

# Prolegomena to a History of Islamicate Manichaeism

John C. Reeves

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SHEFFIELD OAKVILLE

Published by Equinox Publishing Ltd.

UK: Unit S3, Kelham House, 3 Lancaster Street, Sheffield S3 8AF

USA: DBBC, 28 Main Street, Oakville, CT 06779

www.equinoxpub.com

First published 2011

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British Library Cataloguing-in-Publication Data

A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library.

ISBN-13: 978-1-904768-52-4 (hardback)

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Reeves, John C.

Prolegomena to a History of Islamic Manichaeism / John C. Reeves.

p. cm. — (Comparative Islamic studies)

Includes bibliographical references and index.

ISBN 978-1-904768-52-4 (hb)

1. Manichaeism—History. 2. Manichaeism—Relations. I. Title. BT1410.R45 2010  
297.8'3—dc22

2010008755

Typeset and edited by Queenston Publishing, Hamilton, Canada

Printed and bound in the UK by the MPG Books Group.

IN MEMORIAM

Ben Zion Wacholder (ז"ל)

Exemplary scholar, teacher, and mentor

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## Preface

The present volume represents the fruition of approximately a decade of work on most of the important Islamicate sources pertaining to the Mesopotamian prophet Mani and the survival of his religion among early and medieval Muslim polities. My goal in preparing the work was to supply scholars with a roughly sorted mass of raw data for producing more nuanced histories and studies of Manichaeism in the Arabophonic cultural sphere; hence the title *Prolegomena to a History of Islamicate Manichaeism*, an admittedly overambitious label which deliberately mimics those chosen by Julius Wellhausen over a century ago for his justly celebrated pair of monographs devoted to the identification and elucidation of the signal primary texts which permit a plausible reconstruction of both biblical and early Muslim history. It is my hope that modern researchers more erudite than I can likewise exploit the materials contained in this book to re-conceive and expound the history of Manichaeism (as well as dualist religious thought more generally) under Islam.

I appreciate very much the continuing encouragement which I received from a host of interested colleagues and students over the lengthy period of this volume's gestation and preparation. As always, I remain profoundly grateful to the Blumenthal Foundation for its continuing financial support of my research efforts in Jewish and cognate studies at the University of North Carolina, Charlotte. For this volume, my work was also facilitated and accelerated by my residency as a Ruth Meltzer Distinguished Fellow at the Center for Advanced Judaic Studies at the University of Pennsylvania during the fall of 2007, a fantastic privilege whose collegial and scholastic rewards I am still reaping years after the fact. Finally, I want to append here a special note of thanks to Janet Joyce and Valerie Hall of Equinox Publishing for their extraordinary patience and kindness while awaiting the final delivery of this manuscript.

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