

the Phoenician, the Greek, the Roman, ours, the Cyrillic, the Arabic, the Hebrew, the Pahlavi, the Tibetan and the various South Asian (Indian) alphabets. This is due to the fact that an alphabet does not live through its written form, but through its oral memorisation in a school context. It is thus that the abjadiya remained (largely) unchanged when it moved from Semitic to totally different languages and cultures.

But the abjadiya is *not* the only form of the alphabet! From the very beginning, there *was* another letter order, which we call “halhamiya” (Maraqten, p. 418), beginning with the letters h-l-h-m (the first h is a normal h, the second h is the h in “Muhammad”). This is the South Arabian alphabet (and consequently of Ge’ez and modern Ethiopian). It is very important to note that two other (unrelated) halhamiya alphabets were found in excavations in Palestine and in Ugarit; they are dated to the 14th and/or 13th c. BC.

The key for understanding the invention of the alphabet in its two letter orders lies in the following: while there are *two* letter orders in all the world’s alphabets, the *forms* of the letters in both the abjadiya and the halhamiya are *identical*. This means that the genius of the Semitic alphabet, its acrophonic value (a from alpu, ox; b from bet, house, etc.) was discovered only once. Because of the above observation that a letter order does not change when an alphabet moves into another language, none of the two letter orders can have branched off from the other. It must therefore have been *two* persons, two schoolmasters, who invented the letters in a joint effort, but parted ways when they arranged them in a particular order which from that moment onwards perpetuated themselves in the world’s two alphabetic orders. The pioneering – others called it “brilliant” – discovery of these connections is due to the Russian scholar, Lundin/Loundine (his latest article was in *Mare Erythraeum* I, 1997, pp. 9–18). The origin of the South Arabian alphabet can thus be firmly assigned to somewhere in Greater Syria, possibly around the year 1500 BC.

The South Arabian alphabet presents another important characteristic: with its 29 letters, it is the only Semitic alphabet that has retained the signs for all 29 proto-Semitic phonemes (Ugaritic has 27 letters, Phoenician and Hebrew 22). This supports a rather early dating for the South Arabian alphabet, and for its (not documented) abjadiya counterpart. The invention would have occurred in an environment (somewhere in Greater Syria) where (proto-) Aramaeans and proto-Sabaeans were still somehow united or in close contact: The verbal stem system, the most important morphological marker in Semitic languages, is the same in Aramaic and Sabaic, and distinguishes them from all other Semitic languages. Old Aramaic also had the full inventory of the 29 proto-Semitic phonemes (but not yet an alphabet), see Kottsieper and Stein, in ‘Sabaic and Aramaic – a common origin’ in *Supplement to the Proceedings of the Seminar for Arabian Studies* 44 (2014), pp. 81–88. <daum.werner@gmx.de>

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THE MANICHAEAN CHURCH. AN ESSAY MAINLY BASED ON THE TEXTS FROM CENTRAL ASIA, By C. LEURINI. (Serie Orientale Roma. n.s. 1). pp. vi, 428. Rome, Scienze e Lettere, 2013.
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With this impressive book, Claudia Leurini has presented the first monograph on the Manichaean church. It contains an introduction, chapters on the bipolar structure of the church, the relations between the church and the Manichaean cosmogony, the hierarchy, the status of women in the

church, and on peculiarities of the Central Asian Manichaean church, a bibliography, and indices verborum, nominum (of modern authors), and locorum. The book is the outcome of the author's work on the Middle Iranian Manichaean texts from Turfan during a fellowship at the University of Bologna. Due to the suspension of the activities of the editor of *Serie Orientale Roma*, this book mainly shows the state of research of 2009.

In the introduction the author defines “new perspectives of analysis and comparison with cultural, social and religious features belonging to societies Mani and his followers had come in touch with” as the aim of her book (p. 1). In the second chapter Leurini draws an analogy between the territorial organisation of the church (twelve provinces under authority of twelve teachers, fourfold structure in relation to the points of the compass), and that of Sasanian Iran (pp. 21f.). She explains the self-designation of the “Church of the East” (MP. *dēn ī xwarāsān*) as the outgrowing of the territorial unit of the Eastern Manichaean province (MP. *xwarāsān pāygōs*) after the declaration of independence from the central power in Babylon (pp. 37–40). Furthermore, Leurini discusses terms designating the Elect (MP. *wizīdag*, Parth. *wižīdag*; MP. *dēndār*, Sogd. *δynd’r*, MP. *dēnawar*, Parth. *dēnābar*, Sogd. *δynβr*; MP. *dēnāwar*, Sogd. *δyn’βr*; MP./Parth. *ardāw*; Sogd. *rx’nt*) and Hearers (MP. *niyōšāg*, Parth. *niyōšāg*, Sogd. *nywš’k*; MP./Parth. *hurūwān*) respectively, the religious conceptions related to them and the function of both groups within the church. Further designations could be added, such as MP./Parth. *zādag*, *frazend*, Sogd. *z’tyy*, *z’t’k* “child” for the Hearers and MP./Parth. *brād*, Sogd. *βr’t* “brother” for the Elect. For *ardāw* the author refers to the Zoroastrian eschatological concept of Phl. *ahlaw*, Av. *ašauuan* OP. *artāvan* (pp. 50–53).¹ Leurini maintains that the knowledge of Mani's canonical writings was restricted to the Elect (pp. 74–85) and attributes the canonical books to the ranks of the hierarchy. But the extant lists of Mani's books do not establish such a link since the terms quoted (pp. 71, 74f.) do not refer to specific books but designate his teachings as a whole.² Furthermore, Hearers acted as donors or copyists of books and are depicted with books in miniatures. The Coptic Manichaica have also been ascribed to the library of a layperson.

In the third chapter Leurini argues in favour of a cosmological symbolism of the Manichaean church due to the central importance of the cosmos for the redemption of Light. She gives an analysis of Manichaean depictions of the Light Paradise and the firmaments and sets up a connection between the twelve dominions or kingdoms, twelve gods of the pantheon and twelve virtues. Consequently, she infers from that the existence of twelve firmaments: the ten firmaments of the Manichaean cosmogony plus the realm of Light of god Zurwān plus the realm of the Light Nous, i.e. the church (pp. 106–110). On the basis of complex calculations of astronomical units in Manichaean texts and on various possible models (Biblical, Babylonian, Zoroastrian, Brahmanic, Buddhist, Jain), Leurini links these units with the conception of the “Platonic Year” or “World Year”, i.e. the axial precession of equinoxes (p. 133). Accordingly, she associates the figures of the church hierarchy with this system (p. 141). But the author's assumptions are not fully convincing. Some arguments remain hypothetical and speculative since they cannot be verified by textual evidence. The question remains whether this speculation on astronomical figures goes back to Mani himself or is a later development.

In the fourth chapter Leurini analyses terms designating the ranks of the Elect (MP. *hammōzāg* “teacher”; *ispasag* “bishop”; *mahistag* “elder”, *mānsārār*, Parth. *mānsarḏār* “head of the house, presbyter”) and puts them in a broader socio-historical context. She emphasises the use of titles and epithets from the royal sphere and draws parallels with those of the highest god in the Avesta and the Old Persian

¹For *ahlaw* as loan word cf. W. Sundermann, *Die Rede der Lebendigen Seele. Ein manichäischer Hymnenzyklus in mittelpersischer und soghdischer Sprache* (Turnhout, 2012) (Berliner Turfantexte XXX), pp. 122f.

²Cf. I. Colditz, “The Abstract of a Religion Or: What is Manichaeism?” In: R. G. Richter, Ch. Horton, K. Ohlhafer (eds.), *Mani in Dublin: Selected Papers from the Seventh International Conference of the International Association of Manichaean Studies in the Chester Beatty Library, Dublin, 8–12 September 2009*, Leiden 2015 (Nag Hammadi and Manichaean Studies 88), pp. 47–70.

inscriptions, of the Sasanian king, the Manichean pantheon and Mani. Not all text passages quoted by the author can be clearly assigned to the church leader. She explains *hammōzāg* as “he who together releases, the co-releaser” and links it with the function of the teachers in the redemption of Light (pp. 188f.).³ In following H. H. Schaefer, she sees *ispasag* as continuing Olran. **spasaka*- “scout, observer, supervisor”, and compares it with the office of the “Eye of the King” under the Achaemenids, since the bishops were “in charge of watching over the Manichean communities” (p. 212). In *mahistag* and the like Leurini sees an equivalent to the social institution of Phl. *kadag-xwadāy* “head of the house” with a broad variety of meanings (pp. 217–219). She also assumes a connection with the office of the “treasurer”, since the presbyters were the “guardian of the treasure corresponding to the mysteries of religion” (pp. 219f.). Overall, the author maintains that Mani built his church to a great extent according to the model of the Sasanian (and Arsacide) social system. But in contrast, S. F. Jones has clearly pointed to the model presented in the *Book of Elchasai*.⁴

The fifth chapter examines designations of women in the Manichean community (MP. *xwār*, Parth. *wxār* “sister”; MP. *wizīdagčān* “Electa”; *niyōšāgčān*, Parth. *niyōšāgčān*, Sogd. *nywš’k’nc* “female Hearer”, *nywš’qpt’nc* “chief of the community of women-hearer”; MP. *duxš* “virginal; maiden”; *wisduxt* “princess”; Sogd. *δyn’βr’nc* “Electa”). Leurini points to parallels between the Zoroastrian marriage law and the virgin Electae as the brides of the Light-Nous (pp. 225f., 230–239). But in Zoroastrian marriage virginity did not play a prominent role since women could get married with several men consecutively. The author explains the type of the virgin bride by the hierogamy or “Sacred Marriage” of the priestess with the God in Mesopotamia, later also continued in the cult of Anāhitā, and denies a Christian model for the Electae (pp. 239–252). Nevertheless, the rule of celibacy for male and female clerics can be derived from the Manichean myth and may have been inspired by Christian narratives like that of Thecla recorded also in Manichean literature. Buddhist or Jain nunneries could have been further models.

In the last chapter Leurini investigates designations of ranks in the Central Asiatic Manichean church. The term “head of the Hearers” (MP. *niyōšāgbad*, Parth. *niyōšāgbad*, Sogd. *nywš’qpt’nc*) reflects the appreciation of laypersons, among them members of the Uyghur royal family and the nobility. For Sogd. **xwšt’nc* as female form of Sogd. *xwšty* “presbyter; master, teacher” and loan word in OTu., the author assumes a borrowing from the title of the abbess customary in the Christian Nestorian community and refers to a possible Elamite forerunner of this rank (p. 264f.). Furthermore, Leurini discusses the etymology of the term *f’mšy /famsi/* “head of the church(?)” (pp. 268f.) and examines the function of Manichean monasteries and the persons related to it (OTu. *xroxwan* “preacher, teacher(?)”; Chin. *ehuanjian saibosai* 遏憺健塞波塞 “soul-working deacon, servant of the alms” < Parth. **arwānagān ispasag*; MP. *hašāgerd*, Parth. *abjīrwānag* “pupil”; Sogd./OTu. *zm’š’yktw’γw’rx’ny/’γwrx’ny zm’štyk* “novice(?)”; various kinds of servants). With reference to the description of the economic activities of the monastery in the OTu. *Klostererlaß* she draws parallels to the institution of the alms-giving or “soul-work” (*ruwānagān*) of the Hearers on the one side and the Zoroastrian fire temple and the “foundation for the soul” (*ruwān rāy, pad ruwān*) on the other. Leurini also points to the economy of temples in ancient Mesopotamia. But Manichean alms-giving served the redemption of Light during the sacred meal. The Zoroastrian *pad-ruwān*-foundation however was a legal institution, for which the profit of a certain amount of money was used to perform rituals for the sake of the soul of the donor and his relatives. It is also still uncertain whether the Manichean monasteries developed into economic

³ Leurini takes it as a neologism, but cf. Parth. *ammōzāg* and the very similar Phl. *hammōzgar* “teacher”.

⁴ Cf. S. F. Jones, “The Book of Elchasai in its Relevance for Manichean Institutions with a supplement: The Book of Elchasai Reconstructed and translated.” *ARAM* 16 (2004), pp. 176–215.

entities only in Central Asia.⁵ Leurini concludes that Mani “took the Zoroastrian pious foundation as a model and on it he structured his *mānistānān*”, after Iran had “acquired from the Mesopotamian milieu the system of the temple-economy, of the pious foundations and alms” (p. 312). But in almost all religions gods have been worshipped in temples and goods have been dedicated to them, which required an administration. The most striking feature of Mani’s church and monastery system was that women however, were admitted to the clergy, which was not the case in the Zoroastrian church. This points again more to a Buddhist or Jain model. On the last pages of the chapter Leurini discusses the investiture of Manichaean clerics, for which she assumes changes in the responsibilities under the Uyghurs (p. 316). The book has no final conclusion. To the comprehensive bibliography some important publications must be added.⁶ The indices are very useful but in the index *verborum* the Greek, Latin and Coptic terms are missing.

The author underlines a strong influence of Mesopotamian and Iranian elements on the development of the Manichaean church. But one must take into account that Mani conceived his teachings first in Aramaic, so that the terminology of the later texts may use not only Iranian loan words but also translations or calques of Aramaic terms. Leurini also does not consider the visual representation of the church in Manichaean art that in various points is not in accordance with her argumentation.⁷ In the discussion of the relevant terms Leurini mostly does not indicate the language of the terms and the sources. It would have been also more comfortable if she had presented the original Chinese characters beside the transcription.⁸ Due to space, we cannot go into further details discussed by the author. The overall impression of the book is lessened by a number of typing errors in the text. Within her book, Leurini refers to the dependence of Manichaeism on other religious systems, it is to her credit that she has challenged earlier research and presented new approaches on the basis of a multitude of sources in an interdisciplinary and long-term perspective, reaching from the first century BC up to the tenth century AD but this raises the problem of comparability. Thus, the results of the Leurini’s research work need further verification by specialists of relevant fields. icolditz@campus.fu-berlin.de

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⁵T. Moriyasu (*Die Geschichte des uigurischen Manichäismus an der Seidenstraße. Forschungen zu manichäischen Quellen und ihrem geschichtlichen Hintergrund*, (Wiesbaden, 2004) [Studies in Oriental Religions 50], p. 41 points to a close relation of the Manichaean monasteries to the subsistence strategy of Buddhist monasteries.

⁶M. Mayrhofer, *Etymologisches Wörterbuch des Altindoirischen*. 3 Vol. (Heidelberg, 1992, 1996, 1997–2001), (Indogermanische Bibliothek, Reihe 2: Wörterbücher); Th. Pettipiece, *Pentadic Redaction in the Manichaean Kephalaia* (Leiden, 2009) (Nag Hammadi and Manichaean Studies 66); Ch. Reck, *Fragmente manichäischen Inhalts in soghdischer Schrift*, (Stuttgart, 2006) (Mitteliranische Handschriften, Teil 1; Verzeichnis der Orientalischen Handschriften in Deutschland XVII/1); N. Sims-Williams, D. Durkin-Meisterernst, *Dictionary of Manichaean Texts III: Texts from Central Asia and China. Part 2: Texts in Sogdian and Bactrian*, (Turnhout, 2012) (Corpus Fontium Manichaeorum. Subsidia); P. B. Lurje, *Personal Names in Sogdian Texts*, (Wien, 2010) (Sitzungsberichte der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften 808; Iranische Onomastik 8; Iranisches Personennamenbuch II/8/).

⁷Cf. Zs. Gulácsi, *Manichaean Art in Berlin Collections: A comprehensive catalogue of Manichaean artefacts belonging to the Berlin State Museums of the Prussian Cultural Foundation, Museum of Indian Art, and the Berlin-Brandenburg Academy of Sciences, deposited in the Berlin State Library of the Prussian Cultural Foundation*, (Turnhout, 2001) (Corpus Fontium Manichaeorum. Series Archaeologica et Iconographica 1); Yoshida Yutaka 吉田豊, “Shinshutsu Manikyō kaiga no keijijō 新出マニ教絵画の形而上 [The cosmogony (and church history) of the newly discovered Manichaean paintings.]” *Yamato Bunka 大和文華* 121 (2010), pp. 1–34; G. Kósa, “Translating the Eikon: Some Considerations on the Relation of the Chinese Cosmology painting to the Eikon.” In: J. P. Laut, K. Röhrborn (eds.), *Vom Aramäischen zum Alttürkischen. Fragen zur Übersetzung von manichäischen Texten. Vorträge des Göttinger Symposiums vom 29./30. September 2011*, Berlin–Boston 2013b, pp. 49–84 (Abhandlungen der Akademie der Wissenschaften zu Göttingen. Neue Folge, 29).

⁸Cf. G. B. Mikkelsen, *Dictionary of Manichaean texts in Chinese*, (Turnhout, 2006) (Corpus Fontium Manichaeorum. Subsidia: Dictionary of Manichaean texts 3,4).