the only ritual that our sources appear to know something about.

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[134] BT 11 no. 3.4 in Skjærvø 2006b, 11; cf. Lieu 1992, 105-06, fn. 134.
[135] *1Keph*. 80 (Gardner, 202).
[136] Gardner 2011, 247.
[137] Gardner 2007a, 121-22.
[138] Jenkins 1995, 248.
[139] Gardner 2011, 259.

The *Sacred Meal* of the Elect

As has been shown above, the great luminaries (sun and moon) undertook the task of liberating the entrapped divine element in the material world at a macrocosmic scale. At the microcosmic scale, this project was executed by the Elect Manichaeans who, during their sacred meal, released (by eating) the divine substance entrapped within food.[140]

Yet, according to Mani's teaching in the *Kephalaia*, the sun's "releasing action, by which it releases the living soul, is a full day ahead of all releasing actions!"[141]

The Manichaean ritual meal according to East-Roman sources

Before proceeding to examine the sources, I would like to make it clear from the outset that the records concerning the ritual meal of the Elect, provided by the East-Roman anti-Manichaean sources, are actually very scant. In addition, it has to be noted that the testimonies of sources do not concern what took place during the ritual meal itself, but rather are a criticism of the relationship between Manichaean Elect and catechumens, prompted by what was happening during the ritual meal.

In Turbo's account a prayer is cited,[142] the so called 'Apology to the Bread' (*ἡ πρὸς τὸν ἄρτον ... ἀπολογία*) as this prayer is called by the source in which it is first recorded.[143] According to the text, the Manichaean catechumens

> if [...] have anything good to eat they offer it to those Elect; and when they [the Elect] want to chew bread, they first pray, saying this to the bread: "I did not harvest you nor grind you nor knead you nor put you in the oven; someone else made you and brought you to me; I am innocent as I eat you". When he has said this to himself, he replies to the person who brought it: "I have prayed for you", and then the person goes.[144]

Cyril, in his sixth Catechetical lecture, cites the same prayer slightly differently:

> Then having received the bread into his hand, (as some of them who have repented have confessed), the Manichaean says to the bread, "I did not make you;" and he utters curses against the Highest, and curses him that made (the bread), and thus eats what was made […] And again he says, "I did not sow you; may he who sowed you be scattered! I did not reap you with a sickle; may the one who reaped you be reaped to death! I did not bake you with fire; may he who baked you be baked!" What a lovely return of kindness this is![145]

[140] See for example: (1) Manichaean sources: *1Keph*. 79 (Concerning the Fasting of the Saints); *1Keph*. 81 (The Chapter of Fasting, for 2 it engenders a Host of Angels); *1Keph*. 93. (2) Augustine, *Ep. 236*.2, cf. BeDuhn 2000b, 77 & Gardner and Lieu 2004, 244-45. See also Puech 1979, 235-294; BeDuhn 2011, 301-19, esp. 313-15.

[141] *1Keph*. 65 (Gardner 1995, 171): "The strength that it gives to its limbs is a great strength, being mightier than all strengths!"

[142] *AA* 10.5-7; Epiphanius, Pan. 66.28.7.

[143] PRylands 3 Gr. 469, (Roberts 1938, 38-46; Gardner and Lieu 2004, 114-5; Lieu 2010, 36-37).

[144] *AA* 10.5-7 (Vermes, 54); Epiphanius, *Pan.*, 66.28.7: καὶ ὅταν μέλλωσιν ἐσθίειν ἄρτον, προσεύχονται πρῶτον, οὕτω λέγοντες πρὸς τὸν ἄρτον· «οὔτε σε ἐγὼ ἐθέρισα οὔτε ἤλεσα οὔτε ἔθλιψά σε οὔτε εἰς κλίβανον ἔβαλον, ἀλλὰ ἄλλος ἐποίησε ταῦτα, καὶ ἤνεγκέ μοι· ἐγὼ ἀναιτίως ἔφαγον.» καὶ ὅταν καθ' ἑαυτὸν εἴπῃ ταῦτα, λέγει τῷ κατηχουμένῳ «ηὐξάμην ὑπὲρ σοῦ», καὶ οὕτως ἀφίσταται ἐκεῖνος.

[145] Cyril, Catech. 6.32 (Lieu 2010, 55): Εἶτα δεξάμενος εἰς χεῖρας τὸν ἄρτον, (ὡς οἱ ἐξ αὐτῶν μετανοήσαντες ἐξωμολογήσαντο), Ἐγώ σε οὐκ ἐποίησά, φησιν ὁ Μανιχαῖος τῷ ἄρτῳ· καὶ κατάρας πέμπει εἰς τὸν ὕψιστον, καὶ καταρᾶται τὸν πεποιηκότα, καὶ οὕτως ἐσθίει τὸ πεποιημένον. […] Καὶ πάλιν, Ἐγώ σε οὐκ ἔσπειρά, φησι· σπαρείη ὁ σπείρας σε. Ἐγώ σε οὐκ ἐθέρισα δρεπάνοις· ἐκθερισθείη ὁ θερίσας σε. Ἐγώ σε πυρὶ οὐκ ὤπτησα· ὀπτηθείη ὁ ὀπτήσας σε ὀπτηθείη ὁ ὀπτήσας σε. Καλὰ τὰ ἀμοιβαῖα τῆς χάριτος.

The earliest primary source which records a preliminary form of this prayer is the circular epistle against the sect of Manichaeans, attributed to Theonas, the bishop of Alexandria (282-300 CE):

> And the Manichaeans manifestly worship the creation (? and that which they say) in their psalms is an abomination to the lord . . . (saying) "Neither have I cast it (sc. the bread) into the oven: another has brought me this and I have eaten it without guilt". Whence, we can easily conclude that the Manichaeans are filled with much madness; especially since this "Apology to the Bread" is the work of a man filled with much madness.[146]

Modern researchers unanimously agree that the offerings of the foods to the Elect by the catechumens and the prayer of the former (the Apology to the Bread) can be interpreted as a part of the sacred meal of the Elect. However, a prayer with the same words has not been found in genuine Manichaean sources. The only parallel we possess is Mani's praying over bread and salt in his *Homilies* (58.18-19), but the exact text is missing.[147] According to BeDuhn, the Manichaean ritual meal of the Elect consisted of two parts: (1) the offering of the food by the auditors to the Elect (alms-service), and (2) the central ritual of the holy meal, during which the auditors had to withdraw[148] and only the Elect could participate. It is probable that both the offerings and the prayer took place during the first phase of the ceremony (act of alms service).

It is difficult to discern when the delivery of alms ended, and the ritual of the meal started. What is certain is that they were both phases of the same ceremony. The ritual of the meal had to commence after the official offerings ended and the catechumens departed. As BeDuhn notes, the majority of the sources state that the catechumens brought their alms a little while before the beginning of the holy meal and not during the whole day.[149] They stayed there until a petitionary prayer over them took place, and after that they left. Both Iranian and Latin sources say that the Elect blessed the catechumens when the latter offered the food.[150] An Iranian fragment (M 580) also mentions that the catechumens were advised to ask the Elect to absolve their sins. However, in our texts, it is not clear whether the apology-prayer occurred during the offering of the alms by the catechumens, or just after the latter had departed. That there was a holy meal to the community is certain. Nevertheless, it is very difficult to reconstruct the whole ritual, due to lack of information for the main part of it, the liturgical meal.

I will further discuss the structure of the ritual in chapter [7]. What interests us here are the religious implications, which the anti-Manichaean authors stress, caused by Manichaean dualism and practiced through the Manichaean religious behaviour in the ritualized context of the holy meal.

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[146] PRylands 3, Gr. 469, (Roberts 1938, 38-46, 42-43): [ταῦτα βδέλυγμά ἐστιν κ(υρί)ῳ τῷ θεῷ· καὶ οἱ Μανιχῖς δηλονότι προσκυ[νοῦσι τὴν κτίσιν] ἐν ταῖς ἐπαοιδαῖς βδέλυγμά ἐστιν κ(υρί)ῳ [... οὐδὲ εἰς κλείβα[νον ἔβαλον ἄλλος μοι ἦνε[γκε ταῦτα ἐγὼ] ἀν[α]ι[τίω]ς ἔφαγον· ὅθεν εἰκότως ἐστιν γνῶναι ὅτι πολλῆς μανίας πεπλή[ρ]ωνται οἱ Μανιχῖς· καὶ μάλιστα, ἐπὶ καὶ ἡ πρὸς τὸν ἄρτον αὐτῶν, ἀπολογία ἔργον ἐστὶν ἀν(θρώπ)ου πολλῆς μανίας πεπληρωμένου· Cf. Lieu 2010, 36-37; Gardner and Lieu 2004, 114-15.

[147] Lieu in Vermes 2001, 54, fn. 69.

[148] From the few references we have at our disposal (177 M & Augustine) we assume that auditors probably were not present at the second phase of the ceremony itself. However, there is an exception, a monastic manuscript testimony which speaks of "specially appointed Auditors in serving the Elect and making sure that all was in order, before, during, and after the meal" (BeDuhn 2000b, 159).

[149] BeDuhn 2000b, 143-147.

[150] In *1Keph*. 115, there is a petitioner prayer and memorial over the catechumens that bring the offerings.

Criticism of East-Roman anti-Manichaean sources on the ritual meal

As already indicated, our sources do not comment on the ritual meal as such. Their criticism mainly targets the dual structure of the Manichaean Church (the two classes), which the anti-Manichaean authors interpret as a relationship of exploitation of the catechumens by the Elect.

In commenting on the Apology to the Bread, Cyril notes that it is a curse rather than a prayer (blessing), pointing out the hypocrisy of those Manichaeans who exploit their feeders:

> The Manichaeans are children of laziness; they do not do any work and gobble up the possessions of those who do work; they welcome with smiling faces those who bring them food, but repay them with curses instead of blessings for when some simple person brings them [anything], he [the Manichaean] says, "Stand outside for a little while, and I will bless you." Then having received the bread into his hand, […] he says to the bread, "I did not make you" […] and curses him that made (the bread), and thus eats what is made.[151]

The same opinion is also shared by Epiphanius in his commentary on Turbo's Manichaean narrative:

> Their so-called Elect [Manicheans] [...] instruct their catechumens to feed these people generously. They offer their Elect all the necessities of life, so that < whoever> gives sustenance to Elect souls may appear supposedly pious. (5) But silly as it is to say, after receiving their food the Elect all but put a curse on the givers under the pretence of praying for them, by testifying to their wickedness rather than to their goodness. For they say: "I did not sow you. I did not reap you. I did not knead you. I did not put you into the oven. Someone else brought you to me and I eat. I am guiltless." (6) And if anything, they have stigmatized as evildoers the persons who feed them—which, indeed, is true.[152]

In a similar fashion, Theodoret of Cyrrhus remarks:

> They consider all things animated beings, [including] fire, water, air, plants and seeds. On this account, those called "Perfect" among them did not break bread, or cut vegetables, but they stir up against those who do these things openly, as being bloodthirsty; yet, they eat the things cut and the things broken.
>
> Instead, you persist in your ingratitude, and launch insults, and you are afflicted with the disease of Manichaeus, who on the one hand is satisfied up with all kinds of food and drinks, and on the other hand reproaches those who supply them, the reapers, as well as the bakers, and curses those who cut the bread in two pieces, since he refuses to cut it; but he eats the slice.[153]

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[151] Cyril, *Catech*. 6.32,1-4/9 (Lieu 2010, 55, slightly altered): Ἀργίας ἔκγονοι Μανιχαῖοι, οἱ μὴ ἐργαζόμενοι καὶ τὰ τῶν ἐργαζομένων κατεσθίοντες· οἱ τοὺς προσφέροντας αὐτοῖς τὰ βρώματα μειδιῶσι προσώποις δεχόμενοι, καὶ ἀντὶ εὐλογιῶν κατάρας ἀποδίδοντες. Ὅταν γάρ τις αὐτοῖς [τι] προσενέγκῃ ἀνόητος, Μικρὸν ἔξω, φησὶ, στῆθι, καὶ εὐλογήσω σε. Εἶτα δεξάμενος εἰς χεῖρας τὸν ἄρτον, […] Ἐγώ σε οὐκ ἐποίησά, φησιν ὁ Μανιχαῖος τῷ ἄρτῳ· […] καὶ καταρᾶται τὸν πεποιηκότα, καὶ οὕτως ἐσθίει τὸ πεποιημένον. See also Cyril *Catech* 6.31.

[152] Epiphanius, *Pan*. 66.53.4-6 (Williams, 278): οἱ ἐκλεκτοὶ αὐτῶν καλούμενοι [...] παρακελεύονται οὖν τοῖς αὐτῶν κατηχουμένοις τρέφειν αὐτοὺς δαψιλῶς. οἱ δὲ πᾶν ὁτιοῦν ἀναγκαῖον προσφέρουσι τοῖς ἐκλεκτοῖς ἑαυτῶν, ἵνα δῆθεν εὐσεβὴς ὀφθείη <ὁ> τρέφων τὰς ψυχὰς τὰς ἐκλελεγμένας. οἱ δὲ λαβόντες, ὡς γέλοιόν ἐστιν εἰπεῖν, προφάσει τοῦ εὔξασθαι ὑπὲρ τῶν ἐνηνοχότων, μᾶλλον δὲ σχεδὸν κατάραν αὐτοῖς ἐπιτιθέασιν, ἐπιμαρτυρήσαντες αὐτοῖς κακίαν μᾶλλον ἢ ἀγαθωσύνην. φάσκουσι γὰρ οὕτως· ὅτι ἐγὼ οὐκ ἔσπειρά σε, οὐκ ἐθέρισά σε, οὐκ ἤλεσα, εἰς κλίβανον οὐκ ἔβαλον. ἄλλος ἤνεγκε, καὶ ἔφαγον. ἀναίτιός εἰμι. καὶ μᾶλλον πονηροποιοὺς ὑπέδειξαν τοὺς ἑαυτῶν τροφεῖς. καὶ γὰρ ἀληθές.

[153] Theodoret, *Haer.* (PG 83:380(C-D).42-47) (Cope, 130): Πάντα δὲ νομίζουσιν ἔμψυχα, καὶ τὸ πῦρ, καὶ τὸ ὕδωρ, καὶ τὸν ἀέρα, καὶ τὰ φυτὰ, καὶ τὰ σπέρματα. Οὗ δὴ χάριν οἱ καλούμενοι τέλειοι παρ' αὐτοῖς, οὔτε ἄρτον κλῶσιν, οὔτε λάχανον τέμνουσιν, ἀλλὰ καὶ τοῖς ταῦτα δρῶσιν, ὡς μιαιφόνοις προφανῶς ἐπαίρονται·ἐσθίουσι δὲ ὅμως τὰ τεμνόμενα καὶ τὰ κλώμενα. Cf. Theodoret, *De providentia orationes decem* (PG 83:581.28): ἀλλὰ μένεις ἀχαριστῶν, καὶ λοιδορούμενος, καὶ τὰ Μανιχαίου νοσῶν, ὃς σιτίων καὶ ποτῶν ἀπολαύων, λοιδορεῖται τοῖς

It is noteworthy that, in contrast to Epiphanius, Cyril and Theodoret (in his second text) do not clearly juxtapose the Elect with the catechumens. Instead the difference is made between those who do not work (whom they call Manichaeans) with those who work (farmers, bakers, etc.) in order to produce food which the Manichaeans consume.

That the Manichaean Elect simply exploited the hearers as a means of their support is also the target of Augustine's criticism.

> As for your not plucking fruits or pulling up vegetables yourselves, while you get your followers to pluck and pull and bring them to you, that you may confer benefits not only on those who bring the food but on the food which is brought, what thoughtful person can bear to hear this? For, first, it matters not whether you commit a crime yourself, or wish another to commit it for you. You deny that you wish this![154]

From the Manichaean point of view however, this behaviour is related with another command, the "seal of the hands". According to it, the Manichaean Elect had "to avoid injury to water, fire, trees and living things […] hence [the seal] bans the procurement of food" by the Elect.[155] Indeed, the Manichaean normative code of behaviour protected the Elect from injuring the *Living Self*, since it was a command forbidding the Elect from being preoccupied with the gathering, procurement, and preparation of food. One of the three principal commandments (seals) the Elect had to observe, was to "acquire 'the rest [of the] hands', so that he will keep his hand still before the Cross of Light".[156] The sin of injuring the *Living Self* and violating the "seal of the hands" was a task laid upon the hearers who were obliged by the religion's commandments to feed the Elect. One of the three primary duties of the catechumens was daily almsgiving to the Elect.[157]

Revealing in this respect is a Manichaean text which reflects the extent of anxiety catechumen Manichaeans had due to their task of providing alms-offerings for the Elect. A Manichaean catechumen confesses his fears, before the Manichaean congregation and Mani, that the pain inflicted upon the *Living Self* by him (through his offering to the Elect) be proved fatal for himself.

> I know that each time I would provide an alms/-offering for the Elect, I know and sense that [...] I awake pain for it in various / form [s ...] […] Indeed, due to this my heart trembles. / I become very afraid. I will venture to this place to speak / befo[re] you. Perhaps the good I perform will not repay the sin I am doing to the living soul?[158]

Ecclesiological dualism also affected the soteriological perspective and expectations. Turbo's account defines three classes of people: the Elect, the hearers, and the unbelievers (outsiders).

χορηγοῦσι, καὶ θερισταῖς ὁμοῦ καὶ ἀρτοποιοῖς, καὶ τοῖς τὸν ἄρτον διχῇ τέμνουσιν ἐπαρᾶται, αὐτὸς τέμνειν μὲν οὐκ ἀνεχόμενος, ἐσθίων δὲ τὸ τεμνόμενον.

[154] Augustine, *Mor. Manich*. 17.

[155] Lieu 2010, xviii-xix. Augustine, *Mor. Manich*. in Lieu 2010, 75.

[156] *1Keph*. 80, 192.3-193.22 (Gardner 1995, 201).

[157] *1Keph.* 80, (Gardner 1995, 202): "The first work of the catechumenate that he does is fasting, prayer, and almsgiving. Now, […] The alms]/giving also is this: he can place it [...] / in the holy one, and give it to them in righteous[ness ...] /.". The whole text: The Chapter of the Commandments of Righteousness (192,3-193,22, pp. 201-202).

[158] *1Keph*. 93 (Gardner 1995, 242-45). A Catechumen asked the Apo/stle: When I would give an Offering to the Saints, shall I inflict a Wound on the Alms? Cf. Gardner's introductory comments on the moral of the chapter: "The catechumen must not be afraid of causing sin in the task of preparing and offering alms […] The offering of alms is also a means for the salvation of the catechumen" (243).

The latter class consists of those who do not accept the two principles, clearly the outsiders, the non-Manichaeans. As Turbo states, the fate of the 'infidel', among them being those who follow the words of the Jewish prophets (i.e. Jews and Christians), is to "die for all age, bound up within a heap of earth, since he has not learnt the knowledge of the paraclete".[159]

Anyone who does not possess the knowledge of the two principles or is not aware of the primordial mixture and the presence of the *Living Self* in the material world will suffer in the *Gehenna* in order to be educated. If necessary, they will suffer endless metempsychoses (*μεταγγισμός*) until the end of time and the final consummation:

> If a soul has gone forth which has not understood the truth, it is handed over to demons to tame it in hell-fire, and after it has been educated, it is transferred into other bodies to be tamed, and then it is thrown into that great fire until the final reckoning.[160]

In theory, the catechumens were atoned for any injury they had caused to the *Living Self* if they offered a steady living for the Elect. For this reason if they have anything good to eat they offer it to those Elect.[161] As Augustine explains, "the Elect get others to bring their food to them, that they may not be guilty of murder".[162] In turn, auditors are forgiven by serving the Elect, who liberate the divine substance from the foods.[163] However, in case they neglected their duties, they would be punished by successive reincarnations in catechumens' bodies. As the eschatological aim of each individual was the liberation from the "birth-and-death" cycle and the return to the primitive light, reincarnations (*μεταγγισμός*) counted as a punishment.

> Anyone who has not given his food to the Elect will be subjected to the punishments of hell and is to be transformed into the bodies of catechumens, until he has suffered many miseries.[164]

Nevertheless, in the texts of the Church Fathers it is not always clear whether the catechumens had the option of atonement through their offerings, or whether they had to undergo further painful reincarnation in what they had killed. As Turbo emphasizes, anyone who would harm any kind of life would suffer the same fate in retribution of his misconduct.

> I shall also tell you how souls are transmitted to other bodies. First of all a small part of it is purified; then it is transmitted into a dog or a camel or the body of another animal. But if it has committed murder, a soul is transferred into the bodies of lepers; if it has cut the harvest, into those of the dumb. […] Harvesters who gather the harvest are compared with the princes [of darkness] […] For that reason it is necessary for them to be transformed into hay or beans or grain or corn or vegetables, so that they too are cut down and harvested. Anyone who chews

[159] *AA* 11.3 (Vermes, 55-56). Epiphanius, *Pan*. 66.30.2: καὶ εἴ τις ἀκολουθεῖ τοῖς λόγοις αὐτῶν [παρ' ὑμῖν προφητῶν] ἀποθνήσκει εἰς τοὺς αἰῶνας, δεδεμένος εἰς τὴν βῶλον, ὅτι οὐκ ἔμαθε τὴν γνῶσιν τοῦ παρακλήτου.
[160] *AA* 11.2 (Vermes, 55). Epiphanius, *Pan*. 66.29.3: καὶ ἐὰν ἐξέλθῃ ἡ ψυχὴ μὴ γνοῦσα τὴν ἀλήθειαν, παραδίδοται τοῖς δαίμοσιν ὅπως δαμάσωσιν αὐτὴν ἐν ταῖς γεέννοις τοῦ πυρός, καὶ μετὰ τὴν παίδευσιν μεταγγίζεται εἰς <ἕτερα> σώματα, ἵνα δαμασθῇ, καὶ οὕτω βάλλεται εἰς τὸ μέγα πῦρ ἄχρι τῆς συντελείας. The Greek text here uses the term 'μεταγγισμός' instead of 'μετενσωμάτωσις' or 'μετεμψύχωσις'.
[161] *AA* 10.5 (Vermes, 54). Epiphanius, *Pan*. 66.28.6: καὶ διὰ τοῦτο εἴ τι κάλλιστον ἐν βρώμασι τοῖς ἐκλεκτοῖς προσφέρουσι. The same belief is also testified by Manichaean sources, see *1Keph*. 91 and 127 and *2PsB*. 111.25. Cf. Brand 2019, 202.
[162] Augustine, *Faust.* b4, 6.8.
[163] Augustine, *Haer.* 46. Augustine, *Mor. Manich*. 61.
[164] *AA* 10.5; Epiphanius, *Pan*. 66.28.6: καὶ εἴ τις οὐ δίδωσι τοῖς ἐκλεκτοῖς αὐτοῦ εὐσέβειαν, κολασθήσεται εἰς τὰς γεέννας καὶ μετενσωματοῦται εἰς κατηχουμένων σώματα, ἕως οὗ δῷ εὐσεβείας πολλάς.

> bread must also be chewed by becoming bread. He who kills a chicken must also become a chicken himself, or if a mouse he too will be a mouse.[165]

Cyril ridicules the Manichaean teachings concerning reincarnation, and considers them irrational and absurd, as worthy of laughter, and of censure and of dishonour.

> Let no one join himself to the soul-wasting Manichees [...] who teach, that he who plucks up a herb, is changed into it. For if he who crops a herb, or any vegetable, is changed into it, into how many will husbandmen [farmers] and the tribe [children] of gardeners be changed? Into how many doth the gardener put his sickle, as we see; -into which then of these is he transformed? Ridiculous doctrines truly, and fraught with their own condemnation and shame! A shepherd both sacrifices a sheep and slays a wolf; into which is he changed? Many men have both netted fishes and limed birds; into which are they changed?[166]

Augustine becomes extremely caustic when commenting upon the 'racist' Manichaean soteriology. The best scenario for the reincarnation of the auditors, he says, was to reincarnate in melons and cucumbers (!) if they were diligent in their duties as hearers.[167]

This (ecclesiological) eclecticism is also attested in the Manichaean texts.[168] The Elect are ascertained to rise to heaven upon their death. The lifestyle suggested by Mani for the Elect is a remedy for the "inherent pathology" of their body and its materiality.[169] Thus, after their death, the Elect are rewarded with their ascent to paradise, while the catechumens will undergo further reincarnations. However, the hearers, because they supported the Manichaean religion, were in a more favourable position than the outsiders and in that sense, they were in a way Elect too.[170] Instead, those souls who were subjugated to evil (the outsiders) "have become alienated from the life and freedom of the sacred light. Therefore, they cannot be taken back into those peaceful kingdoms, but will be confined in the terrible 'mass'".[171]

According to the *SC*, the converted Manichaean had to anathematize all those who supported transmigration as a punishment for not observing the *anapausis* of the hands.

> And (I anathematize) those who introduce metempsychosis which they call transmigration (*μεταγγισμός*) and those who suppose that grass and plants and water and other things without souls in fact all have them and think that those who pluck corn or barley or grass or vegetables

[165] *AA* 10.1-3 (Vermes, 52-53). Epiphanius, *Pan*. 66.28.1-5: 28: Ἐρῶ δὲ ὑμῖν καὶ τοῦτο, πῶς μεταγγίζεται ἡ ψυχὴ εἰς ἕτερα σώματα. πρῶτον καθαρίζεται μικρόν τι ἀπ' αὐτῆς, εἶτα μεταγγίζεται εἰς κυνὸς ἢ εἰς καμήλου ἢ εἰς ἑτέρου ζώου σῶμα. ἐὰν δὲ ᾖ πεφονευκυῖα ψυχή, εἰς κελεφῶν σώματα μεταφέρεται· ἐὰν δὲ θερίσασα εὑρεθῇ, εἰς μογγιλάλους. […] οἱ δὲ θερισταί, ὅσοι θερίζουσιν, ἐοίκασι τοῖς ἄρχουσι […] διὸ ἀνάγκη αὐτοὺς μεταγγισθῆναι εἰς χόρτον ἢ εἰς φασήλια ἢ εἰς κριθὴν ἢ εἰς στάχυν ἢ εἰς λάχανα, ἵνα <καὶ αὐτοὶ> θερισθῶσι καὶ κοπῶσι. καὶ εἴ τις πάλιν ἐσθίει ἄρτον, ἀνάγκη καὶ αὐτὸν βρωθῆναι ἄρτον γενόμενον. εἴ τις φονεύσει ὀρνίθιον, <καὶ αὐτὸς> ὀρνίθιον ἔσται· εἴ τις φονεύσει μῦν, καὶ αὐτὸς μῦς ἔσται [...]

[166] Cyril, *Catech*. 6.31 (LFHCC, 75-76): τοῖς διδάσκουσιν, ὅτι ὁ τήνδε τὴν βοτάνην ἐκτίλλων, εἰς αὐτὴν μεταβάλλεται. Εἰ γὰρ ὁ ἐκτέμνων βοτάνας ἤ τι τῶν λαχάνων, εἰς τοῦτο μεταβάλλεται, γεωργοὶ καὶ κηπουρῶν παῖδες εἰς πόσα μεταβληθήσονται; Κατὰ τοσούτων ὁ κηπουρὸς ἤνεγκε τὴν δρεπάνην, ὡς ὁρῶμεν· εἰς ποῖα ἆρα μεταβάλλεται; Γέλωτος ἀληθῶς τὰ διδάγματα καὶ καταγνώσεως πλήρη καὶ αἰσχύνης. Ὁ αὐτὸς ἀνὴρ ποιμὴν ὢν προβάτων, καὶ πρόβατον ἔθυσε καὶ λύκον ἀπέκτεινεν· εἰς ποῖον ἆρα μεταβάλλεται; Πολλοὶ τῶν ἀνθρώπων ἰχθύας ἐσαγήνευσαν, καὶ ὄρνεα ἴξευσαν· εἰς ποῖον ἆρα μεταβάλλονται οἱ τῆς ἁρπαγῆς; Cf. Nemesius of Emesa, *De natura hominis* 2.33.8-10: καὶ τὰς μὲν καθαρὰς ψυχὰς χωρεῖν εἰς τὸ φῶς, φῶς οὔσας, τὰς δὲ μεμολυσμένας ὑπὸ τῆς ὕλης χωρεῖν εἰς τὰ στοιχεῖα καὶ πάλιν ἀπὸ τῶν στοιχείων εἰς τὰ φυτὰ καὶ τὰ ζῷα·

[167] Augustine, *Faust.* 5.10.

[168] Lieu 1994, 289.

[169] BeDuhn 2000b, 258.

[170] BeDuhn 2000b, 103 (216-17).

[171] Augustine, *Fund*., in Gardner and Lieu 2004, (no 53), 171-72.

> are transformed into them in order that they may suffer the same and that harvesters and bread-makers are accursed, and who call us Christians who do not accept these stinking myths simpletons.[172]

As is illustrated by the anathema, Manichaeans considered those who do not accept these beliefs as naive. Moreover, the contradistinction between the Christian and Manichaean identity is also emphasized here.

What is striking, is that both Christian and pagan authors in their criticism of the Manichaean sacred meal (and fasting), do not comment at all on the redemptive theology which lies behind it.[173] References and criticism of the East-Roman sources to the Manichaean ritual meal are restricted to the first phase of the ritual (the phase of almsgiving), and target the relationship of exploitation between the two classes. Our sources do not comment at all on the objective, the very purpose of the sacred meal itself (second phase), that the ultimate goal of the ritual was the liberation of the trapped divine elements within food, by the Elect. Indeed, Augustine is merciless in his frequent criticism of the Manichaean belief that the Elect, by their teeth and their stomachs, liberate the divine substance, becoming likewise the saviours of God: "And, if some [Manichaean] 'saint' ate this fig […] he would blend it in his bowels and breathe forth angels from it, even groaning in prayer and belching up little pieces of God".[174]

The beliefs and practices that Augustine attributes to the Manichaeans are also attested in Manichaean sources. According to the *Kephalaia*, the ultimate aim of the fasting of the Elect Manichaeans was the preparation of their bodies, so that during the sacred meal they could function as 'machines' which would liberate the divine substance. Thus, the effectiveness of the sacred meal depended on whether the Elect strictly observed the seals of mouth and hands.[175] As Mani explains, what the other sects of the world are doing wrong in their fasting and rituals is that they do not keep the seals of mouth and of hands, which will finally open the gates for the liberation of the divine substance trapped within the alms-offerings.[176] In contrast to other Churches, in the Manichaean Church, it is due to the observation of the commandments that the divine light "is healed by the Elect, by the psalms [and] prayers and ble[ssings]".[177]

As Gardner underlines, "for the Manichaeans the human body and its digestive processes worked in a very literal way so as to purify the divine light, and thus to discard the evil waste matter.[178]

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[172] *SC*, ch. 6 (Lieu, 1994, 248): καὶ τοὺς μετεμψύχωσιν, ἣν αὐτοὶ καλοῦσι μεταγγισμόν, εἰσηγουμένους, καὶ τοὺς τὰς βοτάνας καὶ τὰ φυτὰ καὶ τὸ ὕδωρ καὶ τὰ ἄλλα ἄψυχα πάντα ἔμψυχα εἶναι ὑπολαμβάνοντας, καὶ τοὺς τὸν σῖτον ἢ κριθὴν ἢ βοτάνας ἢ λάχανα τίλλοντας εἰς ἐκεῖνα μεταβάλλεσθαι οἰομένους, ἵνα τὰ ὅμοια πάθωσι, καὶ τοὺς θεριστὰς καὶ τοὺς ἀρτοποιοὺς καταρωμένους καὶ ἡμᾶς τοὺς Χριστιανοὺς τοὺς μὴ παραδεχομένους τοὺς ὀδωδότας μύθους τούτους ἁπλαρίους ἀποκαλοῦντας.

[173] The question of this silence is worth investigating. One naturally wonders how the above beliefs escaped the criticism of the East-Roman authors. Cf. Lieu 2010.

[174] Augustine, *Conf.* 3.10(18) in Lieu 2010, 83-85. Cf. Augustine, *De Nat. bon.* 44.20, 45; Augustine, *Ep.236 to Deuterius* (2); Augustine, *Mor. Manich.* 15, 17 (Description of the Symbol of the Hands Among the Manichaeans); Augustine, *Haer.* 46; Augustine, *Commentary on Psalm* 140.12; Augustine, *Faust.* 31.4. See also Gardner and Lieu 2004, 245.

[175] *1keph.* 79: 'Concerning the Fasting of the Saints' (191.9–192.3). Cf. Gardner and Lieu 2004, no 79, (The profits of fasting). *1Keph.* 94, 240.1-12.

[176] *1Keph*. 87, 217.1-11.

[177] *1Keph*. 93, 238.2-4, p. 244.

[178] Gardner 1995, 202, cf. *1Keph.* 81, 193,23-194. 13 (The Chapter of Fasting, for it engenders a Host of Angels) (Gardner 1995, 203).

Holy-Oil (?)

Apart from the Apology to the Bread, Turbo's narration refers to what he calls the end of the Elect's meal. He quotes Mani's words:

> Mani has commanded only his Elect, of whom there are no more than seven, "When you finish eating, pray and put on your heads oil which has been exorcized with many names, as a support for this faith." The names have not been revealed to me for only the seven employ them.[179]

Could this mystery that Turbo refers to be equivalent to the Christian mystery of the Holy Oil? In the early Christian Church, this mystery—as all other mysteries—was connected to the Holy Liturgy and took place during the meeting for the *agapai* (*ἀγάπαι*) as part of it. The aim of the Holy Oil mystery was the strengthening of faith (*στηριγμὸν τῆς πίστεως*), the awareness of the sinful, and the therapy of the bodily and the psychic illnesses. As is indicated in the above passage, the use of oil by the Manichaean Elect had the same purpose of faith strengthening (*πρὸς στηριγμὸν τῆς πίστεως*), as in Christianity.

The ceremony of the 'Dried Fig'

Text and translation

Cyril in his sixth Catechetical lecture, apart from the Apology to the Bread and the olive-oil rite (?), records an occult ritual, the identity of which remains a true mystery: the ceremony of the dried fig (*τῆς ἰσχάδος*).[180] As mentioned in ch.[1], a part, or even the whole chapter that describes the ritual was heavily abridged in a series of English translations.[181] This protracted concealment partly explains the absence of references or of any commentary of the text in modern scholarship until Van Oort's publication in 2016.

Cyril is the only author in Greek anti-Manichaica who mentions this particular ceremony; the testimony of Peter of Sicily repeats Cyril's account.[182] Just after his reference to the Manichaean holy meal and his critique about the feeding of the Elect by the hearers (6.32), Cyril states:

> These are also great evils, but yet small in comparison with the others. *I do not dare give an account about their λουτρὸν of men and women. I do not dare say in what they baptise the dried fig they give to their wretched. But I will only reveal it speaking symbolically (through symbols/signs)*. *Let men think about those (things/products) of the wet dreams (=nocturnal emissions), and women of the menstruation/menses.* We truly pollute our mouth speaking about these things. For the fornicator, in a moment/an hour, because of lust, performs the deed. However, he [soon] condemns his deed, realizing that, as a defiled, he is in need of *λουτρῶν* and he acknowledges that his deed is abominable/loathsome. But the Manichaean places these

[179] Epiphanius, *Pan*. 66.30.3 (Williams, 259): ἐνετείλατο δὲ τοῖς ἐκλεκτοῖς αὐτοῦ μόνοις, οὐ πλέον ἑπτὰ οὖσι τὸν ἀριθμόν· ἐὰν παύσησθε ἐσθίοντες, εὔχεσθε καὶ βάλλετε ἐπὶ τῆς κεφαλῆς ἔλαιον ἐξωρκισμένον ὀνόμασι πολλοῖς, πρὸς στηριγμὸν τῆς πίστεως ταύτης. τὰ δὲ ὀνόματά μοι οὐκ ἐφανερώθη· μόνοι γὰρ οἱ ἑπτὰ τούτοις χρῶνται. *AA* 11.4 (Vermes, 56): He also instructed only his elect, who are not more than seven in number, that when they have stopped eating they should pray and put on their head olive oil over which they have sworn an oath, invoking many names to confirm this pledge. But he did not reveal the names to me, for only those seven use these names. Cf. *AA* 63.5 (Vermes, 143): "Finally early one morning he climbed a high roof top, where he began to invoke certain names which Turbo told us only seven of the elect have been taught".

[180] Cyril, *Catech*. 6.33.

[181] See ch.[1], 1.2 (Cyril of Jerusalem).

[182] Peter of Sicily, *Hist. ref. Man.* 33, ch. 72.

> things in the middle of the altar, as/where he thinks [right], and defiles both his mouth and his tongue.[183]

In the above translation I purposely kept the Greek form *λουτρὸν/ῶν*, because this is the key word for the interpretation of the text and, therefore, for the understanding of the context in which Cyril places the ritual. Apart from its literal interpretation (i.e. washing or bath), *'λουτρόν'* in the religious language of the era meant baptism, 'baptism of tears' (confession) and 'baptism of blood' (martyrdom).[184] In all English translations the word *λουτρὸν* is translated as baptism. The latter is problematic, for as is known the Manichaeans did not practice any baptism in water.[185] Before proceeding to the interpretation of the text, I will present other parallel testimonies that exist in anti-Manichaean literature.

Parallel testimonies in Greek anti-Manichaean literature

Cyril himself refers once again to the ceremony of the dried fig at another point of the sixth catechesis where he talks about the roof-top ritual performed by Terebinthus, which cost him his life.

> Terebinthus […] having gone up to the roof-top of the house, and invoked the daemons of the air, whom the Manichaeans to this day invoke upon their detestable ceremony of the fig.[186]

By this testimony, Cyril provides additional information on the puzzle of the rite: attaching to it a flavour of magic, Cyril reveals that during the ceremony the aerial demons were invoked,[187] and that the ritual was performed until his days.

Other references to a ceremony under the name *dried fig*, in Greek (or Latin) literature, do not exist. However, Cyril is neither the first nor the only one to accuse the Manichaeans of performing licentious practices during their rituals. The anonymous Alexandrian author of the encyclical epistle is the first who accuses Manichaeans of using the *Electae*'s menstrual blood during their rites. As the author warns his readers:

> We may be on our guard [...] particularly against those women whom they call "Elect" and whom they hold in honour, manifestly because they require their menstrual blood for the abominations of their madness.[188]

In the rest of Greek literature, there are another two references to Manichaean practices that combine magic and orgies. As Theodoret points out,

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[183] Cyril, *Catech*. 6.33: Μεγάλα μὲν κακὰ καὶ ταῦτα, ἀλλ' ἔτι μικρὰ πρὸς τὰ ἄλλα. Οὐ τολμῶ ἐπὶ ἀνδρῶν καὶ γυναικῶν τὸ λουτρὸν αὐτῶν διηγήσασθαι. Οὐ τολμῶ εἰπεῖν, τίνι ἐμβάπτοντες τὴν ἰσχάδα, διδόασι τοῖς ἀθλίοις. Διὰ συσσήμων δὲ μόνον δηλούσθω. Ἄνδρες γὰρ τὰ ἐν τοῖς ἐνυπνιασμοῖς ἐνθυμείσθωσαν, καὶ γυναῖκες τὰ ἐν ἀφέδροις. Μιαίνομεν ἀληθῶς καὶ τὸ στόμα, ταῦτα λέγοντες. Ὁ μὲν γὰρ πορνεύσας, πρὸς μίαν ὥραν δι' ἐπιθυμίαν τελεῖ τὴν πρᾶξιν· καταγινώσκων δὲ τῆς πράξεως, ὡς μιανθεὶς οἶδε λουτρῶν ἐπιδεόμενος, καὶ γινώσκει τῆς πράξεως τὸ μυσαρόν. Ὁ δὲ Μανιχαῖος θυσιαστηρίου μέσον, οὗ νομίζει, τίθησι ταῦτα, καὶ μιαίνει καὶ τὸ στόμα καὶ τὴν γλῶσσαν. The omitted sentences in previous translations are in italic. See also the translations by Fox and Sheldon (Lieu 2010, 55) and Van Oort 2016b, 432.

[184] The second time that the word *λουτρῶν* is mentioned could mean both washing and confession (baptism of tears).

[185] Stroumsa 1999, 405-20.

[186] Cyril, *Catech*. 6.23 (LFHCC, 71): Τερέβινθος […] ἐπὶ δώματος ἀνελθὼν, καὶ προσκαλεσάμενος τοὺς ἀερίους δαίμονας, οὓς οἱ Μανιχαῖοι μέχρι σήμερον ἐπὶ τῆς μυσαρᾶς αὐτῶν ἰσχάδος ἐπικαλοῦνται·

[187] Sacrilege and magic were often interwoven. Cf. the anti-Manichaean law *CTh* 16.5.65.

[188] PRylands 3, Gr. 469 (Roberts, 1938; Lieu, 2010, 36-37): ἐπιτηρῶμεν [...] μάλιστα τὰς λεγομένας παρ' αὐτοῖς ἐκλεκτάς, ἃς ἐν τιμῇ ἔχουσιν διὰ τὸ δηλονότι χρῄζειν αὐτοὺς τοῦ ἀπὸ τῆς ἀφέδρου αἵματος αὐτῶν εἰς τὰ τῆς μανίας αὐτῶν μυσάγματα.

> They especially use magic in practicing their impious mysteries. In this way, I tell you, their teaching is hard to eradicate, and it is extremely difficult to remove anyone who has partaken of their loathsome orgies from the activity of the soul-destroying demons, who bind their souls by the spells of those initiating them.[189]

It is not improbable that Theodoret, here, is denoting the dried fig ritual.

The Manichaean mysteries were also anathematized and condemned as abominable, unclean, and magic-filled by the ex-Manichaeans during the ritual of their conversion: "I anathematize and condemn […] and their abominable and unclean and magic-filled mysteries".[190] Another practice attributed to Manichaeans in the *SC*, which had to be anathematized, was that of washing themselves in their own urine instead of water.

> So I anathematize these and I curse (them) as being unclean in their souls and bodies, with all the rest of their evils, and as not suffering their filth to be washed away by water lest, they say, the water be defiled, but even polluting themselves with their own urine.[191]

According to Kessler, by urine one could mean 'semen'. However, his suggestion is not supported by the specific context of the text, where the discussion clearly concerns the act of washing.[192]

The charge of sacrilege in anti-Manichaean laws

As examined in ch.[3], sacrilege[193] was one of the capital crimes due to which Manichaeism was characterized as a public crime[194] and by which Manichaeans were deprived of the status of Roman citizenship.[195] Expressions that define the content of the crime of sacrilege exist in a series of laws.[196] The overall impression is that during these 'sacrilegious rites'[197] the 'elements' were 'injured' by magic. According to the law of 428, the Manichaeans had to be

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[189] Theodoret, *Haer.* (PG 83:380.48-53) (Lieu 2010, 95-97): Κέχρηνται δὲ καὶ γοητείαις διαφερόντως, τὰ δυσαγῆ αὐτῶν ἐκτελοῦντες μυστήρια· ταύτῃτοι καὶ δυσέκνιπτος αὐτῶν ἡ διδασκαλία, καὶ τὸν τῶν μυσαρῶν ὀργίων μετειληχότα λίαν ἐστὶ δυσχερὲς μετατιθέναι τῆς τῶν ψυχοφθόρων ἐνεργείας δαιμόνων, ταῖς τῶν τελούντων ἐπῳδαῖς τὰς ἐκείνων καταδεσμούντων ψυχάς. In antiquity the word orgies meant the 'secret rites' of Demeter, Orpheus, Cabeiri, Cybele and most commonly, the rites/mysteries of Dionysus-Bacchus.

[190] *SC*, ch. 7 (Lieu 2010, 124-25): ἀναθεματίζω καὶ καταθεματίζω […] καὶ τὰ μυσαρὰ τούτων καὶ ἀκάθαρτα καὶ γοητείας πλήρη μυστήρια. The same is reproduced by the *LAF* (1465A-1465D). Both Cyril and *SC* use the word *μυσαρὰ* in order to characterize the Manichaean mysteries.

[191] *SC*, Ch. 7. (Lieu 2010, 123 and Lieu 1994, 250): Τούτους οὖν ἀναθεματίζω καὶ καταθεματίζω ἀκαθάρτους ὄντας, σὺν τοῖς ἄλλοις αὐτῶν κακοῖς, τὰς ψυχὰς καὶ τὰ σώματα καὶ μὴ ἀνεχομένους τὰς ῥυπαρίας αὐτῶν ὕδατι ἀποπλύνειν, ἵνα μή, φασίν, τὸ ὕδωρ μολυνθῆναι, ἀλλὰ καὶ τοῖς οἰκείοις οὔροις ἑαυτοὺς μιαίνοντας. See also the same in *LAF* (PG 1:1461/1472A, 1465), cf. Lieu 2010, 138.

[192] On this, see Lieu 1994: 293-94. In the *LAF* the converted Manichaeans had also to condemn the immoral practices that took place at the Feast of the Bema. However, according to Lieu (1994, 225), this "must now be seen as Byzantine polemics against Paulicians". Anastasius of Sinai (*Hexaemeron* 7b. 530-32) also speaks about Manichaean mysteries where men and women congregate nude in imitation of Adam and Eve (6th/8th?): Μανιχαῖοι δὲ ὁμοῦ τε καὶ ἄνδρες καὶ γυναῖκες γυμνοὶ ἐν ταῖς αὐτῶν ἐκκλησίαις συνάγονται κατὰ μίμησιν τοῦ Ἀδὰμ καὶ τῆς Εὔας.

[193] In the laws of *CTh* 9.38.7 (384) and *CTh* 9.38.8 (385), Theodosius I classifies sacrilege among the capital crimes. Sacrilege was also the offense that forced Theodosius I to innovate with the retroactivity of his law (16.5.7, 381).

[194] *CTh* 16.5.40 (407).

[195] *CTh* 16.5.7 (381).

[196] *CTh* 16.5.9 (382); 16.5.11 (383); 16.5.38 (405); 16.5.43 (408); 16.5.65 (428); *NVal*. 18 (445); 16.5.35**;** 16.5.38; *CJ* I.5.16**.**

[197] *CTh* 16.5.41. See also *NVal.* 18 (Pharr, 531): "obscene to tell and to hear" and "so detestable an outrage to the Divinity of God".

expelled "from municipalities, since to all these must be left no place wherein even on the very elements may be made an injury".[198]

Parallel testimonies by Augustine

Augustine too charges Manichaeans with the crime of sacrilege and of the consumption of human semen during their ritual meal.[199] As he states in *De haeresibus*, the Manichaean "Elect are forced to consume a sort of eucharist sprinkled with human seed in order that the divine substance may be freed".[200] Manichaeans themselves, Augustine comments, rejected these accusations, clarifying that these practices were performed by some other groups (e.g. Catharists); yet they conceded, that "the Manichaean books" were "common to all of them".[201] These books, especially the myth of the *Seduction of the Archons*, Augustine believed were "the source of the [aforementioned] obscene practices".[202] The *Seduction of the Archons* was a scene from the Manichaean cosmogonic myth cited in the *Thesaurus*.[203] According to it, the divine powers "exploiting the 'deadly unclean lust'" of the archons of evil appeared before them as attractive beautiful males and females, "so that the divine substance which is imprisoned in them may be set free and escape".[204] So, as Augustine explains, the Manichaeans

> imagine that they are imitating divine powers to the highest degree and so they attempt to purge a part of their god, which they really believe is held […] in human seed as it is in all celestial and terrestrial bodies, and in the seeds of all things.[205]

Augustine adds that "some of them [who] were brought to trial […] admitted that this is no sacrament, but a sacrilege".[206] As Augustine argues in *De moribus Manichaeorum,* even if Manichaeans did not perform these things of which they were accused, and instead only claimed that their Elect set free the *Living Soul* from all seeds by eating and drinking (their food), this would inevitably raise suspicion; one would reasonably think that this purification concerned not only plant but also animal and human seeds. Continuing his argumentation, Augustine considers it likely that this purification took place during the secret assemblies of the Elect.

> And as your followers cannot bring these seeds to you for purification, who will not suspect that you make this purification secretly among yourselves, and hide it from your followers, in case they should leave you?[207]

Augustine's accusations of immorality were not concealed such as Cyril's; however, no scientific work has taken them seriously into account, with the exception of van Oort's recent publications.[208] As the determining factor in this direction, van Oort considers Alfaric's contribution, who, commenting on the "historical reliability of the described" events in *Haer*. 46. 9-10 concludes: "Leur Eucharistie aspergée de semence humaine semble aussi légendaire

[198] *CTh* 16.5.65 (428) (Coleman-Norton 1966, 2, 643). Cf. the same law in *CJ* (*CJ* 1.5.5).
[199] Augustine, *Haer.* 46.9–10; *Mor. Manich.* 18.66 and 19.70 (pp. 150.17–151.5); *Nat. bon.* 45–47.
[200] Augustine, *Haer.* 46.9–10, in Gardner and Lieu 2004, 144-45, 144.
[201] Augustine, *Haer.* 46.9–10, in Gardner and Lieu 2004, 145.
[202] Augustine, *Haer.* 46.9–10, in Gardner and Lieu 2004, 145.
[203] Tardieu 2008, 37; Lieu 2010, 149; Reeves 2011, 108-109.
[204] Augustine, *Haer.* 46.10. Cf. Tardieu 2008, 37.
[205] Augustine, *Haer.* 46.10. Cf. Tardieu 2008, 37.
[206] Augustine, *Haer.* 46.10. Cf. Tardieu 2008, 37.
[207] Augustine, *Mor. Manich.* 18.66. See also *Nat. bon.* 45–47.
[208] For a detailed overview of the fate of the passage in modern literature see van Oort, 2016a 200-02.

que le meurtre rituel si souvent imputé aux Chrétiens pendant les premiers siècles".[209] Therefore, van Oort points out, "One gets the impression that, since Alfaric, most researchers have subscribed to this opinion and hence considered the subject to be legendary".[210]

Parallel accusations for other religious groups

It is true, that to blame religious opponents for immorality was "a fairly standard" accusation at that time.[211] Epiphanius, for instance, makes similar accusations against the Nicolaitans[212] and a group of 'Gnostics', known as Borborites (or Barbelognostics, or Stratiotics, etc.).[213] However, although the chapter of *Panarion against the Manichaeans* is by far the longest of the chapters devoted to the above 'heretics',[214] Epiphanius nowhere implies that the Manichaeans exercised similar practices during their rituals. This, firstly, challenges Cyril's credibility, and secondly indicates that Epiphanius was not aware of the content of Cyril's *Catecheses* (something that has been highlighted in ch.[2]). The latter applies also to the rest of the authors who wrote against Manichaeans until the ninth century, when Photius and Peter of Sicily clearly name Cyril as their source. So, it seems that Cyril's passage was neglected not only by contemporary researchers but also by Byzantine anti-Manichaean authors.[215]

Was, then, Cyril's account just a slander? Even if this were the case, the stereotypes of modern society and the taboos of contemporary researchers should not misinterpret or, even worse, silence any testimonies. The 'embellishment' of the past in order to be in line with modern ethical codes is not compatible with scientific ethos.

Interpretation of the text

Without of course intending to confirm Cyril's testimony, I will investigate the framework in which Cyril places these practices, assuming that there is an element of truth in his words. Besides, although we do not know exactly what the Manichaean Elect did during their rituals, following Augustine's rationale, one can legitimately assume, on the basis of the Manichaean beliefs and the existing excerpt from *Thesaurus*, that Cyril's testimony sounds plausible. So, was the above ritual, a description of the mystery of baptism (as all English translations maintain) or of the holy meal, as van Oort argues? Or does it concern another ritual altogether?

The only study on Cyril's text, as said, is that of van Oort. Commenting on this 'gap', van Oort points out that "in previous research the passage is regarded either as mere slander or simply as not worth mentioning".[216] Van Oort too, interprets the crucial word *λουτρόν* as baptism. However, since the Manichaeans did not practice baptism, he suggests a baptism of the fig, rather than of the bodies of the Manichaeans, placing the whole scene during the Manichaean sacred meal. In favour of his interpretation, van Oort points to Cyril's statement that "the Manichaean sets these things [...] in the middle of *the altar* (θυσιαστήριον) and defiles both his lips and his tongue".[217] Thus, according to him,

[209] van Oort 2016a, 201.
[210] van Oort 2016a, 201.
[211] Lieu 1992, 143 fn. 131.
[212] Epiphanius, *Pan.* 25.2.2-3.2, (v. 1, pp. 268-274, esp. 269.23-270.2).
[213] Epiphanius, *Pan.* 26 (v. 1, pp. 275-300, esp. 280.10 [ch. 4]-282.13).
[214] Five times longer than the chapter devoted to Borborites etc., and twelve times longer than the respective to Nicolaitans. See also Coyle 2009a, 164-165.
[215] An exception to this likely was Theodoret of Cyrrhus, see ch.[5], fn. 189.
[216] van Oort 2016b, 432, fn. 6.
[217] van Oort 2016b, 435.

> Cyril claims that the Manichaeans 'dipped' or 'baptized' (ἐμβάπτω) a fig (ἰσχάς) in some substance, which he indicates 'only indirectly' (διὰ συσσήμων) as a product of men's 'delusive dreams of the night' and women's 'menses'. In other words, some (dried) fig (ἰσχάς) is dipped in male sperma and female menstruation fluid.[218]

Van Oort considers it less plausible to interpret the word *λουτρόν* as either spiritual baptism, or another type of baptism which Cyril considered horrible.[219] Arguing in favour of Cyril's reliability, he firstly points out that Cyril drew his information from inside sources: the converted Manichaeans and the Manichaean books,[220] in particular the *Thesaurus*, for in the next paragraph (34) which follows the puzzling text he refers to the *Seduction of the Archons*.

Furthermore, in support of his interpretation, van Oort points out the importance that the fig and the human semen should have had in the Manichaean Eucharist. The main axes of his argumentation are the following: (1) the sexual symbolism of the fig in Antiquity (and not only),[221] (2) that Augustine emphasizes (in several of his works) the great importance that figs must have had in Manichaeism, in particular in their ritual meal as fruits containing much divine light,[222] (3) that Augustine also records similar practices which reveal the importance that Manichaeans might have attributed to human semen for the same reason as in the case of the figs,[223] (4) that, according to Augustine, the source of inspiration of those practices was the *Seduction*-myth from the *Thesaurus*[224] to which Cyril also refers, and (5) that Cyril's and Augustine's testimonies are two independent testimonies from each other. Van Oort concludes his article, presenting two pieces of Manichaean art (miniature-paintings) found in Kotcho (Central Asia) which, as he argues, reveal "the special place of the fig in Manichaean eucharistic meals".[225]

Agreeing with van Oort, I also consider it plausible that Cyril's sources may have been of Manichaean provenance, i.e. former Manichaeans and the *Thesaurus*. As said in ch.[2], Cyril in all probability had access to the *Thesaurus*, since this was the book which was circulated during his time by the Manichaean missionaries in his area. This also may have been the book which Cyril says that he read himself and from which (as he says) originates the scene he quotes in ch. 34 that echoes the *Seduction of the Archons*.[226] Furthermore, taking into account the two basic assumptions of the Manichaean cosmogony, it makes sense for one to argue (agreeing with Augustine) that, indeed, the *Seduction-myth* could have inspired such

[218] van Oort 2016b, 435.
[219] van Oort 2016b, 434.
[220] Van Oort 2016b, 437.
[221] Van Oort 2016b, 435.
[222] Van Oort 2016b, 435-36. The respective Augustine's works are: *Mor. Manich*. 2.40-41, 2.57 and *Conf*. 3.18. As van Oort (2016b, 435) comments on *Mor. Manich*. 2.57: "when seeing a raven on the point of eating a fig, the true Manichaean will pluck the fig and eat it in order to release the light elements".
[223] Van Oort 2016b, 436. See also van Oort's (2016a) previous paper on Augustine concerning "Human Semen Eucharist Among the Manichaeans".
[224] Van Oort 2016b, 436-37.
[225] Van Oort 2016b, 437, 437-440.
[226] Cyril, *Catech*. 6.34: "These persons say that the rain is produced by erotic mania. And they dare to say that there is a beautiful virgin in the heaven, together with a beautiful young man. […] and that the latter during the winter, runs after the virgin like a madman […] then as he runs he sweats; [and they say that] the rain comes from his sweat. These things are written in the Manichaean books. These things we have read disbelieving those who affirmed them. For your safety, we have closely inquired into their deadly doctrines". See also ch.[2], 2.3.4. However, a similar scene exists also in Turbo's narration, so, possibly his source could have been *AA*.

practices.[227] As said, one basic assumption of the Manichaean cosmogonical narrative was that the *Living Spirit*, which the Manichaean Elect had to liberate during their meal, was dispersed and bound in all kinds of plant and animal life and in all kinds of seeds.[228] The other basic assumption was that in Manichaeism the link between macrocosm and microcosm was direct and substantial. The structures of the human and of the body of the Universe are interconnected. Thus, although it is common to all religions that believers imitate their divine archetypes, the Manichaean believer was not just called to imitate his divinities, but also to remember his own deeds during the primordial episode and to act accordingly. The example of the *Seduction of the Archons* indicated the way of action for Manichaeans.

However, concerning the great importance that figs must have had in Manichaeism, I would rather say that what becomes apparent in Augustine's writings is that all fruits and vegetables, especially those containing large amount of water and not only figs, had a special place in Manichaeism, particularly in the ritual meal. Melons and cabbages are equally cited in Augustine's texts. The only reference, as far as I know, of Augustine that correlates figs with the holy meal is *Conf*. 3, 18:

> Yet if some saint (i.e., a Manichaean Elect) ate the fig [...] then he would digest it in his stomach and breathe out angels, yes indeed particles of God when he groaned in prayer and even belched. These particles of the most high and true God would have remained bound in that fruit, if they had not been liberated by the tooth and belly of that Elect saint.[229]

In addition, since the holy meal (at least theoretically) was the only daily meal of the Manichaean Elect, apart from figs, they would obviously eat other vegetables and fruits too.[230] Furthermore, it sounds odd that Cyril names the Manichaean holy meal as a baptism. So, if the ritual in question was neither the Manichaean holy meal, nor their baptism, what else could it have been?

In any case, the sentence "But the Manichaean places these things in the middle of the altar, as/where he thinks [right], and defiles both his mouth and his tongue" denotes that the framework was sacramental, not secular (e.g. baths). The latter is also supported by Cyril's first reference in 6.23, where he speaks about a ritual which Manichaeans exercise until his days (*μέχρι σήμερον*).

The interpretation of baptism in water should be excluded, for it is known, from the genuine Manichaean sources, that the Manichaeans were not baptised in water. However, it could have been another kind of "baptism", as Van Oort also suggests, although he considers this interpretation less likely.[231] So, what other kind of baptism might Cyril have meant? Put

[227] According to the version of the *Seduction of Archons* provided by Bar Kōnay, "the Third Messenger appeared in the Sun in his radiant nakedness in a female form as the Virgin of Light … before the male archons, and in a male form before the female. He thus awakens their sensual desires and makes them scatter with their seed the Light" (Lieu 2010, xvii).

[228] Theodoret, *Haer*. (PG 83:380). Timothy the Presbyter, *Recept. Haer*. Augustine, *Nat. bon.* 44 in BeDuhn 2000b, 77. Ephrem the Syrian appears surprised about the "Manichaean project of metabolizing the whole world, and Augustine invoked the Manichaean slogan "purify all seeds", see BeDuhn 2000b, 249.

[229] Augustine, *Conf*. 3.18. As van Oort (2016b, 436) comments, "No doubt, here we have a surprising description of the Manichaeans' sacred meal, in which—equally surprising—the fig is considered to be the central element". In contrast, what Augustine says in *Mor. Manich*. 2.40-41 about figs does not testify Manichaean beliefs and practices, but it is Augustine's hypothetical deductive reasoning in his polemical argumentation, e.g. "I grant that He dwells more in a fig than in a liver" (2.40). Augustine trying to prove the absurdity of the Manichaean beliefs, says that if one took them seriously he would have to conclude that "In color alone the excrement of an infant surpasses lentils; in smell alone a roast morsel surpasses a soft green fig".

[230] BeDuhn 2000b, 158: "the meal was conducted daily; testimony on this point is overwhelming".

[231] Van Oort 2016b, 434.

differently, what other meanings, apart from baptism in water, could the word *λουτρὸν* have?[232] I will briefly suggest two more alternative (to van Oort's) interpretations. As said, in the literature of the era, *λουτρὸν* also meant a 'baptism of tears', referring to the mystery of repentance, confession and absolution of sins (*λουτρὸν παλιγγενεσίας*).[233] As far as is known, the Manichaeans held rituals of confession daily, weekly and annually, in three different circumstances. The first concerned the daily absolution of the sins of the catechumens. When they offered the food to the Elect, they were advised to "seek assembly and absolution from the Elect".[234] The third concerned the great confession that took place during the grand annual festival of the Manichaeans, the Bema.[235] Lastly, between the daily and the annual confession, "every week, all Manichaeans—Electi and Auditors alike—subjected themselves to a ceremony of contrition and reconciliation", or in other words, to the *rite of Confession* (ritualized confession).[236]

The other alternative interpretation could be that Cyril, by saying "baptism of men and women", meant it in the sense of baptism in the secrets of the Manichaean religion. In other words, the riddling ritual could have been an initiation ceremony. Thus, according to this interpretation, the baptised dried fig was consumed by the neophyte Manichaean communicants as their first communion or holy meal during their 'baptism/initiation' into the class of the Elect. This interpretation also fits well with the expression "the Manichaean places these things [the offerings] in the middle of the altar". Furthermore, apart from the sexual symbolism that the fig had in Antiquity, the fig-tree was considered as the tree of religious initiation. In many religious traditions (familiar to Mani) the fig-tree featured as the symbol of 'gnosis' and of the initiation in 'gnosis'.[237] Finally, in favour of this interpretation is the fact that it incorporates the 'baptism of tears', since a part of the initiation procedure was also the 'baptism of tears'. The candidates entering the Manichaean community had to go "through an initial confession and absolution as part of his or her initiation into the community".[238]

[232] Similarly, the word 'ἐπὶ' apart from 'before' (as is translated by both Lieu and van Oort) could acquire other meanings too, such as: in, on, upon, at, over, during, in the time of, to, about, concerning, etc. So, the puzzling phrase "Οὐ τολμῶ ἐπὶ ἀνδρῶν καὶ γυναικῶν τὸ λουτρὸν αὐτῶν διηγήσασθαι" can also be translated: "I do not dare give an account about their baptism of/upon men and women" instead of "I dare not deal with their baptism before [in the presence of] men and women", cf. van Oort 2016b, 432 and Lieu 2010 (translation by Fox and Sheldon).

[233] Cyril (*Catech*. 6.33.9-12) also in the same paragraph states: "For the fornicator, in a moment/an hour, because of lust, performs the deed. However, [soon] condemn his deed, realizing that, as a defiled, he is in need of *λουτρῶν* (washing or 'baptism of tears'), and he acknowledges that his deed is abominable".

[234] BeDuhn 2000b, see especially pp. 108, 143, 147, 202 & 208.

[235] About the Bema festival and the great confession see BeDuhn 2010, 332. See also BeDuhn 2013, 271-72.

[236] BeDuhn 2013, 271-299, 297. See in particular p. 271: "Between the daily prayers and sacred meal, and the annual high holiday of the Bema festival, Manichaeans punctuated their life with a weekly assembly that featured among its activities a rite of confession" and pp. 282-288: *The Rite of Confession.* Yet, according to BeDuhn 2013, 277: "Evidence for a Monday [weekly] rite of confession among western Manichaeans is far scarcer".

[237] Nathanael was sitting under a fig-tree before becoming a disciple of Jesus. According to Vallas (1993, 40-44), the wild fig-tree (*ἐρινεώς*) was the tree of religious initiation and one of the prosonimia of Dionysus/Bacchus was Sykites, i.e. the fig-tree god. The enlightenment of Buddha took place under a *ficus religiosa* (a kind of a fig-tree). For the religious meaning of *ficus religiosa*, see Eliade 1982, 76.

[238] BeDuhn 2013, 271-299, 291. In p. 284: "It may even be questioned whether, besides the initial confession at the time of conversion, the recurring weekly and annual confessions were anything but recitations of either brief general statements of repentance for sinfulness."

Bema

Bema was the most important annual feast in the Manichaean calendar during which Manichaeans commemorated Mani's martyrdom. The only explicit reference to Bema throughout the Greek anti-Manichaean literature is found in the *SC*:

> And (I anathematize) their abominable and unclean and magic-filled mysteries and that which they called the (Feast of the) Bema.[239]

According to Augustine's testimony, "at the feast a seat or tribunal [or a platform (bema) of five steps covered with precious cloth] was raised in the middle of the worshipping congregation. Upon this was placed a portrait of Mani (or a seated Elect representing Mani) to celebrate his continuing presence in the community of the Elect".[240] Surprisingly, there is a unique reference to Mani's icon in Greek anti-Manichaica. Eusebius of Caesarea, in an epistle addressed to Augusta Constantia (the stepsister of Constantine), reported that he saw with his own eyes Mani's icon to be surrounded by the Manichaeans ("*Ἐθεωρήσαμεν δὲ καὶ αὐτοὶ τὸν τῆς μανίας ἐπώνυμον ὑπὸ τῶν Μανιχαίων εἰκόνι δορυφορούμενον*").[241]

In his letter, Eusebius explains to Constantia (who wished to have an icon of Christ) that worshiping icons was idolatry; as an example he recounts the scene with the Manichaeans he had recently happened to have witnessed. Could this have been a reference to Bema?[242]

5.3 Manichaean Beliefs and their Implication in Everyday Social Life

As underlined in the previous section, the religious behaviours that were the target of our sources were interpreted by the anti-Manichaean authors as the result of the Manichaean cosmological dualism: the mixed status of cosmos. Accordingly, in the social sphere, the problematic behaviour and ethos that anti-Manichaean authors attributed to Manichaeans were interpreted as deriving from the Manichaean anthropological dualism: the mixed status of humans. The Manichaean anthropological model seems to rest on these three premises:

(1) The creation of man is the stratagem of Hylē (Matter).
(2) The ontological and cosmological division also characterizes human beings: both matter (evil) and light (divine) are mixed in humans.
(3) Evil acts independently of man's free will.

5.3.1 The Manichaean Anthropology

The creation of man as the stratagem of Hylē (Matter)

According to the Manichaean cosmogonic myth, the archons of Darkness undertook the creation of man as "a countercreation" to the creation of the cosmos, in order to perpetually entrap the light in matter. The son of the *King of Darkness*, Ashaqlun, with his companion Nebroel (Namrael), ate the abortions of the daughters of Darkness, in which the form of the Messenger was imprinted, and then "came together". "Nebroel conceived of him and gave birth to a son, whom she called Adam. Then she conceived and gave birth to a daughter, whom

[239] *SC* ch.7 (Lieu 2010, 125): καὶ [ἀναθεματίζω] τὰ μυσαρὰ τούτων καὶ ἀκάθαρτα καὶ γοητείας πλήρη μυστήρια καὶ τὸ καλούμενον αὐτῶν Βῆμα.
[240] Augustine on the bema festival (*Fund*. 8) in Gardner and Lieu 2004, no 77. See also Lieu 1985, 126; Lieu 2010, pp. xx-xxi & 79.
[241] Eusebius, *Ep. Constantiam*: Ἐθεωρήσαμεν δὲ καὶ αὐτοὶ τὸν τῆς μανίας ἐπώνυμον ὑπὸ τῶν Μανιχαίων εἰκόνι δορυφορούμενον.
[242] Cf. Gulácsi 2015, 48-50.

she called Eve".[243] "The human species therefore is born out a series of cannibalistic and sexual acts".[244]

In Turbo's account, Adam and Eve were created by the princes of Darkness after their form and according to the image of the Primal Man. Thus, the rulers instilled in man their own evil desire (= sin):

> Concerning Adam and how he was created, he says this, that the one who says: "Come let us make a man in our image and likeness" and following the form that we have seen, is a prince who says this to his fellow princes, namely: "Come give me some of the light which we have received, and let us create following the form of ourselves, who are princes, and following that form we have seen, which is the First Man"; and so they created man. They made Eve too in a similar way, and gave her some of their lust in order to deceive Adam, and through this method was produced the formation of the world by means of the creation of the prince.[245]
>
> Next, then, Matter also created from itself plants or seeds, and when they had been stolen by some of the princes, he summoned all the leading princes, and took from them all their powers, and made this man following the image of that first man and bound the soul in him.[246]

Among the East-Roman anti-Manichaean sources in Greek that present the cosmogonic Manichaean myth, there are only two that mention two names quite similar to those of Ashaqlun and Nebroel: Theodoret of Cyrrhus and the *SC*.

> They say that man was not created by God but by the ruler of matter. They called him Saclas. They say that Eve was created by Saclas and Nebrod in the following manner. Adam was created in the form of an animal, but Eve was soulless and motionless.[247]

In addition, the Abjuration formula presents the first human couple as the fruit of demons' intercourse.

> I anathematize all these myths and condemn them together with Manichaeus himself and all the gods proclaimed by him and those who say that out of the sexual union which was glimpsed Adam and Eve were generated, issuing forth from Sakla and Nebrod, and to put it simply, (I anathematize) whatever is contained in the Manichaean books, especially their magical works.[248]

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[243] A summary provided by Tardieu 2008, 80.

[244] Lieu 2010, xvii.

[245] *AA* 12.1-2 (Vermes, 56). Turbo's account from Epiphanius' *Pan.* 66.25-31 (68.5-13/30.5-6) (Williams, 259-260): Περὶ δὲ τοῦ Ἀδὰμ πῶς ἐκτίσθη λέγει οὕτως· ὅτι ὁ εἰπών «δεῦτε, καὶ ποιήσωμεν ἄνθρωπον κατ' εἰκόνα ἡμετέραν καὶ καθ' ὁμοίωσιν», ἢ καθ' ἣν εἴδομεν μορφήν, ἄρχων ἐστὶν ὁ εἰπὼν τοῖς ἑτέροις ἄρχουσιν ὅτι δεῦτε, δότε μοι ἐκ τοῦ φωτὸς οὗ ἐλάβομεν, καὶ ποιήσωμεν ἄνθρωπον κατὰ τὴν ἡμῶν τῶν ἀρχόντων μορφὴν <καὶ> καθ' ἣν εἴδομεν, ὅ ἐστι <ὁ> πρῶτος ἄνθρωπος. καὶ οὕτως ἔκτισαν τὸν ἄνθρωπον. τὴν δὲ Εὔαν ὁμοίως ἔκτισαν, δόντες αὐτῇ ἐκ τῆς ἐπιθυμίας αὐτῶν πρὸς τὸ ἐξαπατῆσαι τὸν Ἀδάμ. καὶ διὰ τούτων γέγονεν ἡ πλάσις τοῦ κόσμου ἐκ τῆς τοῦ ἄρχοντος δημιουργίας.

[246] *AA* 8.3 (Vermes 49-50). Epiphanius' *Pan.* 66.26*:* τότε τοίνυν καὶ ἡ ὕλη ἀφ' ἑαυτῆς ἔκτισε τὰ φυτὰ καὶ συλωμένων αὐτῶν ἀπό τινων ἀρχόντων ἐκάλεσε πάντας τοὺς τῶν ἀρχόντων πρωτίστους καὶ ἔλαβεν ἀπ' αὐτῶν ἀνὰ μίαν δύναμιν καὶ κατεσκεύασε τὸν ἄνθρωπον <τοῦ>τον κατὰ τὴν ἰδέαν τοῦ πρώτου ἀνθρώπου ἐκείνου, καὶ ἔδησε τὴν ψυχὴν ἐν αὐτῷ. αὕτη ἐστὶ τῆς συγκράσεως ἡ ὑπόθεσις.

[247] Theodoret, *Haer.* (PG 83:377.55) (Lieu 2010, 95, slightly altered): Καὶ τὸν ἄνθρωπον δὲ οὐχ ὑπὸ τοῦ Θεοῦ πλασθῆναι λέγουσιν, ἀλλ' ὑπὸ τοῦ τῆς Ὕλης ἄρχοντος· Σακλᾶν δὲ τοῦτον προσαγορεύουσιν· καὶ τὴν Εὔαν ὡσαύτως ὑπὸ τοῦ Σακλᾶ καὶ τοῦ Νεβρὼδ γενέσθαι· καὶ τὸν μὲν Ἀδὰμ θηριόμορφον κτισθῆναι, τὴν δὲ Εὔαν ἄψυχον καὶ ἀκίνητον.

[248] *SC*, ch. 3 (Lieu, 1994, 240; 2010, 121, slightly altered): Τοὺς μύθους τούτους ἅπαντας ἀναθεματίζω καὶ καταθεματίζω σὺν αὐτῷ Μανιχαίῳ καὶ τοῖς εἰρημένοις ἅπασι παρ' αὐτοῦ θεοῖς καὶ "τοὺς λέγοντας ἐκ τῆς συνουσίας τῆς ὑποδειχθείσης παρὰ τοῦ Σακλᾶ καὶ τῆς Νεβρὼδ γεγενῆσθαι τὸν Ἀδὰμ καὶ τὴν Εὔαν, καὶ ἁπλῶς εἰπεῖν ὅσα ταῖς μανιχαϊκαῖς, μᾶλλον δὲ ταῖς γοητευτικαῖς αὐτῶν περιέχεται βίβλοις.

That the Manichaeans considered the creation of man as a stratagem of the matter, is emphasized also by Titus of Bostra. As said in ch.[2], Titus seems to have at his disposal a particular Manichaean text, which he examines and which contains a chapter entitled '*Concerning the first human moulding'* (*Περὶ τῆς ἀνθρωπίνης πρωτοπλαστίας*), that criticized the biblical *Genesis* and *Exodus*. According to it, as Titus says, when the princes of Darkness realized that by the creation of cosmos, the luminaries would gradually drain all the light from matter, and that this would lead to their death, they contrived the creation of human flesh (=Adam) as a prison in which the soul (*Living Self*) will remain in the world bound to the body. "And their first creature moulded is Adam, a means/tool of desire and bait for the souls from above and a device which trap them in the bodies."[249]

Both evil and divine are congenital in man

Further argumentation in support of the view that man was created by the princes of Darkness was presented by Mani in the debate with Archelaus. As Mani said, the good God could not create creatures that are full of evil, death, and corruption such as men.

> Moreover, how could he form creatures, if there were no pre-existent matter? For if it was from things that did not exist, it would follow that these visible creatures are better, and full of all virtues. But if they are full of evil, and death is in them and corruption and everything that is contrary to the good, then how can we say that they are not made from another nature?[250]

As Mani states in his *Fundamental Letter*, even today one can observe that the bodies are created by the archons of Darkness.

> And yet as we (even) today can observe that the principle of evil, which forms bodies, takes and creates out of them (the bodies) forces, in order to form (new bodies).[251]

In the same fashion, Turbo declares before the judges during the first debate with the bishop Archelaus in Carchar:

> If indeed you consider how men produce offspring, you will discover that it is not God who is the creator of man, but another, who is himself also of an unbegotten nature, who has no founder, nor creator nor maker, but only his own evil has produced him as he is.[252]

However, although man is a creation of the archons, since his creation he has imprisoned in his body the light that was caught by the principle of evil in the primordial time. Because, as said, the princes created man "after that form" which they "have seen, which is, the First Man"; thus, by creating man they tied within him the image of Primal Man.

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[249] Titus of Bostra, *c. Manichaeos* 3, 4-5.19: Φησὶ δὲ πρὸς λέξιν αὐτὴν ἐκεῖνος, ἢ ἕτερός τις τῶν ἀπ' ἐκείνου, ἐπιγράψας τὸ κεφάλαιον Περὶ τῆς ἀνθρωπίνης πρωτοπλαστίας. Ἐπειδὴ γὰρ ἔγνωσαν οἱ ἄρχοντες ὡς ἐκ τοῦ παραιρεῖσθαι τὸ ἀπαξαπλῶς ἐμπῖπτον εἰς αὐτοὺς μέρος τοῦ φωτός, ταχὺς ἐπ' αὐτοὺς ὁ θάνατος ἥξει, τὴν εἰς τὰ σώματα τῆς ψυχῆς κάθοδον ἐμηχανήσαντο, ἀναδραμεῖν μὲν αὐτὴν μηδ' ὅλως ζητοῦντες, ἀνελθοῦσαν δὲ μηδὲ τῆς ἄνωθεν λήξεως ἀξίαν εὑρίσκεσθαι, μιάσματι τῆς σαρκὸς ἀνεχομένην. […] Καὶ πλάσμα αὐτῶν ἐστι πρῶτον ὁ Ἀδάμ, ὄργανον ἐπιθυμίας καὶ δέλεαρ τῶν ἄνωθεν ψυχῶν καὶ μηχάνημα τοῦ αὐτὰς εἰς σώματα ἐμπίπτειν. "They say in these words, he, or one of his followers who wrote the chapter *Concerning the first moulding*. When the archons [of Darkness] realized that through the withdrawal of the portion of light that had fallen into them, soon they will die, they contrived the descent of the soul in the bodies [...]".

[250] *AA* 16.5 (Vermes, 63).

[251] Augustine, *Fund.*, Frg. 9: (6.4) in Lieu 2010, 11. *Letter to Menoch*, in Lieu 2010, 13 (Bodies the other power, Adam was made by the archons of Darkness).

[252] *AA* 16.6 (Vermes, 63).

> Next, then, Matter […] summoned all the leading Princes, and took from them all their powers, and made this man following the image of that first man and bound the soul in him.[253]

Thus, from his very creation, man inherently carries both divine and evil 'parts'. Furthermore, divine or evil particles are rooted within him through the consumption of food. Indeed, according to Manichaean sources, the human body contains "the richest concentrations of both two substances", each of which is trying to prevail "over the other".[254]

The dichotomy of man

The consequence of the above assumptions is the dichotomy of man, with two conflicting identities. God is the originator of souls, whereas matter is the originator of bodies. Souls are of divine nature and provenance, while the origin of bodies is evil. This, according to anti-Manichaean authors, entailed a polarity between body and soul and a disdain of the former.

> So since this is the body of princes and matter […] air is the soul of men and animals, birds, fish and reptiles and everything there is in this world; because as I told you this body is not that of a deity, but of the matter of shadows, and for that reason it must be kept in obscurity.[255]

> 7. I therefore anathematize and condemn those who teach these myths and say that bodies are of the evil (principle). 6. [...] I anathematize those who say that the human souls are consubstantial with God and, being part of (the) good (principle) were swallowed up by [matter] the Hylē and out of this necessity the world was created. [256]

As Serapion of Thmuis critically comments, the Manichaeans held the absurd and outrageous view that man's essence is a mixture of good and evil essences. The substance of the body is of the evil one, while the essence of the soul is a spoil from God that the evil one inserted in the body. The flesh, its essence, its form, and all its works are from the imposter. Thus, they argue that man consists of two opposite essences.

> For which reason then did Manichaeans bring accusations against the body? [257]

> The Manichaeans say (this): we carry our body from Satan, but the soul is of God. And so, it is that the body is naturally evil, as it proceeds from evil, while the soul is naturally good, having its origin from what is good.[258]

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[253] *AA* 8.3 (Vermes, 49-50). Epiphanius, *Pan*. 66.25-31: τότε τοίνυν καὶ ἡ ὕλη [...] ἐκάλεσε πάντας τοὺς τῶν ἀρχόντων πρωτίστους καὶ ἔλαβεν ἀπ' αὐτῶν ἀνὰ μίαν δύναμιν καὶ κατεσκεύασε τὸν ἄνθρωπον <τοῦ>τον κατὰ τὴν ἰδέαν τοῦ πρώτου ἀνθρώπου ἐκείνου, καὶ ἔδησε τὴν ψυχὴν ἐν αὐτῷ. αὕτη ἐστὶ τῆς συγκράσεως ἡ ὑπόθεσις. As Didymus the Blind states, the Manichaeans argue that human souls are "of the same substance as God" and "had been joined to the bodies", see Bennett 1997, 76.

[254] BeDuhn 2000b, 88. About human beings as depositories and storehouses of matter and light, see BeDuhn 2000b, 88, 231, 155.

[255] *AA* 10.4, 8 (Vermes 54-55). Epiphanius, *Pan*. 66.28.5, 9: τοῦ δὲ σώματος τούτου ὄντος τῶν ἀρχόντων καὶ τῆς ὕλης […] ὁ ἀὴρ ψυχή ἐστι τῶν ἀνθρώπων καὶ τῶν ζῴων καὶ τῶν πετεινῶν καὶ τῶν ἰχθύων καὶ τῶν ἑρπετῶν καὶ εἴ τι ἐν κόσμῳ ἐστίν· εἶπον <γὰρ> ὑμῖν ὅτι τὸ σῶμα τοῦτο οὐκ ἔστι τοῦ θεοῦ, ἀλλὰ τῆς ὕλης ἐστὶ καὶ σκότος ἐστὶ καὶ αὐτὸ σκοτωθῆναι δεῖ.

[256] *SC*, chs. 6, 7 (Lieu 1994, 248, 246; Lieu 2010, 123): 7. Ἀναθεματίζω οὖν καὶ καταθεματίζω τοὺς ταῦτα μυθολογοῦντας καὶ τὰ σώματα λέγοντας εἶναι τοῦ πονηροῦ 6. ... Ἀναθεματίζω τοὺς τὰς ἀνθρωπίνας ψυχὰς λέγοντας ὁμοουσίους εἶναι τῷ θεῷ καὶ μοῖραν οὔσας τοῦ ἀγαθοῦ ὑπὸ τῆς ὕλης καταποθῆναι καὶ ἐκ τῆς ἀνάγκης ταύτης τὸν κόσμον γεγενῆσθαι.

[257] Serapion, *c. Manichaeos* 10.1-3: Πόθεν οὖν κεκινημένοι Μανιχαῖοι διαβολὰς κατὰ τῶν σωμάτων ἐπηνέγκαντο;

[258] Serapion, *c. Manichaeos* 12.3-8 (Lieu 2010, 51): φασὶ γὰρ Μανιχαῖοι· "τὸ σῶμα ἐφορέσαμεν τοῦ Σατανᾶ, ἡ δὲ ψυχὴ τοῦ θεοῦ. καὶ τὸ μὲν σῶμα οὕτω πέφυκε κακόν, ἐκ κακοῦ προελθόν, ἡ δὲ ψυχὴ πέφυκε καλή, ἐκ καλοῦ ἔχουσα τὴν ἀρχήν· οὐκοῦν δύο ἀρχαὶ καὶ δύο οὐσίαι […]".

> He (the teacher, i.e. Mani) wants to say that this visible creation is the creation of the deceiver, and man is a creature of the evil one and, while soul is of God, it is however bonded to the evil one. And so, man has been formed, after taking the essence of the body from the essence of the evil one, while the essence of the soul has been taken from God as spoil or plunder, plundered by the evil one. In this way, from the plundered essence and from that of the evil one, man has been formed from soul and body. And the evil one is not the cause of the soul [...] but is the agent only of its introduction into the body [...] whereas the flesh itself and its formation and its features and its general shape and its entire essence are the work and making of the deceiver. Therefore, man is formed out of opposites, they state.[259]

Augustine criticizes the conflicted human identity of the Manichaean anthropological model along similar lines.

> You say that all your members and your whole body were formed by the evil mind (maligna mente) which you call Hylē, and that part of this formative mind (fabricatricis') dwells in the body along with part of your God.[260]
>
> So, "every living being has two souls, one of the race of light, and the other of the race of darkness".[261]

The above wording of Augustine (and Serapion's) reveals another dimension of the division of man, which is caused by the two rival souls that reside within him. As BeDuhn argues in interpreting the Manichaean anthropogony, the two roots do not simply correspond to the dipole of matter and spirit, as many modern scholars understand it, but to two roots within the body, a good and an evil one.[262]

The above dimension of polarity emphasized by BeDuhn is not discernible in the following letter attributed to Mani and addressed to Menoch, one of his catechumens.

> For just as souls are begotten from souls, so the creation of the body derives from the nature of the body. Therefore, what is born of the flesh is flesh; and what of the spirit, is spirit; [...] So just as God is the originator of souls, so the devil is the originator of bodies through lust that is in the Devil's snare by means of the lust for a woman, by which the Devil traps, he hunts not souls but bodies [...]. Wherefore see how foolish are they who say that his creative act was established by the good God […] In short, abolish the root of this evil stock and gaze at once on your own spiritual self [...] the root of all evils is lust.[263]

The text above identifies evil with nature, through the passions and the desires of the flesh (carnal lust). Lust, which is identified with flesh and matter, is the cause of evil, but because of this, man himself is not responsible, but his nature.

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[259] Serapion, *c. Manichaeos* 51.12-25 (Lieu 2010, 53): καὶ τοῦτο τὸ φαινόμενον ποιήμα τοῦ ἀπατεῶνος ποίημα εἶναι βούλεται καὶ εἶναι μὲν τὸν ἄνθρωπον πλάσμα [μὲν] τοῦ πονηροῦ καὶ εἶναι μὲν τὴν ψυχὴν ἀπὸ θεοῦ, εἶναι δὲ παρὰ τῷ πονηρῷ ἡρμοσμένην, καὶ γεγονέναι τὸν ἄνθρωπον τὴν μὲν οὐσίαν τοῦ σώματος ἀπὸ τῆς οὐσίας εἰληφότα τοῦ πονηροῦ, τὴν δὲ οὐσίαν τῆς ψυχῆς ὡς σκῦλον ἢ λάφυρον ἀπὸ θεοῦ ληφθεῖσαν, ὑπὸ δὲ τοῦ πονηροῦ λαφυραγωγηθεῖσαν. οὕτως ἔκ τε τῆς λαφυραγωγηθείσης καὶ τῆς οὐσίας τοῦ πονηροῦ γεγονέναι τὸν ἄνθρωπον ἐκ ψυχῆς καὶ σώματος, καὶ τῆς μὲν ψυχῆς μὴ αἴτιον εἶναι τὸν πονηρὸν μήτε πεποιηκέναι οὐσίαν ψυχῆς, τῆς δὲ εἰσκρίσεως μόνης τῆς ἐν σώματι ἐνεργὸν εἶναι. σκυλεύσας γάρ, ὡς φασίν, εἰσέκρινε τῇ σαρκί, τὴν δὲ σάρκα αὐτὴν καὶ τὴν πλάσιν αὐτὴν καὶ τὸν χαρακτῆρα καὶ τὴν τοιάνδε μορφὴν καὶ τὴν οὐσίαν ὅλην ἔργον εἶναι καὶ πλάσιν τοῦ ἀπατεῶνος. ἐξ ἐναντίων οὖν γεγονέναι τὸν ἄνθρωπον ὁμολογοῦντες.

[260] Augustine, *Faust.* 20.15.

[261] Augustine, *Faust.* 6.8 in BeDuhn 2000, 95. Cf. *Duab.* 1.16.

[262] BeDuhn 2000b, 95.

[263] *Letter to Menoch* 2-4, in Gardner and Lieu 2004, 172-74 (no 54). According to Gardner and Lieu (2004, 172) "The authenticity of this text (Latin) remains open to dispute".

Athanasius of Alexandria is familiar with the Manichaean terminology (*ἄρχοντα τῆς κακίας*) and aware of the above 'problematic' rationale. As he says, Manichaeans claim that since human flesh is created and dominated by the archons of evil, the sin is the nature of human flesh rather than the result of human deeds.[264] According to Severianus of Gabala the Manichaeans misinterpret Paul by saying that flesh comes from the evil one. They scorn the body and appreciate only the soul, whereas in the Scripture one can find examples where the flesh is esteemed by the Spirit, while the soul is not worthy to receive the gifts of the Spirit.[265]

The coexistence of evil and good in man had negative results for the psyche. Manichaean texts describe the body as a corpse, a prison for the soul.[266] The powers of light in man work in order to liberate the elements of good.

Evil acts independently of man's free will

Thus, the human person was divided in two opposite parts. As Augustine criticizes commenting on Manichaean anthropology: "Two souls, or two minds, the one good, the other evil, are in conflict with one another in one man, when the flesh lusts against the spirit, and the spirit against the flesh".[267] Consequently, according to the Manichaean thesis, man does not sin consciously (i.e. by free choice of the will) but it is another opposing nature within man makes him sin. "They ascribe the origin of sins not to a free choice of the will, but to the nature of the opposing element, which they hold is intermingled in man".[268] One of the passages that Manichaeans invoked in order to support the above position, as is indicated in the Epistle to Menoch, was Paul's letter to the Romans: "The good which I wish, I do not do; but I perform the evil which I abhor (Rom. 7.15)".[269] In this very same letter, Mani explains to Menoch, his 'daughter' (i.e. female catechumen), that the evil exists outside men's actions, as an autonomous entity.

> In short, every sin is outside the body, because it is active; [...] For every sin, before it is committed, does not exist; [...] but the evil of lust, because it is natural, exists before it is committed;... If sin is not natural, why are infants baptised, who are agreed to have done no evil of themselves?... (Let those answer), whom I have to question with these words, – if every evil is committed by an act, then before anyone does evil, why does he receive the purification of water when he has done no evil of his own accord?[270]

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[264] Athanasius, *[Apoll.]* [Sp.] 1116.5-8 & 1144.30-34: ... Μανιχαῖος εἰσηγήσατο τὴν γνώμην, τοῦ ἀνθρώπου τὴν σάρκα καὶ αὐτὴν τὴν γέννησιν ὑπὸ τὸν ἄρχοντα τῆς κακίας τάσσων ...

[265] Severianus of Gabala, *c. Manichaeos*, 17 & 22: Ἀλλὰ προφέρουσιν τὸ ἀποστολικὸν οἱ Μανιχαῖοι καὶ συκοφαντοῦσι τὴν ἀποστολικὴν φωνὴν λέγουσαν ὅτι ἡ σὰρξ πονηρά ἐστιν. Λέγουσιν τὴν ψυχὴν εἶναι τοῦ θεοῦ, τὴν δὲ σάρκα τοῦ διαβόλου. Εὑρίσκομεν ἀπὸ τῆς γραφῆς τὴν μὲν σάρκα καταξιουμένην Πνεύματος ἁγίου, τὴν δὲ ψυχὴν μὴ δεχομένην τὰ τοῦ πνεύματος· κατὰ τὴν λέξιν λέγω, οὐχ ὅτι οὐ καταξιοῦται, ἀλλὰ πρὸς τὸν αἱρετικῶν λόγον ἐνίσταμαι. Cf. Aubineau 1983, 65-67. Apart from the specialists, there exist many relevant references in the whole byzantine literature. For example, see Cosmas Indicopleustes, *Top.* 5.178. Criticism is made by all Christian parties: Theodorus Heracleensis vel Theodorus Mopsuestenus, *Frg. Matt*: οὐ μὴν θατέρου κατὰ τοὺς τῶν Μανιχαίων λήρους, οἳ διαφόρους εἰσάγουσιν δημιουργούς, ἄλλον τὸν τῆς ψυχῆς καὶ ἄλλον τὸν τοῦ σώματος. Julianus Arianus: "<ἐκ> σαπρίας δ' ὁ ῥάδαμνος" λέγει οὐχ ἵνα φαυλίσῃ τὸ σπέρμα κατὰ Μανιχαίους καὶ Ψευδεγκρατίτας (οὔτε γὰρ τὸ σῶμα κακὸν οὔτε αἱ τροφαὶ φαῦλαι […].

[266] BeDuhn 2000b, 89, 95: "Even the good soul can be corrupted by its contact with evil, and lose its divine identity".

[267] Augustine, *haer*. (Lieu 2010, 91).

[268] Augustine, *haer*. (Lieu 2010, 91).

[269] *Letter to Menoch* in Lieu 2010, 13.

[270] *Letter to Menoch*, 6-8. Gardner and Lieu (2004, 172 fn. 67) challenge the authenticity of the letter and one of the reasons is its "preoccupation with theological issues (such as infant baptism) which could not possibly have been of interest to Mani".

The idea that man is created by the archons of Darkness, that evil exists innately in man, and that man 'sins' due to his nature and not due to his conduct entailed two major consequences according to the anti-Manichaean authors: (1) the abolition of free will, and (2) the lack of effort (resignation) for moral improvement. In turn, both of them had implications on the ethics and attitudes in everyday social life.

5.3.2 Implications of Manichaean Dualism in Ethics of Social Life

Abolition of free will (determinism vs. personhood)

For the authors, a first major side-effect of the Manichaean anthropology was the adoption of a deterministic stance, which entailed the abolition of man's free will. For both Christian and pagan authors the Manichaean anthropological proposal was problematic, because attributing the 'evil' human deeds to another entity that man could not control eliminated free will and was against the concept of the human person and free agency. The latter entailed the annihilation of the human guilt for the 'evil' deeds that man committed. Man was not responsible for his misconduct: an evil nature within him acts against his virtuous one.[271] In the words that the converted Manichaean had to recite during the anathema: "I therefore anathematize and condemn those [...] who deny free will and say it is not in our power to be good or evil".[272] As Augustine confesses,

> For, still I thought that it is not we who sin but some kind of alien nature in us which sins. It gratified my pride to think that I am beyond blame, and when I had done something evil, not to confess I had done it … but instead I liked to excuse myself and accuse something else which existed within me and yet was not really I.[273]

Soon enough, it was pointed out by the anti-Manichaean authors that this rationale (anthropology) had ethical implications which in turn would lead to the adoption of behaviours with social consequences. The necessity to answer the Manichaean challenge was an important reason for the development of the theology of *αὐτεξούσιον* (free will) and the freedom of choice, especially by the Greek Church Fathers.[274] The core of their rationale is this: Evil is not self-existent at an ontological level, it is not an entity but the absence of being, the not-being. It is not a substance but an event that has happened (*συμβεβηκός*). It exists only through the deeds of man, who in front of a range of good and bad choices chooses the evil ones.

As Serapion emphasizes, the Manichaean theory that human nature is a mixture of good and evil essences promotes a weak moral responsibility. Serapion refutes the

[271] Many Manichaeologists challenge anti-Manichaean authors' claim regarding Manichaean determinism. As BeDuhn (1995b, 393-94 and 2000b, 225) states, "Manichaean treatment of the self has defied the most well-intentioned and ingenious efforts to classify it as a form of determinism. There is no unanimity even in the Christian sources; Ephrem, for example, states that the Manichaeans believe in free will." "In brief, Manichaeism ascribes no fault to the soul prior to its 'awakening' [...] Only when the soul is collected, and establishes dominion over the body, does it assume responsibility for action", [determinism under preconditions]. As Pedersen (2004, 173) remarks, the original Manichaean literature "often lays claim to man's freedom and sense of responsibility; the importance in Manichaean texts of themes such as ethical commandments, penance and eternal perdition would seem to render it impossible for Manichaeism to have been a deterministic doctrine".

[272] *SC*, ch. 7 (Lieu, 1994, 248, 250): τὰ σώματα λέγοντας εἶναι τοῦ πονηροῦ, τὸ αὐτεξούσιον ἀναιροῦντας καὶ μὴ ἐν ἡμῖν εἶναι λέγοντας τὸ εἶναι καλοῖς ἢ κακοῖς. See also Zacharias of Mytilene, *Adv. Manichaeos* 4.7-9: Τὸ κακὸν τοίνυν οὐκ οὐσία, ἀλλὰ τοῦ θείου νόμου παράβασις ἐκ μόνου τοῦ αὐτεξουσίου κινήματος.

[273] Augustine, *Conf.* 10.18 (Lieu 1992, 184).

[274] For example, by Serapion of Thmuis, Titus of Bostra, Zacharias of Mytilene, John of Caesarea, etc.

Manichaean belief that "the body is naturally evil, as it proceeds from evil, while the soul is naturally good, having its origin from what is good"[275] arguing that: The choice of doing the good is up to each person (10). In any case, people can change (16), not in terms of their essence, but their skills and their quality (17). The body and its limbs are mere tools; they do not determine the quality of man's operations which depend on man's disposition and freedom of choice (18). The vices and virtues could be acquired; yet, they also could be lost (19). Both our life and our achievements depend on our free choice (23).[276] For Serapion, even the demons are not evil by nature as springing from an evil root, or because their substance is darkness. Instead, they are evil because of their deliberate choices.[277]

Titus of Bostra, answering the classical Manichaean question: "whence evil?" (*Πόθεν οὖν τὰ κακά;*), argues that evil is not an autonomous entity, does not exist as an individual being, and that there is no other first principle opposing God; God is the only authority. Evil exists only through human deeds (2). Furthermore, good and evil are qualities that could be acquired through man's choices. God wanted to give man the freedom of choice. Therefore, he did not create him either as good or evil, in order to give him the opportunity to attain goodness via virtue and through pain (7). Thus, since he is God's creation, man is by nature innately beautiful (*καλὸς*); whether he will become good (*ἀγαθὸς*) or bad (*κακὸς*) depends upon his intentions and his choices. So, goodness and badness are qualities that are acquired through human praxis (8).[278]

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[275] Serapion, *c. Manichaeos*, 12.3-8 (Lieu 2010, 51): καὶ τὸ μὲν σῶμα οὕτω πέφυκε κακόν, ἐκ κακοῦ προελθόν, ἡ δὲ ψυχὴ πέφυκε καλή, ἐκ καλοῦ ἔχουσα τὴν ἀρχήν.

[276] Serapion, *c. Manichaeos*, 16-23 (in the text above is provided a summary of the content): 16. διὰ τοῦτο οὐδὲ εἰκόνα τὴν παλαιὰν λαμβάνουσι, καίτοι ἄνθρωποι καὶ αὐτοί εἰσιν. οὐ τοῦ εἶναι ἄνθρωποι ἐπαύσαντο· μενούσης τῆς οὐσίας, οὐ μένουσιν οἱ τρόποι. αἱ οὐσίαι οὐ λέλυνται, οἱ δὲ τρόποι καταλέλυνται· ἔστηκεν ἡ ἑκάστου οὐσία, ἡ τοῦ ἀνθρώπου οὐσία· […] οὐ τὸν χαρακτῆρα τοῦ προσώπου λέλυκε, μένει ὁ τῆς ὄψεως χαρακτήρ· οὐ τὴν ὄψιν τῆς φύσεως ἀνῄρηκεν. [...] 17. καὶ αἱ μὲν οὐσίαι οὐκ ἠλλάγησαν· μένει γὰρ τὸ σῶμα σῶμα, οὐχ ἕτερον γεγονός· οὔτε γὰρ τὸ σῶμα εἰς τὸ ἀσώματον μετετέθη· οὔτε ἡ ψυχὴ ἑτέρα τῇ οὐσίᾳ ὑπῆρξεν· ἀλλὰ μενουσῶν τῶν οὐσιῶν τὰ ἐπιτηδεύματα οὐκ ἔμεινε. [...] 18. ὀφθαλμοῦ ἦν τὸ βλέπειν, οὐ τὸ πῶς βλέπειν· καὶ γλώττης ἦν λαλεῖν, οὐ πῶς λαλεῖν· ἡ γὰρ ποιότης τῶν κινημάτων ἐν τῇ προαιρέσει κεῖται [...] 19. μεταβέβληνται οὖν αἱ κακίαι καὶ αἱ ἀρεταί· καὶ κτηταὶ καὶ ἀπόκτηται. ἔχεις, οὐκ ἔχεις· εὗρες καὶ ἀπολώλεκας· ἔχεις ὃ εὗρες· οὐκ ἔχεις ὃ ἀπολώλεκας. 23. [...] προαιρέσει γὰρ ζῶμεν, προαιρέσει τὸ κατόρθωμα ἀποταμιευόμεθα.

[277] Serapion, *c. Manichaeos*, 29.9-14: εἰ δὲ βούλεσθε μαθεῖν ὅτι καὶ οἱ δαίμονες αὐτοὶ οὐκ ἀπὸ ῥίζης εἰσὶ κακοὶ οὐδὲ ῥίζαν ἀτοπίας ἔχουσιν, ἀλλὰ κἀκεῖνοι ἀπὸ προαιρέσεως ἐπὶ τοῦτο ἐληλύθασιν, οὐ πονηροὶ τὴν φύσιν ὄντες, οὐκ ἀγνοίᾳ ἀναγεγραμμένοι, οὐ νὺξ καὶ σκότος τὴν οὐσίαν τυγχάνοντες, ἀλλ' ἕξει καὶ ἐπιτηδεύμασι τῇ ἐπιχειρήσει τῶν τοιούτων γεγονότες.

[278] Titus of Bostra, *c. Manichaeos,* 2.1-8: […] Καὶ γὰρ δὴ οἱ ἐξ ἐκείνου, ἐπειδὰν περὶ τῶν ἀσυστάτων ἀρχῶν ἐν λόγῳ διελεγχθῶσιν, ἐπὶ ταύτην κατάγονται τὴν ἐπαπόρησιν, ὡς δυσαπόδεικτον καὶ πολλὰς παρέχουσαν λαβὰς κατὰ τοῦ προσδιαλεγομένου, φάσκοντες· Πόθεν οὖν τὰ κακά; Φαμὲν δὴ θαρσαλέως ἡμεῖς ὡς, ἑνὸς ὄντος θεοῦ τοῦ πάντα δημιουργήσαντος, οὐδὲν μὲν κατ' οὐσίαν ἐν τοῖς οὖσι κακόν […] Μόνη δὲ εὐλόγως καὶ δικαίως πρὸς κακίαν ἡ τῶν ἁμαρτανόντων ἀνθρώπων ἀδικία, καὶ ἀληθῶς γε κακία τυγχάνει, οὐ μὴν ἐξ ἀνάρχου κακίας ἥντινα μὴ οὖσαν ὡς ἀπὸ ταύτης γε οὔσης ἐπενόησεν ὁ Μάνης […] κατ' οὐσίαν οὐδὲν τῶν ὄντων κακόν […] Οὕτω δὴ κατεσκεύακε τὸν ἄνθρωπον φύσει μὲν οὔτ' ἀγαθὸν οὔτε κακόν, ἐπιτρέψας δὲ τῷ λογισμῷ τοῦ κρείττονος τὴν αἵρεσιν. […] Ἡ μὲν γὰρ οὐσία τούτου καλή, τὸ δὲ κατ' ἀρετὴν ἀγαθὸν οὔπω προσείληφεν. […] Κατὰ δὴ τοῦτον τὸν λόγον καὶ ἄνθρωπος, καλὸς μὲν καὶ λίαν καλὸς οὐσίᾳ τε καὶ αὐτῷ τῷ εἶναι, τὸ δὲ ἀγαθόν, τὸ διὰ μόνης ἀρετῆς προσγιγνόμενον, πόνῳ κτᾶται·[…] Οὐσίᾳ μὲν καὶ φύσει ἄνθρωπος καλὸς ὡς χρυσός, ὡς λίθος τίμιος, ὡς ἔργον θεοῦ, ἀγαθὸς δὲ ἢ τοὐναντίον κακὸς προθέσει. Ταῦτα γὰρ αὐτῷ παράκειται μὲν ὡς πραχθῆναι δυνάμενα· ποιότητες δέ εἰσιν ἐπισυμβαίνουσαι κατὰ τὴν ἐγγιγνομένην ἀγωγὴν καὶ τῆς προθέσεως αἵρεσιν, ὡς τὴν κακίαν ἐν πράξει μόνον συνισταμένην πρὶν πραχθῆναι μὴ ὑφεστάναι. Ἐξουσίαν μέντοι ἔχει κακίας ὁ ἄνθρωπος τῆς πραχθῆναι δυναμένης, οὐχ ἵνα πράξῃ ταύτην, ἀλλ' ἵνα μὴ πράξας, ἄριστος ἀναδειχθῇ. Εἰ γὰρ τοῦ πράττειν τὴν ἐξουσίαν οὐκ εἶχε, φθόνον ἂν ἔδοξεν ὑπέχειν τοῦ δημιουργοῦ πρὸς ἐμπόδιον εὐδοκιμήσεως καὶ πρὸς στέρησιν ἐλευθεριότητος, ὡς οὐκ ἔχων ἐφ' ἑαυτῷ τὸ γενέσθαι ἀγαθός […] Ἀρετὴ γὰρ ἐν ἀνθρώποις σχεδὸν οὐδὲν ἕτερον ἢ κακίας παραίτησις.

As Didymus the Blind remarks, the Manichaeans argue that the body is evil by nature (8) and "flesh belongs to sin" (12). However, sin is the result of man's disposition and not of his nature. Men are characterised (either good or evil) by their deeds. No one is inherently bad, "not even the Devil himself is evil by nature: instead, he became so, as a result of a change effected by his own free will" (6). "Soul and body are not inherently bad or good, but are receptive of both qualities by "the exercise of free will" (11). When talking about a rational species like man that are either good or evil, we do not mean that their substance is good or evil (19).[279]

As Epiphanius explains in his commentary on the Manichaean cosmogony:

> We must first consider the sort of thing that evil is [...] whether it is an object or, as it were, has a body or substance, or whether it can even have a root. And when [...] we shall find that evil is without substance and has no root, but is limited to the deeds of human activity at work. While we are doing it, evil exists; while we are not doing it, it does not. [...] For though God in his supreme goodness willed that all persons and creatures be < good > [...] he still, by allowing the freedom to choose, permits all creatures to undertake whichever action each chooses by its own will. Thus God cannot be responsible for the evils [...] But though this madman Mani (*Μάνης*) means to exempt God from evil, he has instead set evil over against God on equal terms. And at the same time, while he is abusing all creation, he is not ashamed to use our human errors as his excuse for interweaving < a mixture of the two* > evenly matched < principles* > with all created being.[280]

That the discourse on theodicy was one of the hotly debated issues is illustrated not only in the theological treatises but also in the live speeches and sermons of Church Fathers. Cyril of Jerusalem, teaching his disciples, emphasizes and admonished them "Learn also this: The soul comes into the world without sin (faultlessness). Thus, while we were born faultless, we now sin due to our freedom of choice. So, do not listen to those who support the opposite view".[281]

John of Caesarea, in his homily *Adversus Manichaeos*, answering the repeated Manichaean question: "whence evil?" (*Πόθεν οὖν τὰ κακά*;), develops the twofold meaning of it, distinguishing: the natural evil (e.g. illnesses, physical disasters), which according to him should not be called evil, and which frequently becomes the agent of salvation, from the human evil (sin) which is the real evil. Concluding his homily, he stresses that the gift of free will is necessary for the promotion of virtue, and that the cause of real evil is only our freedom of choice and disposition.[282]

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[279] Didymus the Blind (Pseudo-Didymus), *c. Manichaeos,* (1092B-1105A) 6-20, 32 (Bennett 1997, 309-315, 321 altered): 8. […] οὐ κακὸν τὸ σῶμα τῇ φύσει [...] 12 […] ἁμαρτίας εἶναι τὴν σάρκα, τοῦτο νομίζουσιν· […] […] Ἀλλ' οὐδ' αὐτὸς ὁ διάβολος κατὰ φύσιν κακὸς, ἀλλ' ἐκ τροπῆς τοῦ ἰδίου αὐτεξουσίου. [...] 37 οὐδὲ φύσει κακὴ ἡ κόλασις [...] Εἰ οὖν διὰ πλειόνων ἡ σὰρξ καὶ τὸ πνεῦμα, ὁτὲ μὲν ἁμαρτίας, ὁτὲ δὲ ἁγιασμοῦ, καὶ πρὸς τὸ δοξάζειν τὸν Θεὸν ἔχοντα λέγεται οὐδὲν τούτων φύσει κακὸν, ἢ ἀγαθόν ἐστιν· ἀλλ' αὐτεξουσίως ἑκατέρων δεκτικόν· […] 19 Μηδεὶς δὲ ὑπολάβῃ, ὅτι εἴδη λογικῶν πονηρῶν εἰρηκότες, οὐσίαν πονηρὰν λέγομεν [...] 20 Ἀμέλει γοῦν τὰ ὀνόματα τὰ προειρημένα πονηρὰ, οὐκ οὐσιῶν, ἀλλὰ προαιρετικῶν ἐστιν ἐμφανιστικά.

[280] Epiphanius, *Pan.* 66.15.4-16.4.

[281] Cyril, *Catech*. 4.18: Μάνθανε δὲ καὶ τοῦτο, ὅτι πρὶν παραγένηται εἰς τόνδε τὸν κόσμον ἡ ψυχὴ, οὐδὲν ἥμαρτεν· ἀλλ' ἐλθόντες ἀναμάρτητοι, νῦν ἐκ προαιρέσεως ἁμαρτάνομεν. Μή μοι κακῶς τινος ἀκούσῃς.

[282] John of Caesarea, *Adv. Manichaeos* (hom. 2): 14. Ἐντεῦθεν οὖν λοιπὸν ἀνακύπτει τὸ παρὰ τοῖς ἀθέοις θρυλλούμενον· […] Πόθεν οὖν τὰ κακά; […] 15. Τὸ κακὸν διττὴν ἔχει τὴν σημασίαν· δηλοῖ γάρ ποτε μὲν τὴν κάκωσιν, ποτὲ δὲ τὴν ἁμαρτίαν, καὶ κυρίως μὲν κακὸν ἡ ἁμαρτία, καταχρηστικῶς δὲ ἡ κάκωσις κακὸν ὀνομάζεται. Ἡ γὰρ κάκωσις οὐ πάντως κακή· πολλάκις δὲ καὶ σωτηρίας πρόξενος γίνεται […] 21. Ἰδοὺ καὶ τὸ θρυλλούμενον ἀποδέδεικται ὅτι τε ἀναγκαῖον πρὸς ἀρετὴν τὸ τῆς αὐτεξουσιότητος δώρημα τοῖς ἀνθρώποις καὶ ὅτι ἐκ μόνης προαιρέσεως καὶ αὐτεξουσιότητος ὑπάρχει τὰ κυρίως κακά· τὰ δὲ ἕτερα, ὅσα κακὰ ὑπάρχει,

This optimistic anthropological proposal, developed by Greek Church Fathers, emphasizes the free agency of man,[283] and reveals the extent of the problem that clerics faced educating their flock because of the moral fatalism and resignation promoted by Manichaeism. In turn, this can be seen as a sign of the success of Manichaean missionary propaganda in the East.[284]

As Stroumsa emphasizes, "Christian theologians focused precisely on those major implications of Manichaean doctrine that threatened the monotheistic conception of God and of the human person. Theodicy and ethics seem never more cogently developed in Patristic and early Byzantine works than in the context of anti-Manichaean polemics".[285]

The anthropological implications of Manichaean dualism are pointed out not only by Christian theologians and clerics, but also by pagans. The neo-Platonist philosopher Simplicius, Proclus' pupil, gives a summary of the "Manichaean cosmogony as a classic example of the wrong solution to the problem of evil".[286]

> Since they didn't want to say that God was the cause of the bad, they posited the existence of a specific origin of the bad, taking it to be equal in honour and strength to the good (or rather, even stronger, since up to the present the bad has obviously been superior in all its undertakings). […] The result is that in their flight from saying that the good is the cause of the bad they portray it as utterly bad — and so, as the proverb has it, by running from the smoke they fell into the fire.[287]

The lack of effort for self-improvement

The second important implication of Manichaean anthropology, highlighted by both pagan and Christian writers, was that it did not leave room for man's moral progress.

παρὰ θεοῦ γινόμενα, παιδευτικὰ τῶν ἀνθρώπων εἰσί, παιδαγωγοῦντα μᾶλλον πρὸς ἀρετήν. Διὸ οὔτε κυρίως κακὰ ταῦτα λεκτέον·

[283] Contra Augustine's pessimistic perspective of the *man of fall* due to the consequences of the primeval sin. Cf. Gross (1960) in Pedersen (2004, 96).

[284] Presumably, questions such as 'whence evil' would also have had arisen without the Manichaeans. However, this optimistic anthropology, which rejects any kind of predetermination and insists on free will, has been developed in contradiction to the Manichaean challenge. As Pedersen (2015b, 572-73) notes regarding Titus' anthropology, "His treatise is, firstly, original within Patristic literature, in the sense of intensifying or making a number of ideas unambiguous which otherwise only exist as unclear tendencies among other Greek Church Fathers, where they are combined with different, even conflicting, tendencies. This is, for example, the case with Titus' vehement insistence on man's ethical freedom, which leads him to a denial of the traditional teaching in Greek Patristics on Adam's original immortality and the catastrophic "fall of man". Titus' theology corresponds to a large degree to later "Pelagian" viewpoints in the Latin language area".

[285] Stroumsa, 1988, 56. It is worth examining the influence of these early Byzantine works on later Syriac-speaking anti-Manichaean authors under Islam. John of Dara, for instance, as Ruani (2017, 203-22, esp. 221) has shown addressing the Manichaean question 'whence evil' and the issues of theodicy and free will, draws from Titus of Bostra to whom he refers and whom he quotes.

[286] Lieu 1994, 125, 171.

[287] Simplicius, *Comm. Man. Epict.* ch. 27 (lemma 35) (Brennan and Britain, 40): Μὴ βουλόμενοι γὰρ αἴτιον τοῦ κακοῦ τὸν θεὸν εἰπεῖν, ἀρχὴν ὑπεστήσαντο ἰδίαν τοῦ κακοῦ, ἰσότιμον αὐτὴν καὶ ἰσοσθενῆ τιθέντες τῷ ἀγαθῷ, μᾶλλον δὲ καὶ ἰσχυροτέραν· ὥστε φεύγοντες, αἴτιον αὐτὸν τοῦ κακοῦ εἰπεῖν, πάγκακον ὑπογράφουσι· καὶ, κατὰ τὴν παροιμίαν, φεύγοντες τὸν καπνὸν εἰς πῦρ ἐμπεπτώκασιν. See also Johannes Philoponus, *De opificio mundi*: 69 ς'. Ὅτι τὸ σκότος οὔτε οὐσία ἐστὶν οὔτε ποιότης, στέρησις δὲ μόνη τοῦ ἀντικειμένου φωτός. αἱ μὲν οὖν περὶ τοῦ σκότους τῆς Μανιχαϊκῆς καὶ ἀσεβοῦς μυθολογίας ζητήσεις παρείσθωσαν εὐθύνας ἤδη πρότερον παρασχοῦσαι πολλοῖς.

According to Alexander of Lycopolis, Manichaean anthropology and doctrine resulted into the lack of rules for the moral education of the people; it thus hindered and obscured morals.[288] Moral progress could be acquired in any place, even in the midst of debauchery.

> 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 for 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.[289]

For Titus of Bostra, Manichaean anthropology introduces coercion in human actions and abolishes the hope of change for the better. "Mani does not acknowledge the difference between things and an ethical being like man; he introduces coercion and banishes the hope of conversion",[290] and creates an impression that man cannot determine his own life. "To say that evil is external and therefore uncontrollable, can leave people feeling powerless to influence their own fate or luck".[291] Thus, "the Manichaeans require no anointing for battles, since they regard virtue and vice as necessities of nature".[292]

However, as Zacharias of Mytilene underlines, a change for the better (moral progress) is possible and is the result of education, whereby the choice of the good becomes an acquired habit/disposition (*ἕξις*). Talking about man, good is precisely this acquired state of mind (*ἕξις*), which is a quality, not a substance as it is in the case of God, while evil is the absence of this habit.[293]

In practice, for Church Fathers like John Chrysostom, the Manichaean belief that "evil is steadfast" (*τὴν κακίαν ἀκίνητον εἶναί φασι*) and that man's change for the better is impossible (*ἀδύνατον* […] *ἐπὶ τὸ βέλτιον μεταβολή*), was a constant threat and had a bad influence on the moral behaviour and attitudes of the faithful. People who were eager to make progress were paralysed by this rationale; nobody would fight for virtue anymore (*τις γὰρ ἐπιμελήσεταί ἀρετῆς*?).[294] Chrysostom wonders:

> for if even now, that there are laws, the threat of hell, the desire for glory, […] the condemnation of evil, and the praise of good, there are but a few who choose to strive for virtue; [imagine] if all the above did not exist, what would prevent everyone from being perished and corrupt?[295]

This statement of Chrysostom could be interpreted as a reference to the laws against heretics, which punished and deprived heretics of the privileges of the Catholics. In a similar fashion,

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[288] Alexander of Lycopolis, *Tract. Man.* 1.

[289] Alexander of Lycopolis, *Tract. Man.* 16.12-17 (van der Horst and Mansfeld, 79): πρῶτον μὲν τίς χρεία τοῦ περὶ τὴν παίδευσιν πόνου; γενοίμεθα γὰρ ἂν καθεύδοντες σπουδαῖοι. ἢ διὰ τί μάλιστα τοὺς ἀκροωμένους αὐτῶν οἱ τοιοῦτοι ἄνδρες εἰς ἐλπίδα ἄγουσι τοῦ καλοῦ; καὶ γὰρ καλινδούμενοι σὺν ταῖς ἑταίραις τὸ οἰκεῖον ἔχοιεν ἂν ἀγαθόν.

[290] Titus of Bostra, *c. Manichaeos* 4.4.39-43 in Pedersen 2004, 55.

[291] Lieu 1985, 141.

[292] Titus of Bostra, *c. Manichaeos* 4.10, in Pedersen 2004, 51.

[293] Zacharias of Mytilene, *Adv. Manichaeos* 3-4: ἀλλ' ὡς ποιότητες· ὅθεν οὐ ψυχαὶ λέγονται, ἀλλὰ περὶ ψυχὴν θεωροῦνται, ἡ μὲν ὡς ἕξις τις οὖσα ψυχῆς, ἡ δὲ ὡς στέρησις ἕξεως (3.1-3)· [...] Ἡ γὰρ ἀντιδιαστολὴ τοῦ καλοῦ εἰς τὸ κακὸν ἐπὶ Θεοῦ χώραν οὐκ ἔχει, ἀλλ' ἐπὶ τοῦ ἐν ἀνθρωπίναις πράξεσι καλοῦ τε καὶ κακοῦ, τοῦ μὲν καθ' ἕξιν τῇ τοῦ Θεοῦ δημιουργίᾳ συνεισερχομένου, τοῦ δὲ κατὰ στέρησιν ἕξεως ἐκ τοῦ αὐτεξουσίου κινήματος ἐπιγινομένου πολλάκις καὶ ἀπογινομένου (3.6-10). Τὸ γὰρ καλὸν τὸ ἐν τῇ ψυχῇ καὶ τὸ κατ' ἀρετὴν ζῆν, τῇ γενέσει, καθὼς εἴρηται, οἷά τις ἕξις ἀρίστη συνεισέρχεται· τῇ δὲ τούτου ῥαστώνῃ τῇ ἐκ προαιρέσεως καὶ κακῆς ἀναστροφῆς καὶ συνηθείας φαύλης συμβαινούσῃ, τὸ κακὸν οἷά τις ἕξεως στέρησις πολλάκις ἐπιγίνεται (3.11-15) [...] Τὸ κακὸν τοίνυν οὐκ οὐσία, ἀλλὰ τοῦ θείου νόμου παράβασις ἐκ μόνου τοῦ αὐτεξουσίου κινήματος (4.7-8).

[294] John Chrysostom, *Hom. Matt. (hom. 1-90)*, hom. 26, PG 57:340.15-24.

[295] John Chrysostom, *Hom. Matt. (hom. 1-90)*, hom. 26, PG 57:340.24-30.

Nilus in several of his letters emphasizes that "evil is not invincible, as the Manichaeans claim" (*οὐ γάρ ἐστιν ἀκίνητον τὸ κακὸν, ὡς οἱ Μανιχαῖοί φασιν*). Indeed, pointing out the strength of free will, he argues that self-improvement is possible even for those who have reached "the depths of malice" (*τῆς κακίας τὰ βάραθρα*).[296] Relevant in this context are the worries of John of Caesarea in the sixth century and the instructions he gave when addressing his flock: "So, you must avoid them [Manichaeans] and do not even greet them; because 'evil companionships corrupt good morals'".[297]

Serapion of Thmuis, in order to prove that people can change, gives the example of the apostles. Unlike the example of Manichaeism, in which 'the apostle of Christ' Mani is identified with the Paraclete, Serapion underlines the human weakness of the apostles, stressing that the acquisition of virtue is the result of human effort and not an arbitrary victory of the powers of good over the powers of evil (=nature) within us.[298]

As Basil of Caesarea notes in his second *Homily on the Hexaemeron*, for some people, namely, the Marcionites, the Valentinians and the Manichaeans (the worst of all for Basil and the putrefaction of the Churches), darkness does not mean a place deprived of light; it is an evil power, or rather the evil itself, which is self-begotten and is hostile to the goodness of God. According to them, as Basil criticises, this darkness is fighting the human soul, bringing death and is opposed to virtue. Basil considers all these theories as an invention to serve as pretexts for committing sins freely, which finally would cause man's perdition.[299] Basil's homilies on the *Hexaemeron* were live speeches that Basil gave in Caesarea around 370 during the holy week. Thus, it is reasonable to assume that among his audience there may have been some Manichaeans, something which is at any rate expected, since the first law against the Manichaeans was issued, as we have seen, only in 372. What is certain, however, is that these Manichaean views were raised as a topic of discussion and circulated in the society of Caesarea.

For John Chrysostom, all the trouble started from the Manichaean question 'whence evil', which, according to him, is the culmination of all evils.[300] As Simplicius points out, the quest for the source of evil is not only "a cause of impiety towards the divinity", but "has [also] undermined the foundations of good morals".[301]

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[296] Nilus of Ankara, *Ep. 317 to Martinus the Chancellor*. As also Nilus argues in his epistle to the monk Thaumasius, "it's on our hand to make a progress, because evil is not unmovable, as the Manichaeans claim". See Cameron (1976b) about the authenticity of St. Nilus letters.

[297] John of Caesarea, *Adv. Manichaeos* (hom. 1) 277-79: Φεύγετε τοίνυν καὶ τοῖς τοιούτοις χαίρειν μὴ λέγετε· Φθείρουσιν ἤθη χρηστὰ ὁμιλίαι κακαί.

[298] Serapion, *c. Manichaeos* 24.19-25.4: [...] διὰ τοῦτο καὶ τὰ τῶν ἁγίων ἁμαρτήματα λελάληται· τί γὰρ ἐλύπει σιωπῇ σιωπηθῆναι τὸ πταῖσμα; [...] ἵνα διαβληθῶσι, λελάληται· ἐκβεβλήκασι γὰρ τὴν διαβολήν, ἀλλ' ἵνα μὴ τῶν ἁμαρτημάτων σιωπηθέντων ἀναμάρτητοι τὴν φύσιν ὑπονοηθῶσιν. ὑπὲρ ἀληθείας τοίνυν ὁ λόγος.Ὦ τοῦ καινοῦ θαύματος! ἐγράφησαν αἱ ἁμαρτίαι τῶν ἁγίων, ἵνα ἡ ἀλήθεια γνωσθῇ, ὅτι ἐκ τῶν ὁμοίων φύντες καὶ ὁμοίως φύντες ἀρετῇ τὸ μεῖζον εἰλήφασιν, οὐ φύσει νικήσαντες, ἀλλ' ἀρετῇ διαπρέψαντες.

[299] Basil of Caesarea, *Hom. Hexaem.* (hom. 2, sec. 4.1-24, 22-24)/(2.4.22-24): Τί μακρὰν ἀποτρέχεις τῆς ἀληθείας, ἄνθρωπε, ἀφορμὰς σε αυτῷ τῆς ἀπωλείας ἐπινοῶν; Decret (1982, 1060-1064) commenting on this homily, points out that Basil's problem with Manichaeans was not abominations, the favorite accusation of Augustine, but the "inconsistency and absurdity" of "the dualistic doctrine of Mani", which with its view that "the human body" "derives its origin from the 'race of Darkness', is fundamentally impure and evil" has severe consequences in the life of young ascetics.

[300] John Chrysostom, *Oppugn.* (PG 47:365.22-28)*:* οὐδ' ἂν ὁ τῶν κακῶν τούτων ἐπεισῆλθε κολοφὼν τὸ ζητεῖν, πόθεν τὰ κακά. [...] Καὶ γὰρ Μαρκίων, καὶ Μάνης, καὶ Οὐαλεντῖνος, καὶ τῶν Ἑλλήνων οἱ πλείους ἐντεῦθεν ἔλαβον τὴν ἀρχήν.

[301] Simplicius, *Comm. Man. Epict.* 35 (Hadot, 322,3) (Lieu 2010, 101).

Summarizing, both pagan and Christian writers related theodicy to ethical theory and both, in the words of Stroumsa, "insist on the misleading consequences entailed by such a false epistemology, in particular in the field of ethics".[302] For the anti-Manichaean authors (both Christian and pagan), the Manichaean anthropology had, in specific, the following consequences: matter and body were treated with complete disdain, the annihilation of human guilt and man's responsibility, and the abolition of free will and of the concept of personhood. In terms of social life, such consequences, led to behaviours that undermined the (established) social life-model (status quo) and challenged social institutions and organizations that were vital for social cohesion and economic prosperity, such as marriage, childbearing, labour (a number of professions were rejected), and charity.

5.3.3 The "Seal of the Breast" and its Implications in Everyday Social Life

One of the three major commandments that the Elect had to observe was "the seal of the breast". This stemmed from the Manichaean belief that the creation of man was the stratagem of matter and man's body was created by the archons of Darkness. As Mani himself explains in his *Fundamental Letter*, even today one can observe that the bodies are not created by God, but by nature, which is identified with matter and evil.[303] The aim of the principle of evil was to entrap perpetually the divine substance in matter through the continual creation of new bodies through births. This could only succeed through the weakness and the passions of the body of man, which was co-substantial with lust since it had originated from the evil. Thus, man's carnal lust was the trap of nature. As Mani teaches the catechumen Menoch, "the Devil is the originator of bodies through lust that is in the Devil's snare by means of the lust for a woman".[304] Thus, the desire for a woman is rendered as nature's (i.e. matter/evil) snare, a trap invented by the archons of Darkness. Consequently, for the Manichaeans, the institution of marriage, which is 'inextricably tied' to family and childbearing, ensured the success of the stratagem of Matter to entrap the divine substance in bodies through births.

Therefore, in order to prevent Matter's stratagem, Mani sanctioned the "seal of the breast" as a counter measure. According to the *Kephalaia*, the righteous (Elect) Manichaean had to "embra/[ce] continence and purity".[305] In other words, "the Seal of the Breast prevents fornication and marriage and therefore physical procreation, which prolongs the captivity of Light".[306]

Critique of the "seal of the breast"

The Manichaean prohibition of marriage and of procreation was too serious a matter to pass unnoticed. It was an issue that threatened the nucleus of social life, the family institution. Thus, it became one of the most hotly debated issues in anti-Manichaean polemics.

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[302] Stroumsa 1992, 340.

[303] Augustine, *Fund.*, Frg. 9: (6.4). For the whole text see Gardner and Lieu 2004, 168-172.

[304] *Letter to Menoch* 2.3 in Gardner and Lieu 2004, 172-174 (no 54); Lieu 2010, 13.

[305] *2Keph*. 80, 192.3-193.22 (Gardner 1995, 201): "[Once more] the enlightener speaks to his disciples: Know [and]/ understand that the first righteousness a per[son] / will do to make truly righteous is this: he can embra/[ce] continence and purity".

[306] Lieu 2010, xviii. Regarding the Manichaean rejection of marriage and procreation cf. Gardner and Lieu (2004, 22); Franzmann (forthcoming [b]): "the distinction between virginal, continent and married ones — with married as a fully negative category — is amply illustrated in PsB 179.7-181.18". Arabic sources also testify that Manichaeans rejected marriage and procreation, cf. Al-Nadim, *Fihrist* 9 (Dodge, 788).

The first relevant testimonies come from the Egyptian authors. At the same time as Diocletian worried about the corruption of the innocent, orderly, and tranquil Roman citizens by the Manichaean evil deeds and practices, a Christian bishop and a pagan philosopher were equally troubled by these Manichaean practices. In his circular letter, the bishop of Alexandria warned the faithful and informed the Roman authorities that "Again the Manich[aea]ns" misinterpreting Paul's passage (1 Cor. 7: 1ff.), "speak [falsely against marriage saying that] he [who does not] marry does well".[307] Alexander of Lycopolis provided the interpretation of such practice: The Manichaeans abstain "from marriage and love-making for fear that because of the continuing of the race, the divine power will dwell within the matter for a longer time".[308]

On the opposite side, Manichaean polemics against the Catholic Church commented on Paul's passage, arguing: "Yet, these are men who have dared to say that this lust is a good thing in opposition to the evangelical and apostolic books, which they keep reading in vain; you may see how their holy men at one time have slept with their daughters, at other times have had intercourse with several concubines and wives as well...when they perform this act, they think it has been permitted by God".[309]

Around half a century after Alexander's and Theonas' testimonies, *circa* 350, Didymus the Blind recorded (in his *Ecclesiastes*) a dialogue he had with a Manichaean, who maintained celibacy and abstinence from sex.[310] As one reads in the *Vita Sancti Ephiphanii*, a similar discussion echoing Manichaean ideas concerning celibacy and marriage took place in the Nile Delta between Epiphanius and Hierax, an outstanding ascetic of the era.[311] Logically, such disputes and controversies on the issues of marriage and sexual life should have been part of the daily agenda.

As Theodoret of Cyrrhus remarks, the Manichaeans "maintain that marriage is the Devil's legislation".[312] According to Macarius of Magnesia, a certain Dositheus, a chief among the "children of the Manichaeans" (*Μανιχαίων παῖδες*), said freely (*ἀποθρυλλῶν*) that marriage is an unseemly action and very contrary to the law. This Dositheus claimed that as this world (humanity) began through mingling and communion, so, through abstinence and restraint of impulses and desires it has to be terminated.[313] So, according to Dositheus, marriage is illegal because it is contrary to the goal of the Manichaeans, which is the gradual dissolution of the cosmos into its constituent elements in order to release the divine substance. And, since the cause of man's creation was the sexual intercourse of the princes of Darkness, the only way to bring it to an end is to abstain from sex. Thus, Mani's plan counteracted the plan of Matter, aiming for the gradual release of the divine principle (through rituals), and to put an end to its further entrapment (with "the seal of the breast").

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[307] PRynalds 3, Gr. 469, (Roberts 1938, 38-46) (Lieu 2010, 36-37, 37; Gardner and Lieu 2004, 114-5).

[308] Alexander of Lycopolis, *Tract. Man.* 4.25-30: ἐπεὶ οὖν ἀπόλλυσθαι τὴν ὕλην ἐστὶ θεοῦ δόγμα, ἀπέχεσθαι μὲν ἐμψύχων πάντων, σιτίζεσθαι δὲ λάχανα καὶ πᾶν ὅ τι ἀναίσθητον, ἀπέχεσθαι δὲ γάμων καὶ ἀφροδισίων καὶ τεκνοποιίας, ἵνα μὴ ἐπὶ πλεῖον ἡ δύναμις ἐνοικήσῃ τῇ ὕλῃ κατὰ τὴν τοῦ γένους διαδοχήν.

[309] *Letter to Menoch* 4, in Gardner and Lieu 2004, 173.

[310] Didymus the Blind, *Comm. Eccl.* 274.17-275.2.

[311] *Vita Sancti Ephiphanii* 27 (PG 41:57-60). For more about Hierax, see ch.[7], section 7.3.

[312] Theodoret, *Haer*. 83:380.28-31: Τὸν δὲ διάβολον ποτὲ μὲν Ὕλην καλεῖ, ποτὲ δὲ τῆς Ὕλης ἄρχοντα. Τὸν δὲ γάμον τοῦ διαβόλου νομοθεσίαν φησί. Timothy the Presbyter, *Recept. Haer.* (PG 86^{A}: 20): καὶ τὸν γάμον, νομοθεσίαν τοῦ δαίμονος. Didymus, *De trinitate*.

[313] Macarius of Magnesia, *Apocriticus*, 3.26: Διὰ μὲν κοινωνίας ὁ κόσμος τὴν ἀρχὴν ἔσχε· διὰ δὲ τῆς ἐγκρατείας τὸ τέλος θέλει λαβεῖν. I shall return to Dositheus, who may not have been a Manichaean at all, and about whom there is substantial literature in ch.[6], section 6.3.1.

However, as Titus of Bostra notes, although the Manichaeans condemn marriage as illegal and lawless because of the fear that it will lead to procreation, sex with precaution was considered desirable. As Titus points out, with astonishment:

> [The Manichaeans] curse the begetting of children, while on the contrary, they desire sexual intercourse if it does not lead to procreation. This is so, because they consider as bondage/slavery procreation (which is legislated by God), instead of considering as slavery the sensual pleasure/delight (*ἡδονή*).[314]

In contrast, for the Church Fathers, legitimate sexual intercourse was only that which aims at giving birth to children. Thus, one can imagine that their corresponding instructions and advice were diametrically opposed. As Didymus the Blind argues in his discussion with the Manichaean, the relationship of a couple is not a sin if they come together (have intercourse) at the right time (*ἐν καλῷ καιρῷ*), namely during woman's fertile days, for procreation.[315] This view is apparently in contrast to the advice that the Manichaean Elect gave to their catechumens, such as to abstain from sex during the fertile days of a woman and other suggestions for methods of contraception.[316]

In addition, in case the above contraception was ineffective, as Titus claims, the Manichaeans urged their partners to dispose of their foetuses through abortions.

> But those who often enjoy pleasure necessarily hate the fruit that derives from it and order women to break up and to reject conceptions by magical practices and not to wait for childbirth (at proper time).[317]

It is for this reason, Titus comments, that Mani befriends the young people, because the license to sin is given to them.[318] A well known case of a person who was labelled as a Manichaean and was sentenced to death in 386 was Priscillian the bishop of Avila. Among the charges against him, it is said, was that a "young [woman] Procula had become pregnant by Priscillian and had disposed of the unwanted child by abortion".[319]

The above stance of Manichaeans toward marriage and procreation, described by Eastern Church Fathers, is confirmed by Augustine's critique.[320] As Augustine's criticism has a confessional character it gives more detailed and intimate information since he knew things from within, having himself been an auditor for nine years. Thus, Augustine blamed his former companions:

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[314] Titus of Bostra, *c. Manichaeos* 2.56.29-32: Τήν τε παιδογονίαν ὑβρίζοντες τὰς μίξεις αὐτοῖς ἄνευ γε ταύτης <βούλονται> συμβαίνειν, δοῦλοί γε ὄντες τῆς ἀναγκαίας διαδοχῆς πρὸς θεοῦ νενομοθετημένης, ἀλλ' οὐ τῆς ἡδονῆς.

[315] Didymus the Blind, *Comm. Eccl.* 274.17-275.2: τοῦτό ⳨ⲟ̣ⲧ̣ⲉ̣ καὶ π[ρὸς] τοὺς Μανιχαίους εἶπον < >, ὅτι· 'σκόπησον, οἷον μέγεθός ἐστιν τα[ύ]της τῆς σωφροσύνης· μὴ γὰρ κολάσει ὑποβάλλεται, ἐὰν συνέλθῃ τῇ γυναικὶ ἑαυτοῦ ἐν [κα]λῷ καιρῷ· μὴ γὰρ ψόγον αὐτῷ φέρει, μὴ γὰρ παρανομία αὐτῷ λογίζεται.

[316] Augustine, *Mor. Manich*. 18.65, (PL 32 :1178), cf. Lieu 1994, 294; Lieu 2010, 75. See also Chadwick 2001 170: "Hearers who cooked selected food for the Elect and were allowed sexual relations at safe periods of the monthly cycle. They were discouraged from having children since this incarcerated sparks of divine light in soggy matter".

[317] Titus of Bostra, *c. Manichaeos*, 2.56.48-52 (CCSG 82: 223): Οἱ δὲ τὴν ἡδονὴν πολλάκις καρπούμενοι τὸ ἀπ' αὐτῆς ἔργον ἀναγκαίως μισοῦσι, καὶ παρεγγυῶσι ταῖς παραγγελίαν ἐφαλλομέναις μαγγανείαις τὰς συλλήψεις ἐκλύειν τε καὶ ῥίπτειν καὶ τοὺς ἐν ὥρᾳ τόκους μὴ ἀναμένειν (*CCT* 273). Cf. Pedersen 2004, 32: "The Manichaeans encourage women to dispose of their foetuses, and they are enemies of nature and the Creator". Cf. Pedersen (2004, 171-77), for Titus' portrayal of Manichaeism as determinism and immorality.

[318] Titus of Bostra, *c. Manichaeos* 4.39-43. Pedersen 2004, 55: "he introduces coercion and banishes the hope of conversion, and that is why he becomes the friend of young people who want permission to sin".

[319] See Chadwick 1976, 37.

[320] Augustine, *Haer*. 46 (Cf. Gardner and Lieu 2004, 187-191); *Faust.* 30.6 (*NPNF*[1] 4: 566-67).

> For (you do not forbid) sexual intercourse; but, as has been said long before by the apostle, you really forbid marriage, which is the only honourable justification for such a deed (1 Tim 4:3) … Are you not the ones who are accustomed to advise us to observe as far as possible the period when a woman was fit for conception after the purification of her womb (menstruation), and at that time to refrain from sexual intercourse, lest the soul be entangled in the flesh?'[321]

> And, though you allow many of your followers to retain their connection with you in spite of their refusal, or their inability, to obey you, you cannot deny that you make the prohibition.[322] This proves that you approve of having a wife, not for the procreation of children, but for the gratification of passion.[323]

As I have argued above with regard to "the seal of the mouth", it is also in the case of "the seal of the breast" that Augustine's writings, unlike those of Eastern Church Fathers, make a clear distinction between the Elect and the auditors. The prohibition of marriage applied only to the Elect.[324] Auditors were allowed to marry, even though they, too, were encouraged to avert procreation.[325] However, for Augustine, "there is no marriage where action is taken to prevent motherhood".[326] As BeDuhn comments, in Augustine's "Catholic point of view, the Manichaean encouragement of birth control is incompatible with marriage in the true sense".[327] "This avoidance of childbearing led to Augustine's accusation that the Manichaeans had turned the bed-chamber into a brothel".[328]

Augustine also associates this problematic Manichaean stance toward marriage and reproduction with the dualistic background of the Manichaean doctrine. He further points out that the different treatment of auditors is a contradiction of the Manichaean doctrine for the sake of the Manichaean community and its missionary policies.

> They abstain from sexual intercourse, that he may not be bound more closely in the bondage of the flesh.

> The prohibition is part of your false doctrine, while the toleration is only for the interests of the society. […] You see, then, that there is a great difference between exhorting to virginity as the better of two good things, and forbidding to marry by denouncing the true purpose of marriage.[329]

Recapitulating, according to both Eastern Church Fathers and Augustine, the Manichaeans considered childbearing as a more serious sin than sexual intercourse. As one can easily realize, such attitudes and behaviours threatened the Church Fathers who feared the negative influence of the Manichaean advice to young couples. As Chadwick aptly comments, "the Manichees were known to hold that procreation should be avoided, and horrified orthodox

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[321] Augustine, *Mor. Manich*. 18.65 (Lieu 2010, 75).
[322] Augustine, *Faust.* 30.6 (*NPNF*[1] 4: 567).
[323] Augustine, *Mor. Manich*. 18.65 (*NPNF*[1] 4).
[324] As BeDuhn (2000b, 36) remarks: "Throughout his exposition, Augustine implicitly associates the seals exclusively with the Elect class. He clearly envisions a distinct set of values for Auditors, and does not indicate that they were organized according to a Three Seals scheme".
[325] Augustine, *Faust.* 6.3-5. Cf. Chadwick 1998, 582: "Hearers, who were allowed wives or concubines but were expected to avert procreation"; BeDuhn 2000b, 96. Augustine, *Mor. Manich*. 65 (BeDuhn 2000b, 36): "but do not prohibit marriage since your Auditors, who are in the second rank (*secundus gradus*) among you, are not forbidden to have wives".
[326] Augustine, *Mor. Manich*. 18.65 (BeDuhn 2000b, 284).
[327] BeDuhn 2000b, 36.
[328] Lieu 1994, 294. Augustine, *Faust.* 15.7, p. 480,6-8 (& Augustine, *Mor. Manich*. 18.65).
[329] Augustine, *Faust.* 6.3 & 30.6 (*NPNF*[1] 4:288 & 567).

catholics by openly advising married couples to confine sexual intercourse to the 'safe period' of the menstrual cycle. They were naturally accused of justifying abortion".[330]

For Church Fathers, the heretics of the later times, referred to in the pseudo-Pauline letter to Timothy (1Tim. 4.1-5), were unquestionably the Manichaeans. As Chrysostom stresses, apart from Paul's prophesy that they would abstain from food and marriage ('forbid marriage and demand abstinence from foods'), they will give, for all related issues, the most destructive advice.[331] Macarius of Magnesia, commenting on the Manichaean concepts of chastity, purity, and virginity, states that these would not benefit the world at all, because they are based on wrong grounds.[332]

Also, Alexander's critique on the Manichaean beliefs concerning sexual abstinence is harsh, caustic, and relentless:

> As for their abstaining from marriage and love-making for fear that, because of the continuing of the race, the divine power will dwell within matter for a longer time, I wonder how they are able to convince themselves. For if God's providence is not strong enough to separate the divine power from matter both by means of births and through those things which are always the same and in the same way, what, then, is Manichaeus' inventiveness able to contrive for his sake? For surely, he does not say that he really has come to assist God in this task with a giant's mettle in order to quicken and speed up the departure of the divine power from matter through the abolishing of births.[333]

Along the same lines is Titus' of Bostra criticism. The Manichaeans became lawmakers in the place of God. They want to determine nature's processes and to eliminate the perpetuity of the human race. Thus, they become enemies of nature, or rather of God, nature's creator.[334] The notion that the divine substance was entrapped into the flesh through the births and the subsequent practices (abstinence from lawful intercourse) were some of the things that converted Manichaeans had to abjure in a particular chapter of the abjuration formula.

> I therefore anathematize and condemn those who […] say that bodies are of the evil (principle) […] those who forbid marriage […] and withholding […] themselves from the lawful intercourse with woman […] that is [the one which] is clearly referring to the procreation of children

[330] Chadwick 1976, 37.

[331] John Chrysostom, *Hom. 1 Tim. (homiliae 1–18)*, 557.55-558.30: ἔσται καιρὸς ὅτε χαλεπώτερον αὐτοὶ οἱ τῆς πίστεως μετεσχηκότες τοῦτο ἐργάσονται, οὐ μέχρι βρωμάτων, ἀλλὰ καὶ μέχρι γάμων, καὶ πάντων τῶν τοιούτων τὴν ὀλέθριον συμβουλὴν εἰσάγοντες. Οὐ περὶ Ἰουδαίων λέγει ταῦτα· […] ἀλλὰ περὶ Μανιχαίων, καὶ τῶν ἀρχηγετῶν τούτων.

[332] Macarious of Magnesia, *Apocriticus* 3.52.27: καὶ οὐδὲν οὐδαμοῦ τὸ κοινὸν ὠφέλησαν, κἂν παρθενεύειν, κἂν τὴν ἄκραν σωφροσύνην ἐν βίῳ διδάσκωσι.

[333] Alexander of Lycopolis, *Tract. Man.* (van der Horst and Mansfeld, 94-95): Τὸ δὲ ἀπέχεσθαι γάμου καὶ ἀφροδισίων δεδιότας, μὴ κατὰ τὴν τοῦ γένους διαδοχὴν ἐπὶ πλέον ἐνοικήσῃ τῇ ὕλῃ ἡ δύναμις ἡ θεία, θαυμάζω πῶς καὶ αὐτοὶ ἑαυτοὺς ἀποδέχονται. εἰ γὰρ μὴ ἐξαρκεῖ ἡ τοῦ θεοῦ πρόνοια, ὥστε καὶ διὰ γενέσεων καὶ διὰ τῶν ἀεὶ <κατὰ τὰ αὐτὰ> καὶ ὡσαύτως ἐχόντων ἀποικονομήσασθαι τῆς ὕλης τὴν θείαν δύναμιν, τί ἡ τοῦ Μανιχαίου ἐπίνοια ὑπὲρ τούτου διαμηχανήσασθαι δύναται; οὐ γὰρ δήπου γιγαντείῳ λήματι ὡς ἀληθῶς φησιν τῷ θεῷ βοηθὸς πρὸς τοῦτο γεγονέναι, ἵνα τὰς γενέσεις ἀναιρῶν σύντομον ποιήσῃ τὴν τῆς θείας δυνάμεως ἀπὸ τῆς ὕλης ἀναχώρησιν.

[334] Titus of Bostra, *c. Manichaeos* 2.56.33-38 & 53-55: ἐχθροί γε τὰ πάντα τῆς ἀληθοῦς καὶ γνησίας ἀρετῆς καὶ τῆς εὐσεβείας ὄντες, ὥσπερ αἰτιώμενοι τὸ ἀείζωον τοῦ τῶν ἀνθρώπων γένους καὶ βουλόμενοι αὐτοῦ που στῆναι τὸν δρόμον τῆς φύσεως, νομοθετοῦντες τῷ θεῷ καὶ ἀγανακτοῦντες πρὸς τὴν ἀγαθότητα, δι' ἣν ἀνεξικάκως ἔχει πρὸς τὴν αὐτῶν βλασφημίαν. […] ἐχθροὶ τῆς φύσεως ἐγηγερμένοι, μᾶλλον δὲ τοῦ ταύτην δημιουργήσαντος, καὶ μανίαν κατὰ τοῦδε τοῦ παντὸς ἐκμαθόντες.

> (childbearing), which the Manichaeans detest, so as not to drag, as they say, souls down into the mire of human flesh.[335]

These Manichaean positions on marriage, celibacy, sexual behaviour and procreation were further associated (as is expected) with moral deviations, and fuelled accusations of 'crimes' against nature (e.g. anal intercourse, homosexuality). There is no doubt that the rumours about such behaviours were reinforced by the anthropological perspective that the Manichaeans held (as interpreted by anti-Manichaean authors), according to which evil is congenital in man's nature, acting independently (*in absentia*) of man's own volition and intension, hence free will was absent.

The correlation that the opponents of Manichaeans made between celibacy and 'orgies', is clearly illustrated in the *SC*. The converted Manichaean anathematized abnormal sexual behaviour and acts which his former comrades, men and women, 'were forced' in a way to commit among them, since they abstained from 'normal'/lawful intercourse.

> […] and because of this [withholding themselves from the lawful intercourse] "they commit shameless acts" (Rom 1:26-27) against nature with men and women even as do the women among them.[336]

5.3.4 The "Seal of the Hand" and its Implications in Everyday Social and Economic Life

The concept of the Living Self as the basis for the "seal of the hand"

The concept of the *Living Self* is also the theoretical basis of the third Manichaean seal, which is related to both religious and social behaviour: "the seal of the hand".

According to the *Kephalaia*, the "the seal of the hand" or alternatively "the rest of the hands" is "to take great care not to harm the light soul trapped everywhere in matter and especially vegetation (*the Cross of Light*), for instance by plucking fruit".[337] As al-Nadim records, quoting Mani, "He who would enter the cult", apart from refraining "from eating meats, drinking wine, as well as from marriage", has also "to avoid [causing] injury to water, fire, trees, and living things".[338]

According to Turbo's presentation of the Manichaean doctrines and precepts:

> They also say that if anyone walks on the ground he harms the ground, and if he moves his hand he harms the air, because air is the soul of men and animals, birds, fish and reptiles and everything there is in the world.[339]

The concept and the importance of the *Living Self* for the Manichaeans has been presented in detail in the section above that examined the implications of Manichaean fasting, the "seal of the mouth". Further, "the seal of the hand", with its prohibition against injuring the divine

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[335] *SC*, ch. 7 (Lieu 1994, 248-250 & Lieu 2010, 123-125): Ἀναθεματίζω οὖν καὶ καταθεματίζω τοὺς [...] τὰ σώματα λέγοντας εἶναι τοῦ πονηροῦ [...] καὶ γαμεῖν κωλύοντας [...] καὶ τῆς νενομισμένης πρὸς τὰς γυναῖκας συνουσίας ἀπεχομένους […] δηλαδή πρός παιδοποιΐαν, ἣν οἱ Μανιχαῖοι βδελύττονται, ἵνα μὴ ψυχάς, ὡς αὐτοί φασιν, εἰς τὸν βόρβορον τῶν ἀνθρωπίνων σαρκῶν κατάγωσι.

[336] *SC*, ch. 7 (Lieu 2010, 123-125): […] καὶ διὰ τοῦτο [τῆς νενομισμένης πρὸς τὰς γυναῖκας συνουσίας ἀπεχομένους] ἐν ἄρρεσι καὶ γυναιξὶ παρὰ φύσιν, ὥσπερ οὖν καὶ αἱ παρ' αὐτῶν γυναῖκες, "τὴν ἀσχημοσύνην κατεργαζόμενοι". See also Basil of Caesarea, *Asceticon* (PG 31:1256); Basil of Caesarea, *Quod deus non est auctor malorum* (PG 31:329-353): καὶ αἱ μὲν θήλειαι παρ' αὐτοῖς μετήλλαξαν τὴν φυσικὴν χρῆσιν εἰς τὴν παρὰ φύσιν, ἄῤῥενες δὲ ἐν ἄρσεσι τὴν ἀσχημοσύνην κατεργάζονται.

[337] *2Keph*. 80 (Gardner 1995, 201).

[338] Al-Nadim, *Fihrist* 9 (Dodge, 788). Lieu 2010, xviii-xix.

[339] *AA* 10.8 (Vermes, 55); Epiphanius *Pan*. 66.28.9 (Williams, 258).

substance in animals and plants, but also in the elements of nature (e.g. water, fire, air, earth), entailed implications in a number of daily activities in social and economic life.

Murderous professions

At the economic level, "the seal of the hand" affected many productive sectors. A series of occupations, mainly in the primary sector (e.g. reapers, farmers, growers, breeders), but even in processing (e.g. food preparation, cooks, bakers, carpenters) and in the construction sector were scorned and should be avoided by the catechumens, because they were considered of a criminal nature.

> Harvesters who gather the harvest are compared with the princes who originating from matter are in darkness, from when they chewed from the armour of the first man. For that reason it is necessary for them to be transformed into hay or beans or grain or corn or vegetables, so that they too are cut down and harvested. […] He who kills a chicken must also become a chicken himself, […] […] He who has built himself a house, will be scattered through all bodies.[340]

> And (I anathematize) those who […] think that those who pluck corn or barley or grass or vegetables are transformed into them, in order that they may suffer the same experiences, and that harvesters and bread-makers are accursed […].[341]

Alexander of Lycopolis criticizes the Manichaean elitist discrimination of professions which states that farmers, architects, builders, and other professionals are sentenced to be deprived of the good (*ἀγαθόν*). He compares it with the attitude of Jesus:

> 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 led them towards an understanding of God and helped them to achieve a desire for the good.[342]

As Augustine critically remarks, agriculture is a crime for the Manichaeans.

> They believe that […] souls pass into […] everything that is rooted […] For they are convinced that plants and trees possess sentient life and can feel pain when injured, and therefore that no one can pull or pluck them without torturing them. Therefore, they consider it wrong to clear a field even of thorns. Hence, […] they make agriculture, the mostly innocent of occupations, guilty of multiple murder.[343]

Indeed, as Augustine comments, they go as far as to say that "It is better for a man to be a usurer than a farmer… For, they say, the person who gives money on usury does not injure the Cross of Light", while, "the person who is a farmer very much harms the cross of light [...] Those parts, they say, of God which were captured in that battle, were mixed altogether with the world and are in the trees, plants, fruit trees and fruit. He who furrows the ground troubles

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[340] *AA* 10.2-5 (Vermes, 53-54); Epiphanius, *Pan*. 66.28.2-5/63-64 (Williams, 257): οἱ δὲ θερισταί, ὅσοι θερίζουσιν, ἐοίκασι τοῖς ἄρχουσι τοῖς ἀπ' ἀρχῆς οὖσιν εἰς τὸ σκότος, ὅτε ἔφαγον ἐκ τῆς τοῦ πρώτου ἀνθρώπου πανοπλίας. διὸ ἀνάγκη αὐτοὺς μεταγγισθῆναι εἰς χόρτον ἢ εἰς φασήλια ἢ εἰς κριθὴν ἢ εἰς στάχυν ἢ εἰς λάχανα, ἵνα <καὶ αὐτοὶ> θερισθῶσι καὶ κοπῶσι.[…] εἴ τις φονεύσει ὀρνίθιον, <καὶ αὐτὸς> ὀρνίθιον ἔσται· [...] εἰ δέ τις οἰκοδομεῖ ἑαυτῷ οἰκίαν, διασπαραχθήσεται εἰς τὰ ὅλα σώματα.

[341] *SC*, ch. 6 (Lieu 2010, 123): […] τοὺς τὸν σῖτον ἢ κριθὴν ἢ βοτάνας ἢ λάχανα τίλλοντας εἰς ἐκεῖνα μεταβάλλεσθαι οἰομένους, ἵνα τὰ ὅμοια πάθωσι, καὶ τοὺς θεριστὰς καὶ τοὺς ἀρτοποιοὺς καταρωμένους.

[342] Alexander of Lycopolis, *Tract. Man.* 16 (van der Horst and Mansfeld, 80): ὁ Ἰησοῦς καὶ ἵνα μὴ ἀπελαμένοι ὦσι τοῦ ἀγαθοῦ γεωργοί τε καὶ τέκτονες καὶ οἰκοδόμοι καὶ οἱ ἄλλοι ἀπὸ τῶν τεχνῶν, κοινὸν συνέδριον καθίσαι πάντων ὁμοῦ καὶ διὰ ἁπλῶν καὶ εὐκόλων διαλέξεων καὶ εἰς θεοῦ ἔννοιαν αὐτοὺς ἀπενηνοχέναι καὶ τοῦ καλοῦ εἰς ἐπιθυμίαν ἐλθεῖν ποιῆσαι.

[343] Augustine, *Haer.* 46.12 (Gardner and Lieu 2004, 189).

God's parts. He who plucks fruit from tree troubles God's parts".[344] On the contrary, for the Church Fathers it was usury that was a sin and not agriculture. Usurers were heavily criticized by many Christian authors.[345]

This discrimination and rejection of professions—especially of agriculture—is also evidenced by the Manichaean sources. An Iranian text, for example, records "regulations against engaging in agriculture",[346] and a Parthian text "reminds Auditors that they torture the living things".[347]

Dualism in the economy

Another implication of the "seal of the hand" was the division of society into workers and non-workers. As mentioned above, the Elect did not work; or rather, their work was the ritual meal and their prayers. Catechumens were those who offered the Elect all the necessities of life. The Church Fathers are very critical about the dualistic structure of the Manichaean communities; they considered that the dual structure mainly served the Elect who exploited the catechumens as means of their support.

Epiphanius, in his commentary, ridicules the shockingly 'scandalous' and parasitical behaviour of the Elect towards their catechumens.

> But their other complete absurdities, such as their so-called "elect." [...] For they are drones who sit around and "work not, but are busybodies" [...] The holy apostle [...] says, "If any does not work, neither let him eat!"[348]

Augustine, as a former auditor himself, states clearly several times in his work that the Elect did not work but were nourished by their auditors.

> The Elect themselves perform no labors in the field, pluck no fruit, pick not even a leaf, but expect all these things to be brought for their use by their Auditors.[349]
>
> You yourselves do not pluck fruits or pull up vegetables, yet command your Auditors to pick them and bring them to you.[350]

It is important to note at this point, that unlike the ancient Greco-Roman world, which devalued manual labour for its connections with slavery, for Church Fathers, the issue of labour was very important for both individuals and society. According to the *Constitutiones Asceticae* (ascribed to Basil of Caesarea), labour is a factor of joy, as well as important to the mental and psychological health of the individual. Further, (as the author argues developing a

[344] Augustine, *Commentary on Psalm* 140.12, cf. Gardner and Lieu 2004, 245: "Augustine on the Manichaean preference for money-lending over farming".

[345] See for example Gregory of Nyssa, *Contra usurario*s v.9 p.201, 203 & 206; Basil of Caesarea, *Homilia in divites*; Athanasius of Alexandria, *Syntagma ad monachos*; Theodoret of Cyrrhus, *Haer.* (PG 83:429). Cf. Brown 2012.

[346] BeDuhn 2000b, 44 (M801.475-532).

[347] BeDuhn 2000b, 107-08 (M580).

[348] Epiphanius, *Pan.* 66.53.1 (1Tim 1:7 & 2 Thes 3:11) (Williams, 277-78): 53. Τὰ δὲ ἄλλα χλεύης ἔμπλεα, ὡς οἱ ἐκλεκτοὶ αὐτῶν καλούμενοι. [...] ἐκεῖνοι γὰρ καθεζόμενοι κηφῆνες καὶ "μηδὲν ἐργαζόμενοι, ἀλλὰ περιεργαζόμενοι" καὶ μηδὲ γινώσκοντες * οἷς ἐπικηρυκεύεται ὁ ἅγιος ἀπόστολος, [λέγων] ὡς κατὰ προφητείαν γινώσκων ὅτι οὐκ ἐκ τῆς τοῦ θεοῦ διδασκαλίας ἐπιφοιτῶσιν, ἀλλὰ ἐκ τοῦ διαβόλου ἐμ<βε>βροντημένοι τινὲς ἀργοὶ καὶ αὐθάδεις κακῶν· φάσκει <γὰρ> λέγων «ὁ μὴ ἐργαζόμενος μηδὲ ἐσθιέτω», ἵνα παραχαράξῃ τὴν τῶν παρέργων τούτων ὑπόθεσιν. Williams 278, fn. 249: "Manichean sources indicate that the behavior of the elect sometimes gave scandal; Cf. *1Keph*. 88 219,1-221,17 ("Concerning the Catechumen who found fault with the Elect: why he is angry", Gardner 1995, 226).

[349] Augustine, *Haer*. 46.114ff, in BeDuhn 2000b, 47.

[350] Augustine, *Mor. Manich*. 57 in BeDuhn 2000b, 130.

theory of ethics in economic life) social prosperity and peace depend on the balanced distribution of labour among the members of society.[351]

Attitudes against labour that resembled those ascribed to the Manichaeans were adopted by various religious groups of the era (e.g. Messalians), and by some monks and hermits. The representatives, however, of the official Church, seemingly rejected such practices. In one of his letters, Cyril of Alexandria argues that the real motive of the wandering ascetics, who were not working and depended on alms-giving of other people, was their laziness:

> There are some other men going about, as they say, who pretend to devote all their time to prayer, without working at all, and have turned piety into a pretext for laziness and a means of gaining a living, holding on to views that are not right. […] The Church, therefore, does not accept those who act in this way [...]. If they still think that it is good not to work at all, in case everyone will imitate their behaviour, who will feed them? Some, then, use the idea that all time should be devoted to prayer and not even thinking about work as a cover for laziness and gluttony.[352]

In any case, catechumens had to nourish the Elect; thus, they necessarily had to work. By gardening or preparing food, they inevitably injured the divine substance within it. As a punishment, according to anti-Manichaean sources, they had to suffer what they had caused, that is to be reincarnated in what they had killed and to suffer the same fate.

> Just as I said to you a moment ago, if anyone has harvested, he will be mown down, likewise if anyone has put corn to the grindstone, he too will be put to the grindstone, or if anyone has scattered seed, he will be scattered, or if he has cooked bread he will be cooked.[353]

Thus, reincarnation (*μεταγγισμός*) was a punishment for those who did not observe "the rest of the hands", while the Elect, "for this [same] reason" were "not permitted" "to do any work".[354] However, the Elect managed to convince their auditors that they had a way to be forgiven for violating "the seal of the hands": to feed them (the Elect) generously. "For this reason if they have anything good to eat they offer it to those Elect".[355]

> Manichaeans instruct their catechumens to feed these people generously. They offer their Elect all the necessities of life, so that < whoever> gives sustenance to Elect souls may appear supposedly pious.[356]

For all these reasons, it is reasonable to guess that the Manichaean auditors preferred other professions than agriculture, such as trade, as is indicated in Epiphanius.[357] As Gardner and

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[351] Pseudo-Basil of Caesarea, *Asceticon* fus. 37: 39: 42; *Asceticon* brev.121: 143: 144-46.

[352] Cyril of Alexandria, *Ep*. 83 (*to Calosyrius*) 7, 603–607: Περιέρχονται δὲ καὶ ἕτεροί τινες, ὡς φασὶ, προσποιούμενοι μόνῃ σχολάζειν τῇ προσευχῇ, καὶ οὐδὲν ἐργαζόμενοι, καὶ ὄκνου πρόφασιν καὶ πορισμοῦ ποιοῦνται τὴν εὐσέβειαν, οὐκ ὀρθὰ φρονοῦντες. […] οὐκ ἀποδέχεται τοίνυν τοὺς τοῦτο δρῶντας ἡ Ἐκκλησία. […] εἰ δὲ νομίζουσιν εἶναι καλὸν, τὸ ἔργου μὴ ἅπτεσθαι, ὅταν πάντες τὰ αὐτῶν ζηλώσωσι, τίς ὁ τρέφων αὐτούς; ἀργίας τοίνυν καὶ γαστριμαργίας πρόφασιν ποιοῦνταί τινες, τὸ δεῖν οἴεσθαι μόνῃ σχολάζειν τῇ προσευχῇ, ἔργου δὲ ὅλως μὴ ἅπτεσθαι.

[353] *AA* 10.7 (Vermes, 54-55). Epiphanius, *Pan.* 66.28.8 (Williams, 258): ὡς γὰρ εἶπον ὑμῖν πρὸ ὀλίγου, εἴ τις θερίζει, θερισθήσεται, οὕτως ἐὰν εἰς μηχανὴν σῖτον βάλλῃ, βληθήσεται καὶ αὐτός, ἢ φυράσας φυραθήσεται ἢ ὀπτήσας ἄρτον ὀπτηθήσεται.

[354] *AA* 10.7 (Vermes, 55). Epiphanius, *Pan.* 66.28.8 (Williams, 258): καὶ διὰ τοῦτο ἀπείρηται αὐτοῖς ἔργον ποιῆσαι.

[355] Epiphanius, *Pan.* 66.28.6 (Williams, 257): καὶ διὰ τοῦτο εἴ τι κάλλιστον ἐν βρώμασι τοῖς ἐκλεκτοῖς προσφέρουσι.

[356] Epiphanius, *Pan.* 66.53.4 (Williams, 278): παρακελεύονται οὖν τοῖς αὐτῶν κατηχουμένοις τρέφειν αὐτοὺς δαψιλῶς. οἱ δὲ πᾶν ὁτιοῦν ἀναγκαῖον προσφέρουσι τοῖς ἐκλεκτοῖς ἑαυτῶν, ἵνα δῆθεν εὐσεβὴς ὀφθείη <ὁ> τρέφων τὰς ψυχὰς τὰς ἐκλελεγμένας.

[357] Epiphanius, *Pan.* 66.1.8-12.

Lieu comment, "It is perhaps no accident that the Manichaean community in fourth-century Kellis, the only such group from the Roman Empire that we can study in their full socio-economic context, appears to have centred on families of traders".[358]

That the auditors daily supported the Elect with foods is also confirmed by the Manichaean sources. The work of the Elect was to maintain their purity, in order that the ritual meal and their prayers be effective. Terms such as, 'good works', 'apostolate', 'soldiery', 'ministry', 'career', that characterise the work of the Elect and the Elect himself as 'soldiers', 'collaborators in business', 'participants in the 'toil' of this mission', are revealing of the importance that their 'work' (or profession) had in the Manichaean community.[359] On the other hand, one of the first works of the 'catechumenate', according to the commandments of the teacher (Mani), was almsgiving to the righteousness (Elect).[360]

"The seal of the hands" for the Elect was established by Mani himself. As is recorded in the *CMC*, when Mani was young and still in the community of the Baptists in Mesopotamia, he took into consideration the warnings that plants and water gave him, and himself first practiced the *anapausis* (rest) of the hands.

> Rest, one of the leaders of their Law spoke to me, having observed did not take vegetables from the garden [...] He said to me: "Why did you not take vegetables from the garden [...] After that Baptist had spoken to [me] [...] [it] wasted away, [wailing] like human beings, and, as it were, like children. Alas! Alas! The blood was streaming down from the place cut by the pruning hook which he held in his hands. And they were crying out in a human voice on account of their blows. [...] [from] the waters [a face] of a man appeared to me, showing with his hand the Rest, so that I might not sin and bring trouble to him.[361]

Thus, Mani "provides a prototype of the perfect Manichaean, exemplifying in his life the correct behaviour, and explaining through his spiritual experiences the rationale for that behavior".[362]

In addition, in the same text (*CMC*), the dual socio-economic structure of the Manichaean community is justified on Biblical grounds. Firstly, Mani in order to support his view that the Elect should not work, uses the example of the students of Jesus.

> Consider, moreover, how even the disciples of the Savior ate bread from women and idolaters and did not separate bread from bread, nor vegetable from vegetable; nor did they eat, while laboring in the toil and tilling of the land, as you do today. Likewise, when the Savior sent his

[358] Gardner and Lieu 2004, 22. More about commercial activities of Kellites (textile trade and trade of agricultural goods) see Brand 2019 (90, 131, 134, 143-44, 153, 211 and 244-45). As Brand (2019, 90) states, "textile trade belonged to the professional and domestic world of Kellites". Manichaeans from Kellis "traveled into the Nile valley to conduct trade and sell agricultural goods from the oasis" (Brand 2019, 211). Cf. Ruffini 2016, 334-347.

[359] Tebessa codex, in Gardner and Lieu 2004, 270-271.

[360] *1Keph*. 80 (Gardner 1995, 202).

[361] *CMC* 9.2-10.17 & 12.1-6 (Cameron and Dewey, 12-15): ἔλεγεν πρὸς ἐμὲ εἷς [τῶ]ν ἀρχηγῶν τοῦ νόμου αὐτῶν θεωρήσας με λάχανα ἀπὸ τοῦ κήπου μὴ λαμβάνοντα, ἀλλ' ἀπαιτοῦντα αὐτοὺς ἐν λόγωι εὐσεβείας· ἔλεγέν μοι· "σὺ τίνος χάριν οὐκ ἔλαβες λάχανα ἀπὸ τοῦ κήπου, ἀλλ' ἐν μέρει εὐσεβείας αἰτεῖς παρ' ἐμοῦ;" καὶ μετὰ τὸ εἰπεῖν δὲ ἐκ[εῖ-]νον τὸν βαπ[τιστὴν] πρὸς [ἐμὲ ...]. δὲ .[... κ]αὶ ἐτάκ[η ὀλοφυρό-]μενον παραπλη[ίως ἀν-]θρωπείοις προσώ[ποις] καὶ ὡσεὶ παιδίοις. οὐαὶ ο[ὐ-]αὶ δὲ τὸ αἷμα κατεκέχυτο τοῦ τόπου τοῦ κοπέντος διὰ τῆς δρεπάνης ἧς μετὰ χεῖρας εἶχεν. ἔκραζον δὲ καὶ ἀνθρωπείαι φωνῆ διὰ τὰς πλήξεις αὐτῶν. ὁ δὲ βαπτιστὴς πάνυ ἐκινήθη ἐφ' οἷς ἐθεώρησεν καὶ ἐλθὼν [π]ρ[ό]σθεν μου προσέπε[σεν. ὀπ]ηνίκα τοίνυν [..... ..... .] ἐμέ τις | [..... ....]ου | [...] [... ἐκ τῆς πηγῆς] τῶν ὑδάτων εἶδ[ος] ἀν(θρώπ)ου ὤφθη μοι ὑ[ποδει-] κνύον διὰ τῆς χειρ[ὸς] τὴν ἀνάπαυσιν ὡς ἂν μὴ ἁμάρτω καὶ πόνον ἐπάγω εἰς αὐτόν.

[362] BeDuhn 2000b, 78.

> disciples out to preach in [each] place, [neither] mill nor [oven] did [they] carry [with] them, but [made haste], taking one [garment] from [...].[363]

Further, he displays and promotes the model of Martha and Maria from Luke (10:38–42). This became one of the favourite passages of the Manichaeans, an exemplar in order to justify the distinction between the two classes.[364]

> Likewise, he also reclined to eat in the house of Martha and Mary on the occasion when Martha said to him: "[Lord], do you not care (enough) for [me] so as to tell my [sister to] help [me]?", the Savior said [to] her: "Mary has chosen the [good] portion and it will not be taken away from her. [365]

Based on the same Biblical grounds, much later (fourth-fifth cent.), a Manichaean Elect in the Western part of the Roman Empire, elaborated and justified this position in his *Apologia for the Distinction between Elect and hearer*. According to him, "The rich, who […] are themselves known as disciples of the second order" [have] to be "friends with the Elect, who are without these resources" and "are transitory visitors and strangers in the world". The text emphasizes the mutually supportive relationship of the two classes. As it explains, in order for the difference in nature of the two classes to be understood, one has to see "the example of the two sisters", Martha and Maria, "of whom one had chosen the most excellent lot, that is the higher rank of the Elect; whereas the other [...] carried out the housekeeping and domestic duty". The Elect are "poor in resources, and few in number, they walk by the narrow way". "Those possessing wealth are called hearers, or rather, as we have said, catechumens, who, since they have made their fortunes in this world, and are still below that rank of the perfect, because they possess wealth, are referred to by the term 'mammon' in the Gospel." […] However, the catechumens who had difficulty in achieving the level of Election [how?] stayed in their homes; but they helped the Elect and, receiving them under their roofs and into their own homes, they provided them with the necessities of life".[366]

Apparently, the paradigm of Martha and Maria must have been used often for the defence of the dual structure of the community. In addition, the author of the *Apologia* answers Epiphanius' charge that Paul's saying "If any one will not work, let him not eat" (2Thess 3:10)[367] targeted the Elect Manichaeans, clarifying and giving reassurances that the above passage does not apply to the Elect: "However, I affirm that that [Apostle's saying] does not so much concern the order of these perfect ones".[368]

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[363] *CMC* 93.3-21 (Cameron and Dewey, 74-75): σκοπεῖτε τοίνυν ὡς καὶ οἱ μαθηταὶ τοῦ σ(ωτῆ)ρ(ο)ς [...] οὐδὲ ἐν τῇ ἐργασίαι καὶ γεωργίαι τῆς γῆς ἐργαζόμεν[οι] ἤσθιον ὃν τρόπον τήμερον διαπράττεσθ[ε]. ὁμοίως δὲ ὁπηνίκα ἀ[πέ-]στειλεν αὐτοῦ τοὺ[ς μα-]θητὰς ὁ σω(τὴ)ρ καθ' ἕκ[αστον] τόπον κηρύξαι, [οὔτε] μύλον οὔτε κλί[βανον] συνεπεφέρογ[το με-] τ' αὐτῶν, ᾰ[λ]λ' [..... .] γον τοπ.. [..... ....] μιαν ἐκ το [..... ....] λαμβαν [....].

[364] Appart from *CMC* and Tebessa codex (cited above) the model of the two biblical sisters Martha and Mary is known from the Manichaean Psalms (*2PsB* 192.21–24), whereby Mary behaves as a man, cf. Coyle 2009c, 176: "she hunts, she casts the net, and later, like her Gnostic counterpart, she becomes talkative" whereas "Martha, on the other hand, is a servant (though a joyful one)".

[365] *CMC* 92.14-93.2 (Cameron and Dewey, 74-75): ὁμοίως δὲ καὶ [ἐ]ν τῇ οἰκίαι Μάρθας καὶ [Μα]ρίας ἐκλήθη. ὁπηνί[κα] ἑἶπεν αὐτῶι ἡ Μάρ[θα· 'κ(ύρι)ε, οὐ μέλει σοι περὶ [ἐμο]ῦ ἵνα εἴπῃς τῇ ἀ[δελφ]ῇ μου ἀντιλαβέ[σθαι μο]υ;' ὁ σω(τὴ)ρ ἔφη [πρὸς αὐτ]ήν· 'Μαρία τὴν [ἀγαθὴν με]ρίδα ἐπελέξατο καὶ οὐκ ἀφαιρεθήσεται ἀπ' αὐτῆς.

[366] Tebessa codex (*An apologia for the distinction between elect and hearer*) in Gardner and Lieu 2004, 268-272. According to the text apart from the Elect, "there are two other groups, namely the catechumens and the gentiles" (Gardner and Lieu 2004, 268). Cf. Lieu 2010, xxiii.

[367] Epiphanius, *Pan.* 66.53.

[368] Tebessa codex, *An apologia for the distinction between elect and hearer* Col. 21 (vi.1) in Gardner and Lieu 2004, 269-70.

Numerous Manichaean texts scattered across a wide temporal and spatial range attest to the fundamental division of the Manichaean community into Elect and catechumens, and that the latter supported the former. In ancient Kellis many letters were found confirming that the subsistence of the Elect depended on the alms of the catechumens.[369]

However, another aspect of the dualistic character of the socio-economic structure of the Manichaean community is also illustrated by the Manichaean sources: that of the model of barter economy. The catechumen nourishes the Elect with food, while "The Elect nourishes the Auditor through his wise knowledge".[370] As was established by Mani, "the second righteousness that [the Elect] should do is this":

> He can add to it [...] wisdom and faith so that / [...] from his wisdom he can give wisdom, to every person who will he/ar it from him. And also from his faith he can give faith, [to th]ese who belong to the faith. From hi[s grace] he can give freely / of love, shower it upon them, that he might join them to him. / For, when that one acquires a great riches [...] / in righteousness. By this second godliness / he may cause others to be sent, resembling him in [righteous]ness.[371]

The juxtaposition now is between those that preach and those that hear.[372] According to the Manichaean sources, both classes are necessary: "And who[ever] comes […] no one is rejected […] either in Auditorship [….] (or) in Righteousness […] according to their order, zeal, and power".[373] "Each degree (*bathmos*) within the Manichaean community has a task 'in the yoke of Jesus'".[374] BeDuhn emphasizes repeatedly the importance that both classes had for the existence of the Manichaean community and Church.

> This study has shown the essential role played by the Auditors in the community, such that there was no "rest" for the Elect in the world without them, there was no metabolic salvation without their alms-service, there was no possibility of the Elect lifestyle without their support.[375]

However, it seems that such an argumentation regarding the role of the catechumens could not convince the opponents of the Manichaeans who still regarded the relationship of the two classes as exploitation. Thus, East-Roman anti-Manichaean sources, unlike their silence for the Manichaean idea that the stomachs of the Elect function like altars, are quite vocal in their criticism and ridicule of the Manichaean attitude that catechumens had to nourish the Elect.

> The Elect do not cut the cluster themselves but they eat the cluster, which shows them up as out-and-out drunkards rather than persons with a grasp of the truth. For which is the worse? The harvester cut the cluster once, but the eater tormented and cut it many times over, with his teeth and by the crushing of each seed, and there can be no comparison between the one who cut it once and the one who chewed and crushed it. < But they do this* > only to give the appearance of < abstaining from God's creatures* >, < while proving by their* > phony behavior how much evidence of the truth Mani has.[376]

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[369] For instance, see the letter 'An elect writes to ask for alms', *P.Kell*. v Copt. 31, in Gardner and Lieu 2004, 277-78 (no 96).

[370] Turkic source R.i.2-8, 27-29/T II D 171, in BeDuhn 2000b, 113.

[371] *1Keph*. 80, 192.3-193.22 (Gardner 1995, 201).

[372] *2PsB* 241,47.13-14.

[373] Sogdian parable-book (fragment M7420), in BeDuhn 2000b, 29.

[374] BeDuhn 2000b, 27.

[375] BeDuhn 2000b, 211.

[376] Epiphanius, *Pan.* 66.53.7-9 (Williams 278): [...] αὐτοὶ δὲ οὐ τέμνουσι τὸν βότρυν, ἀλλὰ ἐσθίουσι τὸν βότρυν, ἵνα ἐλεγχθῶσι παντάπασι μέθην μᾶλλον ἔχοντες ἥπερ ἀληθείας κατάληψιν. ποῖον γάρ ἐστι τὸ δεινότερον; ὁ μὲν γὰρ τρυγῶν ἅπαξ ἔτεμε τὸν βότρυν, ὁ δὲ ἐσθίων διὰ τῶν μασητήρων καὶ διὰ τοῦ καταδαμάζειν ἕκαστον κόκκον μᾶλλον πολυπλασίως ἐβασάνισε καὶ ἔτεμε, καὶ οὐχ ὅμοιος οὐκέτι ἔσται τῷ τέμνοντι ἅπαξ ὁ μασησάμενος καὶ καταδαπανήσας. ἀλλ' ἵνα μόνον δόξωσι * δοξοποιεῖν ὅσον τῆς ἀληθείας ἔχει τεκμήριον.

Texts such as the *Apologia* (Tebessa Codex) reflect the need of the Manichaeans who lived in Roman territory to defend themselves against the above charges and ridicule. Additionally, it reveals that the topic of labour was highly disputed, and the criticism of opponents was effective.

5.4 Conclusions

As one may observe, the main target of anti-Manichaean critique concerns the Manichaean ascesis. References to rituals, apart from sun worship during the daily prayers of the catechumens, are really very scant. In specific, information concerning the ritual meal itself is non-existent.[377] The occasional charges for occultism (mainly the consumption of human semen and menstrual blood) and for crimes against nature are likely an arbitrary induction, made by the opponents of Manichaeans, since this was a standard accusation that rival religious groups of the era made against each other. Thus, it could be argued, that the critique mainly focuses on the so-called three seals; namely, "the seal of the mouth" (fasting), "the seal of the breast" (avoidance of marriage and procreation), and "the seal of the hands" (not to injure the living soul trapped in the material world).

The implications of the seals of the mouth and breast concern the sphere of religious and social life respectively. The seal of the hands has both religious and social implications. On the religious level, it is related with the Manichaean holy meal. One pole of criticism is the ritualization of the feeding of the Elect by the catechumens. In the context of the sacred meal of the community, the catechumens were obliged to feed the Elect on a daily basis. The other pole of criticism (interrelated with the former) is the division of the Manichaean church into two separate categories, or classes of believers (Elect and catechumens). Further, the critique targets the hypocrisy of the Elect who encouraged the above practice (alms-giving) by cultivating soteriological expectations to the catechumens.

On the social level, anti-Manichaean criticism is related with the economic life of the Manichaean community. It attacks the social elitism which discriminates members of the Manichaean community, dividing them into workers and non-workers, the contempt that the Manichaean Elect had for labour, and the repudiation of a number of professions. What is emphasized on both levels (religious and social) is the relationship of exploitation of the catechumens by the Elect.

What East-Roman anti-Manichaean sources do not criticize at all, whereas Augustine criticizes it thoroughly and ridicules it, is the objective, the very purpose of the sacred meal. This was based on the Manichaean belief that the Elect by eating the food offered by the catechumens during the holy meal liberated the divine substance entrapped within it, 'breathing out angels' and 'bits of God'.[378] Their silence implies that they were not aware of it.

Generally, in the corpus of Greek anti-Manichaica, the distinction between Elect and catechumens is rare. Sources describing the Manichaean religious and social attitudes and behaviour do not differentiate between the two classes. Charges, accusations, and criticisms are addressed to Manichaeans in general. Specifically, sources do not clarify whether everyday fasting, fasting from meat and wine, abstinence from marriage and procreation, and praying

[377] The rare testimonies about the sacred Manichaean meal indicate a small number of participants and possible secrecy of the ritual. On the contrary, the numerous references to the worship of the sun indicate a wider circle of participants.

[378] Augustine, *Conf.* x (18).

to the sun was an obligation of the Elect or/and of the catechumens. An explanation for this is that either they were not well informed, or more likely that in the framework of their polemics, their rhetoric equated the two classes. They generalized by attributing to all Manichaeans behaviours that applied only to the Elect.

The distinction of the two classes is clear only in the case of alms-giving by the catechumens to the Elect; yet this is not always the case. In some cases (e.g. in Cyril and Theodoret) it seems that the distinction is made rather between Manichaeans and non-Manichaeans, than between the Elect and hearers. Indeed, some texts give the impression that only the Elect were considered as Manichaeans, whereas catechumens were not considered as 'totally' Manichaeans. The charges concern mainly the Elect's attitudes and rules, while Church Fathers sometimes seem to defend the Manichaean catechumens, describing them as those 'simple persons' who bring Manichaeans their food. Characteristic is the example of Cyril of Jerusalem, who admonishes his (Christian) catechumens "Let no one bring offerings to the soul-destroying Manichaeans".[379] It could be argued that, in the above case, Cyril was addressing former Manichaean hearers among his catechumens, preventing them from offering alms service to the Manichaean Elect, as they used to do. If this was the case, it seems as if Manichaean catechumens could have been Christian and Manichaean catechumens simultaneously. Indeed, as BeDuhn comments, "it is possible [...] that some Auditors also participated in the rites of other religions. In practice, the boundaries of the Auditor class probably varied considerably in exclusivity of commitment from one region to the next".[380] In this context, it is likely that Christian authors, in their proselytizing policy, tried to appeal to Manichaean catechumens and take them over to their side, identifying the Manichaeans only with the Elect. In favour of the mobility hypothesis is the fact that, in the case of the Manichaean catechumens, there was not any prospect for them to be initiated into the class of the Elect. Catechumenate in the case of Manichaeism was not, necessarily, a transitional stage (at least during this life) as was the case of Christian catechumens who entered the class of believers after being baptized.

This obscurity in the boundaries of the class of catechumens was further intensified in the Roman East by the interconnection of Manichaeism with other extreme ascetic movements, which adopted common practices in the field of ascesis and had corresponding behavioural and social models. The latter issue is one of the key questions that will be examined in the next chapter.

[379] Cyril, *Catech*. 6.31.4-5: Μηδεὶς προσφερέσθω τοῖς ψυχοφθόροις Μανιχαίοις.

[380] BeDuhn 2000b, 162. On the question of the status of the Manichaean catechumens, i.e. whether they were considered (by both insiders and outsiders) as members of the Manichaean community and Church, see BeDuhn 2000b, 211 ff., 29 ff. Puech 1979, 260-63.