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ASPECTS OF ANTI-MANICHAEAN POLEMICS IN LATE ANTIQUITY AND UNDER EARLY ISLAM

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Mani established his religion on very broad syncretistic grounds, in the hope that it could conquer the whole *oikumene,* East and West, by integrating the religious traditions of all peoples—except those of the Jews. Although Manichaeism as an organized religion survived for more than a thousand years, and its geographical realm extended from North Africa to Southeast China, this ambition never came close to being realized, and the Manichaeans remained, more often than not, small and persecuted communities.[1] Yet, in a somewhat paradoxical way, Mani did achieve his ecumenical goal. For more than half a millennium, from its birth in the third century throughout late antiquity and beyond, his religion was despised and rejected with the utmost violence by rulers and thinkers belonging to all shades of the spiritual and religious spectrum. In this sense, Manichaeism, an insane system, a "mania,"[2] appeared as the outsider par excellence. It thus offered a clear reference point, a convenient negative

[1] For the best overview of Manichaeism in its roots and developments East and West, see now S. N. C. Lieu, *Manichaeism in the Later Roman Empire and Medieval China: A Historical Survey* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1985). Cf. the review by G. G. Stroumsa, *Classical Review* n.s. 37 (1987) 95–97. Parts of this paper were read at the Symposium on Late Antiquity and Islam held at the Institute of Classical Studies of the University of London, 26–28 June 1986. We wish to thank the conveners of the Symposium, Professor Averil Cameron and Dr. John Matthews, as well as Dr. Samuel Lieu, who chaired our session and raised interesting points in the discussion. We are also grateful to Professors Shlomo Pines and Shaul Shaked for their helpful comments on an earlier version.

[2] So called by Greek Christian heresiographers using a word play on the founder's name. It appears already in the earliest polemics in Greek; see, e.g., Titus of Bostra *Contra Manichaeos* 1.1 (ed. P. de Lagarde; Berlin: Hertz, 1859) 1; and Epiphanius *Pan.* 66.1 (ed. C. Riggi; Rome: Pontificum Institutum Altioris Latinitatis, 1967) 4; and see n. 46 and *apud* n. 47 below. In order not to overburden a complex argument, we have tried to keep instances and notes to a minimum, often ignoring texts parallel to those cited. Our documentation thus seeks to be representative rather than exhaustive.

criterion of identity and self-definition to Neoplatonist philosophers and Christian, Jewish, Muslim, and Zoroastrian theologians alike.

For Roman emperors, the Manichaeans represented a varied but obvious threat. Manichaean obsession with matter, and resultant radical asceticism (particularly rejection of marriage) was not only foreign and abhorrent to most pagan minds, it was also felt to be a direct threat to the welfare of the state. Moreover, the geographical provenance of Manichaeism rendered accusations of representing a Persian "fifth column" almost inevitable.[3]

In Christian milieus the situation was more complex. Manichaean thinkers considered themselves to be the true Christians, and looked down on Orthodox Christians as Judaizers who were only "semi-Christian." This attitude, amply documented from Augustine to al-Bīrūnī, is easily understood from an inner Manichaean point of view. Mani had given much thought to the (mythical) figure of Jesus, and saw himself—up to his passion—as a new Jesus, as the last prophet sent down to humankind, offering the final and total revelation, the true Gospel.[4] Hence, the Christians treated Manichaeism as a threat from within, regarding it as "the worst of all heresies," the last and most vicious trick of the Devil.[5]

Like the Christians before them, Muslims spoke of the Manichaean danger in superlatives, but for slightly different reasons. Muslim heresiographers never relate to Manichaeism as to an Islamic heresy, but as to pure paganism. Despite

[3] On this perception of the Manichaean danger in the Roman Empire, see Lieu, *Manichaeism*, 91–95.

[4] On Augustine, see particularly L. Koenen, "Augustine and Manichaeism in Light of the Cologne Mani Codex," *Illinois Classical Studies* 3 (1978) 167–76. On Manichaean Christology, the standard work is still that of E. Rose, *Die manichäische Christologie* (2d ed.; Stud. Orient. Rel. 5; Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1979). A thesis recently submitted by I. Gardner at Manchester University is still unpublished. See also al-Bīrūnī, *al-Āthār al-Bāqiya ʿan al-Qurūn al Khāliya—Chronologie orientalischer Völker* (ed. E. Sachau; Leipzig: Harrassowitz, 1923) 23 (= Sayyid Ḥasan Taqizadeh, *Mānī ve Dīn-o* [Tehran, 1325 H] 201), hereafter *Mani*. Taqizadeh's meticulous compilation of Arabic and Persian sources on Manichaeism is concerned mainly with expositions of the religion, especially its mythology, rather than with refutations thereof.

[5] For the description of Manichaeism as a Christian heresy (mainly with docetic features), see, e.g., the prologue of the "Seven Chapters" attributed to Zacharias of Mitylene, in S. N. C. Lieu, "An Early Byzantine Formula for the Renunciation of Manichaeism—the *Capita VII contra Manicaeos* of <Zacharias of Mitylene>," *JAC* 26 (1983) 152–218, esp. 176. For the Devil's role, see ibid., chap. 1 (Lieu 176, and 190 n. on 1.II: Mani is called the "vessel of the Devil," which implies a Syriac word-play on his name). See also Epiphanius *Pan.* 66.2 (12–14, Riggi).

In the Byzantine world, "Manichaeism" soon became a term of opprobrium, thrown at various kinds of heretics whose beliefs were not even loosely connected to Manichaeism. Cf. n. 106 below. Together with the preference of scholars for descriptions of Manichaean mythology over argumentative polemics, this fact has often discouraged scholarly interest in Byzantine anti-Manichaean literature.

Manichaean devotion to their scriptures,[6] and despite the fact that the Zoroastrians were considered *ahl al-kitāb,* Manichaeans were never granted this status. Muslim theologians did not have to worry about overt Manichaean claims to represent truer Islam. Nevertheless, they dreaded the Manichaean skill to infiltrate secretly into the Muslim community in order to lure the simple people and to corrupt Islam from within, for instance by falsifying prophetic traditions.[7]

Unlike Christian and Muslim theologians, Jewish thinkers had no political commonwealth to protect from the Manichaeans. Moreover, Manichaean dualism does not seem to have represented a direct threat from inside the Jewish community. The only lively debate with a dualist may be that with the heretic Ḥīwī al-Balkhī (eighth century), whose system was apparently closer to that of Marcion than to that of Mani.[8] Otherwise, the argumentation in Jewish writings remains on an abstract theological level, and closely resembles that found in Muslim *kalām.* Its main interest for us lies in that it supplements our evidence on the development of anti-Manichaean argumentation.

Although very little is known about the historical evolution of the Manichaean religion, there is no reason to assume that in a world that underwent drastic transformations, the Religion of Light alone remained unchanged. There were dimmer periods and also resurgences. In particular, the first Islamic centuries seem to have witnessed a strong Manichaean renaissance.[9] One possible way to overcome the paucity of Manichaean material is through the study of

[6] This devotion, which found its artistic expression in Manichaean book lore, was noted with envy by Muslims; see al-Samʿānī, *al-Ansāb* (ed. Margoliouth; Hydrabad, 1962) (= *Mani,* 246); Ibn al-Jawzī, *al-Muntaẓam fī Taʾrīkh al-Mulūk waʾl-Umam* (Haidrabad, 1357H) 174 (= *Mani,* 257).

[7] The most notorious example of Manichaean falsification of *hadith* is perhaps that of ʿAbd al-Karīm b. Abī al-ʿAwjāʾ: see al-Bīrūnī, *Āthār,* 67–68 (= *Mani,* 202); al-Baghdādī, *al-Farq bayn al-Firaq* (ed. Muhammad Badr) 167–68 (= *Mani,* 190). The terror of Manichaean infiltration is best formulated by al-Sharīf al-Murtaḍā, *Ghurar al-fawāʾid wa-durar al-qalāʾid* (= *Amālī;* ed. Muḥammad Abū al-Faḍl Ibrāhīm; 1954] 1. 127 [= *Mani,* 193]). As in Byzantium (see n. 5 above), the accusation of "zandaqa" and even specifically dualism, was loosely used against all sorts of unorthodox views, resulting in the same lack of interest in anti-Manichaean literature on the part of modern scholars. See, e.g., G. Vajda, "Les zindiqs en pays d'Islam au début de la période Abbaside," *RSO* 17 (1938) 173–229. For general studies of the Muslim reaction to Manichaeism see S. H. Schaeder, "Manichäer und Muslime," *ZDMG* 7 (= 82) (1928) lxxvii; C. Colpe, "Anpassung des Manichäismus an den Islam (Abū ʿĪsā al-Warrāq)," *ZDMG* 109 (1959) 82–91; A. Abel, "Les source arabes sur le manichéisme," *Annuaire de l'Institut de Philologie et d'Histoire Orientales et Slaves* 16 (1961–62) 31–73; G. Monnot, *Penseurs musulmans et religions iraniennes, ʿAbd al-Jabbār et ses devanciers* (Paris: Vrin, 1974).

[8] Cf. I. Davidson, *Saadia's Polemic Against Hiwi al-Balkhī* (New York: Jewish Theological Seminary, 1915); and see M. Stein, "Hīwī al-Balkhī, the Jewish Marcion," *Sefer Klausner* (in Hebrew; Tel Aviv: 1937) 210–25.

[9] Lieu (*Manichaeism,* 82–83) refers to the initial Arab tolerance under the Umayyads as accounting for this resurgence. This is plausible, although it might be more precise to speak of "preoccupation with other matters" than of "tolerance."

anti-Manichaean arguments, which, while repeating the standard accusations against Manichaeism, may reveal patterns of evolution.

As a full-fledged Gnostic system of thought, Manichaeism represented the last significant outburst of mythological thought in the world of antiquity.[10] It remains a moot point whether Mani himself actually believed in the baroque mythology and the highly developed numerology that he propounded.[11] In any case, since Mani was the Last Prophet, and had brought the final revelation to humankind, there was no place left for interpretation or exegesis of his message.[12] Hence Manichaeans were asked to believe his apodictic sayings and mythical doctrines *au pied de la lettre*. This point was clearly seen by polemicists. The sixth-century neo-Platonist philosopher Simplicius remarked: "They do not think it right to understand any of the things they say allegorically . . . as one of their sages informed me."[13] In the various intellectual and spiritual traditions of late antiquity myths were not seen to be taken at their face value, and were never to be understood apart from the exegetical level that alone could reveal their deeper, spiritual meaning.[14] Therefore Simplicius reflects an attitude very common among late antique thinkers, Christian and pagan alike, when he denies the Manichaean "stories" the very name of a myth: "They fabricate certain marvels which are not worthy of being called myths. They do not, however, use them as myths, nor do they think that they have any other meaning, but believe that all the things which they say are true."[15]

The Manichaeans' univalent understanding of their myths enables two Muslim theologians to remark, some four centuries after Simplicius, that the very exposition of Manichaean myth is its best refutation. This remark, voiced by both al-Māturīdī (d. 942)[16] and ʿAbd al-Jabbār (d. 1025)[17] reflects the assurance of these two well informed and usually trustworthy authors that there

[10] For an analysis of Manichaean versions of some fundamental Gnostic myths, see G. G. Stroumsa, *Another Seed: Studies in Gnostic Mythology* (NHS 24; Leiden: Brill, 1984) part III.

[11] This question is raised by H.-J. Polotsky, "Manichäismus," PWSup 6. 241–72, reprinted in his *Collected Studies* (Jerusalem: Magnes, 1971).

[12] See G. G. Stroumsa, "'Seal of the Prophets': The Nature of a Manichaean Metaphor," *Jerusalem Studies in Arabic and Islam* 7 (1986) 61–74.

[13] *In Epicteti encheiridion* 27 (Dübner, 71–72). We follow Lieu's translation of the paragraph, *Manichaeism*, 23.

[14] We may refer here at least to J. Pépin, *Mythe et allégorie: les origines grecques et les contestations judéo-chrétiennes* (2d ed.; Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1979).

[15] *In Epicteti encheiridion* 27. On the Manichaean use of mythology cf. Alexander of Lycopolis *Contra Manichaei opiniones* 10, and see A. Villey's discussion in his translation of the work (Alexandre de Lycopolis, *Contre la doctrine de Mani* [Paris: Cerf, 1985] 247–49).

[16] Abū Manṣūr al-Māturīdī, *Kitāb al-Tawḥīd* (ed. Fatḥullah Khulaif; Beirut: dār al-Mashriq, 1970) 157,17–18.

[17] ʿAbd al-Jabbār al-hamadhānī, *al-Mughnī fī Abwāb al-Tawḥīd waʾl-ʿAdl* 5 (ed. Maḥmūd Muḥammad al-Khudayrī; Cairo, 1958) 9:4–6, translated by Monnot, *Penseurs musulmans*, 151.

was no second level on which Manichaeans understood their myths. If the Muslim critics had been aware of such an exegesis, they would surely not have neglected to refute it.[18] Yet, like so many others before them, they sneer at the myth but hardly argue with it.

In the various traditions, therefore, the bulk of anti-Manichaean polemics is directed not so much against the myths themselves as against the theological principles underlying them. For it was the Manichaean fascination with science, which has been called a "simulacrum of reason," that attracted intellectuals like Augustine.[19] This scientific and rational pretense of Manichaeism offered the real challenge to the monotheistic religions.

From its very beginning Manichaeism succeeded in bringing about a more or less common front of pagan philosophers and Christian theologians and in turning them into "objective allies," as it were, all united in their radical rejection of the main tenets of the new religion. Of course, the arguments of the various polemicists differ in their accent, their technicity, and their originality. Nevertheless, the picture of Manichaeism that emerges from the various texts is rather clear and consistent.

Also consistent is the polemicists' insistence on what one may call the "philosophical *koine*" of late antiquity, to which the theological foundations of Manichaeism were abhorrent. This philosophical *koine* is reflected in the almost constant appeal—by Christians as well as by pagans— to the "common principles of thought," the *koinai ennoiai* (a concept borrowed from Stoic philosophy) and to "rational argumentations" (*logikai methodai*).[20] Similarly, Moslem and Jewish writers repeatedly insist on the innate, intuitive axioms of thought (*al-maʿqūl*) and on rational, logical argumentation (*ṭarīq al-qiyās*).[21] This fact illustrates what was said above, that it was at the theological, rather than at the mythological level, that the discussion usually took place. There are grounds to believe that this preference for rational debate was introduced by the Manichaeans themselves. The extremely precise and organized mythology developed by

[18] G. Vajda's appreciation of al-Māturīdī's account as "de moyenne importance" is probably too harsh, as Vajda's own interest in the text would demonstrate ("Le témoignage d'al-Māturīdī sur la doctrine des manichéens, des dayṣanites et des marcionites," *Arabica* 13 [1965] 2–3). G. Monnot's somewhat more generous evaluation seems more justified. On the importance of ʿAbd al-Jabbār's account, see Monnot, *Penseurs musulmans*, 19–20, 118.

[19] See, e.g., *Conf.* 3.6; 4.7. Cf. P. Brown, *Augustine of Hippo* (Berkeley/Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1967) 46–53, esp. 48–49.

[20] See G. G. Stroumsa, "Alexander of Lycopolis and Titus of Bostra: A Pagan and a Christian Refutation of Manichaean Dualism," in J. Bregman, ed., *Neoplatonism and Gnosis* (Albany: SUNY Press, forthcoming). See also C. Andresen, "Antike und Christentum," *TRE* 3. 69–71.

[21] For these terms see J. R. T. M. Peters, *God's Created Speech: A Study in the Speculative Theology of . . . Abd al-Jabbar* (Leiden: Brill, 1976) 71–72, 82–83; for its use in anti-Manichaean contexts, see, e.g., (the Muslim) ʿAbd al-Jabbār, *Mughnī*, 9:6, and (the Jewish) Dāwūd ibn Marwān al-Muqammiṣ, *ʿIṣhrūn Maqāla* (ed. and trans. S. Stroumsa; Jerusalem: Magnes, forthcoming).

Mani was meant to account not only for cosmic and psychic phenomena, but also for physical, geological, and climatic realities. Their scathing criticism of the Bible and of the Biblical conception of God was based on the rejection of the anthropomorphisms in the Old Testament and, more broadly, on the involvement of the God of Israel with Evil. This criticism facilitated conversion, as the case of the young Augustine testifies, and the Manichaeans felt secure in their claim to possess in their doctrine more refined instruments of rational discourse than their opponents.[22] Therefore, it was mainly on this level that their opponents had to respond to the Manichaean challenge, by showing that Manichaean thought itself was irrational and self-contradicting.

The range of polemical topics covers most aspects of theology, from logic and metaphysics to physics, ethics, and anthropology. We shall focus here on two themes, or rather, two clusters of connected themes: materialism and free will. These two poles stand broadly for theology and ethics, that is to say, two of the three foci of Manichaeism according to the interesting taxonomy propounded by Leo the Great in one of his sermons.[23] It is hoped that these two themes will highlight the core of the polemics as well as the imprint it left on the theological thought of the opponents of Manichaeism.

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For the Manichaeans matter is evil, and as one of the two principles it is the opposite of God. Christian theologians and pagan philosophers alike discard, first of all, the very idea of two principles (*archai*) for all beings. This idea, they say, contradicts common sense, since there should be a common—and hence third—single root to these two *archai*.[24] Moreover, the two opposite principles could not mix without the presence of a third *archē*, which would act as an intermediary. Following an argument propounded already by Proclus in his treatise *On the Origins of Evil* (where the Manichaeans are not even mentioned), Simplicius adds that matter cannot be a principle.[25]

[22] See, e.g., Augustine *Conf.* 3.7; 5.10, and particularly *De utilitate credendi*, 1.2; this text is quoted by Villey, *Contre la doctrine*, 199, who estimates (rightly, to our minds) that methods of argumentation should not have been very different in Egypt and concludes: "Il ressort de là que les manichéens devaient faire de la raison un usage surtout polémique, pour ruiner les thèses de leurs adversaires et surtout, s'agissant de chrétiens, de ce qu'ils estimaient être les inconséquences de leur exégèse."

[23] The third one is cult. Sermon 86.4 according to the classification of R. Dolle, in Léon le Grand, *Sermons* (SC 200) 4. 184–85: "In qua lex est mendatium, diabolus religio, sacrificum turpitudo."

[24] For two early authors, see the instances quoted in Stroumsa, "Alexander of Lycopolis and Titus of Bostra."

[25] *In Epicteti encheiridion* 27.69–70. Cf. I. Hadot, "Die Widerlegung des Manichäismus im Epiktetkommentar des Simplikios," *Archiv für Geschichte der Philosophie* 51 (1969) 31–57 esp. beginning, and idem, *Le problème du néoplatonisme alexandrin: Hiérocles et Simplicius* (Paris: ÉtAug, 1978) 49–51.

Since essence (*ousia*) can have no opposite, it is illogical to claim that evil stands in opposition to God. Rather, one should say that evil is opposite to the good according to contingence (or: "as an accident" [*symbebēkos*]). Indeed, evil has no *ousia* of its own, but is defined as the absence (*sterēsis*) of good.[26]

One of the most puzzling paradoxes of Manichaean thought—the one which lends itself most easily to criticism—is the contradiction between the perception of the material world as the work, or at least the realm, of the evil power, and a radical inability to overcome, in imagery and mythology, the world of senses. Further, as we have seen, the Manichaeans were unable to distinguish mythical expression from rational and spiritual exegesis. Thus not only their imagery, but their very thought remained entangled in sensibilia.

This Manichaean materialism affects Manichaean theology proper. The Manichaeans are depicted by their opponents as fundamentally unable to conceive of spiritual entities or essences. Titus, bishop of Bostra in the second half of the fourth century, is the author of one of the first—and by far the most important—Christian anti-Manichaean polemical works written in Greek. The arguments of this text are repeated time and again by later Christian heresiographers. In this context Titus wonders about the Manichaean ability to speak of the Light of God without conceiving of it as spiritual.[27]

The Christian heresiographers seem to regard Manichaean materialism as contradicting the very concept of God. God cannot be situated in a place (*topos*), and the Manichaean physical description of the divine realm, and particularly the border between the realm of Good and that of Evil, is perceived as absurd. For Zacharias of Mytilene, for example (first half of the sixth century), this description implies that god is limited (*perigraphos*).[28] Such a conception is obviously at odds with the *koine* perception of God as unlimited (*aperilēptos*). Alexander of Lycopolis, the pagan philosopher who, at the turn of the fourth century, wrote the first full-fledged anti-Manichaean polemic, points out that the Manichaean perception entails not only God's limitation, but also his corporeality.[29] The nature and status of matter are at the core of Alexander's discourse, which appeals to Platonic traditional argumentation in order to refute the Manichaean conception of matter as "disordered movement" (*ataktos kinēsis*).[30]

[26] See, e.g., Zacharias of Mitylene *Antirrhēsis*, in A. Demetrakopoulos, ed., *Ekklesiastikē Bibliothēkē* (Leipzig, 1866) 3, 13 (47). Zacharias probably wrote the *Antirrhēsis* towards the end of his life, after 527. Cf. G. Bardy, in *DThC* 15. 3679, and H.-G. Beck, *Kirche und theologische Literatur im byzantinischen Reich* (2d ed.; Munich: Beck, 1977) 385. Cf. *apud* n. 41 below.

[27] *Contra Manichaeos* 1.23 (de Lagarde, 14).

[28] *Antirrhēsis* 15 (Demetrakopoulos, § 3).

[29] *Contra Manichaei opiniones* 8 (Brinkmann, 13–14; Villey, 17).

[30] Ibid., 6–8 (Brinkmann, 9–13; Villey, 14–15).

One should add that Christians and Manichaeans accused each other in late antiquity of propounding an anthropomorphist conception of God.[31]

Movement and *mixis* imply another series of internal contradictions. According to the last of the Greek church fathers, John of Damascus (who died in the Palestinian monastery of Mar Saba around 750), the moving of a part of God into another locus contradicts God's indivisibility and introduces change into the eternal.[32] Similarly, two sixth-century theologians, John of Caesarea and Paul the Persian, attack in various ways the Manichaean doctrine of God. John insists that if a part of God moves into another realm (that of evil), this creates a division in the deity as does the Manichaean participation of souls in God's substance.[33] Paul notes the moral blemish of a God who sends his "sons" or "members" as ransom into the kingdom of evil.[34] On his side, Zacharias remarks that this conception contradicts God's transcendence, which should imply a certain distance from creatures.[35]

Finally, for Christian theologians—but not for Platonist philosophers—the Manichaean conception of eternal matter denies the possibility of the creation of the world ex nihilo by God rather than from God's own substance. Manichaean hylozoism had to be rejected in order to affirm matter's subordination to God. The Christian heresiographers insist that matter, if subordinated to God, cannot be identified with evil, since everything coming from God must be good.[36] If genesis were evil, its opposite, corruption (*phthōra*), would be good—a manifestly wrong conclusion.

Furthermore, the conception of matter as evil and blind contradicts Manichaean mythology. A blind matter could not see the divine light. On the other hand, if matter could see God, that would imply a close relation, a sort of

[31] See, e.g., Augustine *Conf.* 3.7 for the Manichaean anti-Christian argument and Augustine *C. Epist. Fund.* 23.25 for the Christian counter argument. These texts are discussed in G. Stroumsa, "The Incorporeality of God: Context and Implications of Origen's Position," *Religion* 13 (1983) 345–58, esp. 352–53.

[32] *Contra Manichaeos* 3, in B. Kotter, *Die Schriften des Johannes von Damaskos* 4. (Patristische Texte und Studien; Berlin/New York: de Gruyter, 1981) 355.

[33] John the Grammarian *Disputatio cum Manichaeo* 1.5–13, in M. Richard and M. Aubineau, eds., *Iohannis Caesariensis Opera* (*CC*, ser. graeca; Turnhout: Brepols, 1977) 119–21.

[34] *Disputatio cum Photini Manichaeo* 40 (PG 88. 565–68). Paul also notes that if divine substance is indivisible, the souls cannot originate in it (ibid., col. 536). On Paul the Persian and his dialogue with Photinus, see Lieu, *Manichaeism,* 171–73. It should be pointed out that the years around 527 (when Justinian, together with Justin I, published a harsh edict against the Manichaeans) seem to have witnessed a sort of renaissance of Manichaeism in Byzantium, reflected by Simplicius as well as by the writings of Paul, Zacharias, and John. Cf. Hadot, "Widerlegung," 32, who refers to J. Jarry, *Hérésies et factions dans l'Empire byzantin du IV^e^ au VII^e^ siècle* (Cairo: Institut français d'archéologie orientale, 1968) esp. 334–39 (a work that should be read with care). See also Jarry, "Les hérésies dualistes dans l'Empire byzantin du V^e^ au VII^e^ siècle," *BIFAO* 63 (1965) 89–119.

[35] *Antirrhēsis* 13 (Demetrakopoulos, 7).

[36] See, e.g., John of Damascus *C. Manich.* 76 (Kotter, 392); cf. ibid., 31, 70 (Kotter, 369, 388).

kinship (*suggeneia*) between the two—something which both common sense and Manichaean doctrine itself cannot admit. This argument is based on the rule that only similar essences can know one another.[37]

It should be emphasized that the attack carried from various quarters against the identification of matter with evil is not a rejection of dualism per se, but specifically of Manichaeism. Concerning matter, a basic difference between Zoroastrians and Manichaeans must be noted here. The Zoroastrians did not partake in the Manichaeans' inability to conceive of spiritual entities. While the two realms of matter (*gētīg*) and spirit (*mēnōg*) coexist according to Mazdean thought, creation, an act of Ahura Mazda (the good God) is only in the world of *gētīg*, while Ahriman's existence remains in the world of *mēnōg*.[38]

On most points, the outline given here of Christian polemics against Manichaean materialism would fit also the polemics written against it in Arabic, by both Muslims and Jews. They too attempted to preserve God's indivisibility and God's immutability, and, like the Christians before them, they strove to establish creation ex nihilo, and fought against the Manichaeans as part of their fight against the *Aṣḥāb al-hayūlā*, those who believe in primordial matter.[39] Nevertheless, although no totally new element comes into the discussion, there seems to be a shift in weight, and certain issues become focal, which had been only superficially dealt with in Patristic literature. These arguments are usually incorporated in *kalām* texts into the section devoted to God's unity (*bāb al-tawḥīd*). Al-Māturīdī and ʿAbd al-Jabbār draw their description of Manichaeism from earlier sources such as the ninth-century heresiographers Abū ʿĪsā al-Warrāq and al-Nawbakhtī. But when they turn to the refutation of Manichaeism their arguments and terminology reflect contemporary *kalām*. Hence, the defense of God's indivisibility and immutability is often formulated in terms borrowed from Islamic atomism.[40]

But even beyond atomistic circles and concerns, Arabic writings against Manichaean materialism reflect the growing importance of what we might call physics. Like Simplicius, the tenth-century Jewish theologian Saʿadya al-Fayyūmī points out that darkness is not a principle (*aṣl*) opposed to light, but is

[37] E.g., Titus, *C. Manich.* 1.23 (de Lagarde, 14).

[38] This point has been demonstrated by Sh. Shaked, "The Notions *Mēnōg* and *Gētīg* in the Pahlavi Texts and their Relation to Eschatology," *AcOr* 33 (1971) 59–107. For the Zoroastrian anti-Manichaean polemics, see the *Škand Gumānīk Vičār* of Martan Farrux, in the edition of P. J. de Ménasce, *Une apologétique mazdéenne du IX^e siècle* (Fribourg: Université de Fribourg, 1945) chap. 16, 227–61.

[39] See, e.g., al-Muqammiṣ, *ʿIshrūn Maqāla*, chap. 5, fols. 15–22; chap. 8, fol. 36; Māturīdī, *Tawḥīd*, 113,1–6.

[40] See, e.g., ʿAbd al-Jabbār, *Mughnī*, 61:13 (on the authority of al-Warrāq), and the discussion in *Mughnī*, 22–24 (esp. 23:3 on *ḥayz*, the technical term for atom); Māturīdī, *Tawḥīd*, 157–21.

only the absence (*ʿadam*) of light.[41] In another context he explains that bodies (*ajsām*) have no opposite: only accidents (*aʿrāḍ*, i.e., *symbebēkos*) have opposites.[42] But in Arabic heresiography, unlike in Patristic polemics, this anti-Manichaean argument grows into a Manichaean contention, and the Manichaeans are depicted as those who deny the existence of accidents.[43] They also deny the existence of potentiality: there are only bodies or essences, which may sometimes attach themselves to other bodies (like colors) or hide within them (like the fire within the piece of wood, for example—the famous *kumūn*).[44]

The Manichaean rejection of spiritual entities also receives a slightly different turn, and becomes a purely epistemological issue. In polemical writings in Arabic the Manichaeans are repeatedly said to deny whatever they "have not seen." They are explicitly said to accept only the evidence of the senses,[45] to the point that the ninth-century Jewish theologian Dāwūd al-Muqammiṣ refers to the Manichaeans as *Manānī al-ʿiyān*,[46] a curious appellation that apparently means "those who have a mania of sense perception." Al-Muqammiṣ, who is, so far as we know, the first Jewish theologian to write in Arabic, studied with Christians in Nisibis, and there is every reason to believe that he got his information about the Manichaeans there, as well as the originally Greek pun on Mani's name.[47]

[41] *Kitāb al-Amānāt waʾl-Iʿtiqādāt* (ed. J. Qafih; Jerusalem/New York: Sura, 1970) chap. 1.3, p. 56.12–14. Other *mutakallimūn*, for whom absence was a real entity, do not usually use this argument. See *apud* n. 26 above.

[42] *Amānāt*, 4.3, pp. 155.26–156.5.

[43] See ʿAbd al-Jabbār, *Mughnī*, 11.16–19; 21–22; 62.13.

[44] On the dualistic background for al-Naẓẓām's theory of latency see J. van Ess, "Kumūn," *The Encyclopedia of Islam* (new ed.) 5. 384–85, and see idem, "Ḍirār b. ʿAmr und die 'Cahmiya': Biographie einer vergessenen Schule," *Der Islam* 43 (1967) 258, 260, and passim; and see also al-Bāqilānī, *al-Tamhīd* (ed. M. M. al-Khudairi and M. A. Abū Ridā; Cairo, 1947) 67–75 (= *Mani*, 446); Jābir b. Ḥayyān, *K. al-Khawāṣṣ al-Kabīr* (ed. P. Kraus; Cairo: 1354 H) 229 (= *Mani*, 76); S. Pines, *Beiträge zur islamischen Atomenlehre* (Berlin, 1936) 99–100 and n. 2.

[45] See, e.g., al-Murtaḍā, *Amālī* 138:14 (= *Mani*, 197); al-Jāḥiẓ, *al-Ḥayawān* (ed. ʿAbd al-Salām Hārūn; Cairo, 1940) 4. 449:4–7 (= *Mani*, 93); al-Ashʿarī, *Maqālāt al-Islāmiyīn wa-Ikhtilāf al-Muṣallīn* (ed. H. Ritter; Istanbul, 1929) 332:9–10 (= *Mani*, 122). Phrases such as *lam nara* (ʿAbd al-Jabbār, *Mughnī*, 10:5) in the description of Manichaean claims are probably a veiled reference to the same doctrine. Monotheistic writers turn this argument against the Manichaeans; see, e.g., al-Qāsim b. Ibrāhīm, *al-Radd ʿalā . . . Ibn al-Muqaffaʿ* (ed. M. Guidi; Rome, 1927) 4.10, 5.10–11, 13.7, 80. This polemical shift is a reaction not only to the general Manichaean pretension of objectivity (as suggested by Monnot, "Matoridi et le Manichéisme," *MIDEO* 13 [1975] 49), but specifically to the Manichaean insistence on the testimony of the senses, the *ʿiyān*. The importance of this epistemological principle for the rejection of *creatio ex nihilo* is clearly seen in al-Māturīdī, *Tawḥīd* 27:20–28:3.

[46] *ʿIshrūn Maqālā*, chap. 14, fol. 58.

[47] See n. 2 above.

We have already seen Titus of Bostra's wonder at the Manichaeans' ability to speak about divine light without recognizing spiritual entities. Muslim and Jewish theologians (like ʿAbd al-Jabbār and al-Muqammiṣ) turn this wondering into fact. According to them, the Manichaeans say that the light of God is exactly the same as the light we see in this world.[48]

Manichaean involvement with sensibilia is also reflected in Arabic sources by the description of the two Manichaean principles as endowed with five senses and as having five colors.[49] This colorful description, which borders on mythography, does not appear to have been known to earlier polemicists.

This preference for slightly different issues and variation in the formulas may indeed reflect only intellectual fashions: it may be that the polemicists' preference alone is reflected here. But it is also possible that contemporary Manichaeans themselves were affected by these fashions, and that the Arab heresiographers faithfully recorded not only basic Manichaean arguments and beliefs, but also their slightly evolving shades.

* * * * *

In a *Discourse against Mani* Ephrem the Syrian (fourth century) states that the opinion according to which evil is found in the midst of the works of the good contradicts free will: "For see, that if that evil is still established in our midst, Him therefore we are required to judge and blame for the evil who was able to take away the Evil from our midst."[50] In his flowery language Ephrem refers to the same cluster of problems with which his near-contemporary Augustine will be fighting in his youth. The Manichaeans had thrown their most poisonous arrows at the biblical God, who was responsible for injustice, death, war, and all the evil apparent in the Old Testament. The bulk of Augustine's most voluminous polemical treatise, the *Contra Faustum,* is directed against such blasphemies.[51]

In developing their theodicy, the Christian theologians related it directly and immediately to ethical theory, and in particular to the concept of free will and

[48] al-Muqammiṣ, *ʿIshrūn Maqālā,* chap. 9, fol. 43v (*al-nūr alladhī nushāhidu*); ʿAbd al-Jabbār, *Mughnī,* 22:11–14 (*al-nūr al-maʿqūl*). Al-Qāsim b. Ibrāhīm, *Ibn al-Muqaffaʿa,* 4–8 (= *Mani,* 78); and ʿAbd al-Jabbār, *Mughnī,* 51:21–52:2 are polemical uses of this Manichaean concept.

[49] E.g., Māturīdī, *Tawḥid,* 158: 4–10; Nishwān al-Ḥimyarī, *el-Ḥūr al-ʿīn* (ed. Ḳamāl Muṣṭafā; Egypt: al-Khanjī, 1948) 133; ʿAbd al-Jabbār, *Mughnī,* 10:5–6, 11:8; and see Vajda, "Māturīdī," 14–18.

[50] Quoted according to the translation of C. W. Mitchell, *S. Ephraim's Prose Refutations of Mani, Marcion, and Bardaisan* (London: Williams & Norgate, 1921) 2. xcv.

[51] On the core of the polemics between Faustus and Augustine, see G. G. Stroumsa, "The Words and the Works: Religious Knowledge and Salvation in Augustine and Faustus of Milevis," in S. N. Eisenstadt and I. F. Silver, eds., *Cultural Traditions and Worlds of Knowledge: Explorations in the Sociology of Knowledge* (Philadelphia: ISHI, forthcoming).

anthropology. As Titus of Bostra says at the very beginning of his treatise, it is the first doctrine of the Catholic Church that God is not resopnsible (*anaitios*) for human injustice (*adikia*), which is the only real evil, and hence cannot be imputed to God.[52] Quite opposite to this true conception of God stands the Manichaean one: a God who in his *oikonomia* mixes contraries, adds Titus, will also be responsible for evil.[53]

As this reference to Titus shows, the direct linkage between theodicy and anthropomorphism and ethics (that is, the problem of free will) in Patristic thought is clearly established from the early stages of anti-Manichaean polemics. The problem of free will (*autexousion*) had already been discussed at length in Patristic theology before the fourth century, precisely in an antidualistic context. Against Valentinians and other Gnostics the early Church Fathers up to Origen had already defended both God's goodness and human free will.[54] Christian theology was thus well equipped to deal with the Manichaean challenge at the theological level.

It would seem that even more than with the problems related to materialism, the major place accorded to the defense of free will in Christian theology, particularly in Byzantium, owes much to this challenge.[55] It is also in this context that the accusations of the Pelagian thinker Julian of Eclanum against Augustine should be seen. According to Julian, Augustine's insistence on grace as a major element in salvation and his correlating lack of emphasis on the role of free will, reflect the fact that the bishop of Hippo had never quite succeeded in freeing himself from his Manichaean past.[56]

In their argument against Manichaean materialism the Christian polemicists insisted that evil was not to be identified with matter, and that it did not even have an identity of its own, but rather it should be defined as the lack of good.[57] In the context of their theodicy, they sharpened this conception and developed the Christian doctrine of evil.

[52] *Contra Manichaeos* 1.1; 1.3 (de Lagarde, 1, 3).

[53] Ibid., 1.29 (de Lagarde, 18 = 1.24 in numeration in PG 18).

[54] For an overview, see D. Nestle, "Freiheit," *RAC* 8. 269–306.

[55] See, e.g., H.-G. Beck (= O. Hildebrand), *Vorsehung und Vorbestimmung in der theologischen Literatur der Byzantiner* (OCA 114; Rome: Pontifical Institute of Oriental Studies, 1937) 3–17. See further P. Nagel, "Mani-Forschung und Patristik" (TU 120; Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1977) 147–50.

[56] On the conflict between these two thinkers, see esp. P. Brown, "Sexuality and Society in the Fifth Century A.D.: Augustine and Julian of Eclanum," in E. Gabla, ed., *Tria Corda: scritti in onore di Arnaldo Momigliano* (Como: Free Press, 1983) 49–70, and E. A. Clark, "Vitiated Seeds and Holy Vessels: Augustine's Manichaean Past," in *idem*, *Ascetic Piety and Women's Faith: Essays on Late Ancient Christianity* (Lewiston/Queenston: Edwin Mellen, 1987) 291–349. We thank Professor John M. Rist for calling our attention to this interesting study.

[57] See, e.g., John of Damascus, *C. Manich.* 14 (Kotter, 358) and parallels quoted there. Cf. also nn. 26 and 41 above.

Good and evil, says Zacharias, are not in God, but in human being, adding that good is a habit (*hexis*), whereas evil is the absence of this habit.[58] In the proper sense, evil is impiety or sin; one can speak of the "objective" evils in the world only in the figurative sense. One can thus speak of a polysemy of good and evil that in the proper sense are opposed to each other only as qualities in human beings.[59] Since the world created by God is good, there is no place in it for evil. In many cases, notes Ephrem, what appears *prima facie* as evil turns out to have a curative function.[60] The medical metaphor is also used in a slightly different sense by John of Damascus. God is not more guilty of Satan's fall than a doctor can be held responsible for his patient's sickness.[61] the devil is indeed as free as human beings, and it is out of his own free will that he acts in evil ways. John of Damascus is brought to insist that since God can create only good order, we are responsible even for death, which was produced by human beings, not by God. He adds that, on the other hand, God gives only being, while we alone have the power of making good being.[62] In short, for the Christian theologians evil is found in subjective experience rather than in the objective order of nature.

The opposition of the Church Fathers to Manichaean anthropology and to its implications is not less radical. Manichaean dualism is not limited to the ontological or cosmological level. The great divide crosses also human beings themselves: while our souls may be of divine provenance and of divine nature, our bodies, being material, belong *in toto* to the other power. Such a conception is anathema to the Christian theologians. Anthropological dualism would prevent any integrated concept of the person. Although this concept will find its final expression with Boethius, it was already well established in Patristic thought in the fourth century (in great part owing to the Gnostic challenge of the second and third centuries).[63]

Therefore, the Christian theologians emphatically reject the two aspects of Manichaean anthropology. The body, as part of the human being who is created in the image of God, cannot be altogether evil. On the other hand, as John of Caesarea says, God would indeed be responsible for evil if the soul were part of God.[64] But since human beings are free, the source of evil is to be found in the

[58] *Antirrhēsis* 3 (Demetrakopoulos).

[59] Ibid., 4; 47, 13 (Dematrakopoulos).

[60] *S. Ephraim's Refutations*, 2. xcv.

[61] *C. Manich.* 37 (Kotter, 373–74).

[62] Ibid., 71–72 (Kotter, 389–90).

[63] See, e.g., J. Moingt, "Polymorphie du corps du Christ," in *Corps des Dieux* (=*Le temps de la réflexion*, 11 [Paris: N.R.F., 1986]) 47–62; and G. G. Stroumsa, "*Caro Salutis Cardo:* Shaping the Person in Early Christian Thought," forthcoming.

[64] *Disputatio* 43 (Richard-Aubineau, 123).

soul and in its own free choice (Paul the Persian).[65] Zacharias says that the soul is the cause of evil and of unlawful acts; hence, it cannot be said that we sin involuntarily.[66] Incidentally, the discovery of the soul as the root of sin, and the identity of sin and evil in the proper sense is, according to Titus of Bostra, another proof for the nondivinity of the soul.[67]

In the Father's eyes, a free God and a free human being are corollaries: one entails the other, just as the Manichaean conception that makes of human beings slaves of the evil power is also bound to deprive God of *God's* free will.

If human beings are thus able to act freely, this means that they possess a natural knowledge of good and evil.[68] This natural knowledge is, in the field of ethics, the equivalent of the *koinai ennoiai* in epistemology. Here again, both pagan and Christian thinkers seem to agree on most points in their radical rejection of the ethical implications of Manichaean doctrines.

Already Alexander of Lycopolis was shocked by the Manichaean limitation of the path of salvation, pointing out the social aspects of the closed Manichaean community. Moreover, he ridiculed Manichaean asceticism as meaningless.[69] Simplicius goes further: According to him Manichaean doctrine negates the very possibility of ethical life, since Mani "eradicates virtue and ethical behavior by negating the freedom of choice given to man by God and nature." He adds that, if there were such a thing as the evil principle, there would be no evil in the world.[70] Such wording echoes Plotinus's passionate argument against the Gnostics, where he insists on their lack of ethical teaching.[71]

Although Christian theologians seem to have put a stronger emphasis on theodicy and anthropology, they were by no means insensitive to the ethical side of the polemics. Titus, for instance, notes at the start of his opus, that the false conception of compulsion held by the Manichaeans entails a lack of belief in effort (*ponos*) and virtue (*aretē*) in human behavior.[72]

In reaction to Manichaean encratism, the Church Fathers consistently defended the legitimacy of marriage.[73] Suffice it here to mention John of

[65] *Disputationes* 1 (PG 88. 543).

[66] *Antirrhēsis* 4 (Demetrakopoulos); cf. John of Damascus *C. Manich.* 15 (Kotter, 360).

[67] *C. Manich.* 1.32 (= 1.26–27 in PG 18; de Lagarde, 20).

[68] Titus of Bostra *C. Manich.* 2.3 (= 2.2 in PG 18; de Lagarde, 26–27).

[69] *C. Manichaei opiniones* 16, 25 (Brinkmann, 23–24 = Villey, 30, 41).

[70] *In Epicteti encheiridion* 27 (Dübner, 72–73).

[71] *Enn.* 2.9.

[72] Titus *C. Manich.* 1.2 (de Lagarde, 2).

[73] On Manichaean encratism, see most recently J. Ries, "L'enkrateia et ses motivations dans les Kephalaia coptes de Medînet Mâdi," in U. Bianchi, ed., *La tradizione dell'enkrateia: motivazioni ontologiche e protologiche* (Rome: Ateneo, 1985) 369–83.

Damascus, who insists that natural law itself legitimizes child bearing.[74]

Christians offered exegesis on texts which the Manichaeans understood literally. In their denigration of the flesh, for instance, Manichaeans were able to quote Paul, whereas the Christians had to understand the Paulinian concept of flesh in a figurative sense, as the spiritual principle of evil.[75] The Christians claimed that sin is neither natural nor necessary: human beings, not God, are responsible for it, through the free will of their souls. Indeed, late antique thinkers were not more successful than we are in surmounting the problem of evil. Nevertheless, they offered a cogent conception of free will, which linked in a rather rigorous way theodicy, anthropology, and ethics. This conception is established upon a vision of human beings as free in theory but sinners in practice.

Many of the Christian concepts and arguments mentioned above were taken over by Muslim and Jewish theologians, who stated categorically that the attribution of evil to God stems from ignorance of the meaning of evil and from a subjective, egocentric view of the world.[76] Also common is the attack, from various angles, on the Manichaean mistaken conception of the person, which does not recognize the integrity of the living entity.[77]

Concerning free will, however, there are some differences between Christianity and Islam—differences that bear upon the status of human will and action. As is well known, predestinarian views were predominant in early Islam. This is clear from both the Qurʾān and claims of Muslim orthodoxy.[78] Moreover, an outside observer such as John of Damascus confirms this predestinarian tendency in the earliest period of Islam.[79] It stands to reason that within early Islam, some held the opposite view. Indeed, political insurgents against the Ummayads professed a doctrine of free will, in defiance of the predestinarian

[74] John of Damascus *C. Manich.* 14 (Kotter, 359). For Egyptian instances, see G. G. Stroumsa, "The Manichaean Challenge to Egyptian Christianity," in B. A. Pearson and J. E. Goehring, eds., *The Roots of Egyptian Christianity* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1986) 307–19.

[75] Paul the Persian *Disputationes, Dialogus III* (PG 88. 547–49).

[76] See, e.g., Jaʿfar al-Ṣādiq, *Tawḥīd al-Mufaḍḍal* (Najaf, 1352 H) 89–90 (= *Mani,* 75); G. Vajda, *Al-Kitāb al-Muḥtawī de Yūsuf al-Baṣīr, texte, traduction et commentaire* (ed. D. R. Blumenthal; Leiden: Brill, 1985) 139, 688; Saʿadya, *Amānāt,* IX.7 p. 278.

[77] E.g., ʿAbd al-Jabbār (*Mughnī,* 29:17–19), who speaks of the unity of the person (*al-jumla al-ḥayya*); also, the very common argument from the ability of the sinner to repent, e.g., Saʿadya, *Amānāt,* I, 3, p. 53; al-Khayyāṭ, *Kitāb al-Intiṣār . . . , Le Livre du Triomphe* (ed. H. S. Nyberg; Cairo: Bibliothèque Egyptienne, 1925) 30–31; Māturīdī, *Tawḥīd,* 115, 162, 163, 179; Yūsuf al Baṣīr, *Muḥtawī,* 688.

[78] The relevant texts were analyzed in a comprehensive way by W. Montgomery Watt, *Free Will and Predestination in Early Islam* (London: Luzac, 1948).

[79] See his *Disputatio Saraceni et Christiani* (PG 94, cols. 1585–98 esp. 1589–92). ET by John W. Voorhis, "The Discussion of a Christian and a Saracen by John of Damascus," *Moslem World* 25 (1935) 266–73, esp. 270, and see the discussion of this text in D. J. Sahas, *John of Damascus on Islam, The "Heresy of the Ishmaelites"* (Leiden: Brill, 1972) 99–112.

view held by the rulers.[80] Hence, the issue of free will and predestination was present within Islam itself from its early stages. However, we are concerned here with the theological expression of this issue. In this context, a full understanding of the texts cannot ignore the impact of the Manichaean challenge. Arabic texts repeatedly refer to the Manichaean presence during the formative period of Islam. The scope of this article does not allow us to go further into the historical question, but we see no compelling reason not to accept the accounts of Arab heresiographers on the issue of free will (as in the topics dealt with above) as solid evidence. Moreover, the formulation of the problem of free will in Muslim theological literature seems to confirm this evidence.

It should be noted here that in discussing ethics, Arabic-writing theologians often refer to dualists in general rather than to Manichaeans. In many cases, however, it appears that dualism *tout court* meant first and foremost Manichaeism. ʿAbd al-Jabbār, for example, (who dedicates most of his anti-dualist polemics to Manichaeism), opens his refutation of the Zoroastrian view of evil by saying that this is actually a repetition of the refutation of dualism (*thanāwiyya*)—this last word referring clearly to his previous discussion of Manichaeism (cf. *Mughnī* 33:9; Monnot, *Penseurs*, 251).

Due to the problematic stand of free will in Islamic thought, it seems that Manichaean attacks on God's equity found here, at first, easy prey. But it was not long before Muslim thinkers started to fight back, and this reaction had a major impact on the development of Islamic theology.[81] Wāṣil b. ʿAtāʾ (early eighth century), the founder of the first established school of Islamic theology, the Muʿtazila, is said to have composed a thousand questions against the Manichaeans,[82] and this fact can illustrate the speed and urgency with which Muslims reacted to Manichaeism.

As the *Škand-Gumānīk Vičār,* a Zoroastrian polemical work of the ninth (?) century shows, Muʿtazilite argumentation on free will did not impress dualist theologians, for whom there remained inherent contradictions in monotheism itself on the question of human freedom.[83] The importance of the complex of theodicy and free will in this fight is best illustrated by a relatively late source, the Qaraʾite Yūsuf al-Baṣīr (eleventh century), who often follows the Muslim ʿAbd al-Jabbār. According to Yūsuf al-Baṣīr, the polemics with the dualists has nothing to do with the unity of God (*tawḥīd*), but rather it belongs entirely to the

[80] See n. 98 below.

[81] See H. S. Nyberg, "Zum Kampf zwischen Islam und Manichäismus," *OLZ* 32 (1929) 430–31.

[82] See, e.g., ʿAbd al-Jabbār, *Faḍl al-Iʿtizāl* . . . (ed. Fuʾād Sayyid; Tunis, 1974) 165:11–13. On Wāṣil, see S. Stroumsa, "The Origins of the Muʿtazila Reconsidered," in *Jerusalem Studies in Arabic and Islam* 9 (forthcoming).

[83] *Škand-Gumān Vičār,* chap. 11, 194, p. 141, and 208, p. 147. Of course Muslim polemical works were meant more for internal consumption than as missionary tools.

realm of theodicy (*bāb al-ʿadl*).[84] To our knowledge, this is the only place where this view is formulated in such a drastic way, but Yūsuf al-Baṣīr is certainly not alone in putting the stress in this domain.

A ninth-century Muslim heresiarch, Ibn al-Rāwandī, who was a student of the Manichaean Abu ʿĪsā al-Warrāq, wrote a book propounding dualism (*fī taqwiyat al-qawl fī al-ithnayn*).[85] This book was entitled "The Futility of Divine Wisdom" (*ʿAbath al-Ḥikma*),[86] a title which expresses well Manichaean rejection of both this evil world and its creator. An Arabic work from the same period, which is attributed to the Muslim theologian al-Jāḥiẓ but clearly betrays a Christian origin, takes up the Manichaean challenge and endeavors to prove precisely that Divine wisdom and economy is manifest in every aspect of this world, including what seems to us to be evil.[87] And according to both al-Māturīdī and al-Baghdādī, a major doctrine of the Muʿtazila, that God's deed is always the optimum (*al-aṣlaḥ*) originated in the Muʿtazilite attempt to refute the dualists.[88]

Ibn al-Rāwandī's above mentioned book had an alternative title: "On defending God's injustice and on accusing him of injustice" (*al Taʿdīl waʾl Tajwīr*).[89] This title reveals the broader scope of the Manichaean challenge. For the creation of the evil world earned God the accusations of cruelty and folly; the accusation of injustice, however, did not refer directly to God's creation, but more precisely to God's conduct with human beings. God orders them to do what they cannot do, and then punishes them for disobeying these absurd orders.[90] This accusation led ʿAbd al-Jabbār, for example, to formulate clearly his

[84] *Muḥtawī*, 139, 687.

[85] On al-Warraq's Manichaeism, see Colpe, "Anpassung des Manichäismus," and S. Stroumsa, "The *Barāhima* in Early Kalām," *Jerusalem Studies in Arabic and Islam* 6 (1985) 230–31 n. 5. Al-Warrāq's Manichaeism suggests that his student's *qawl fī al-ithnayn* was also of the Manichaean sort.

[86] See Nyberg's introduction to his edition of the *Kitāb al-intiṣār*, 34–35; Ibn al-Murtaḍā, *ṭabaqāt al-Muʿtazila, Die Klassen der Muʿtaziliten* (ed. S. Diwald-Wilzer; Wiesbaden: Steiner, 1961) 92:3–4.

[87] *Kitāb al-Dalāʾil waʾl-Iʿtibār ʿalā al-Khalq waʾl-Tadbīr* (ed. Muḥamad Rāghib al-Ṭabbākh; Ḥalab, 1928), and see D. Z. Banet, "A Common Source for Baḥya b. Yosef and al-Ghazālī," *Magnes Anniversary Book* (in Hebrew; Jerusalem: Hebrew University, 1938) 23–30.

[88] Māturīdī, *Tawḥīd*, 215:8–216:3; al-Baghdādī, *Farq*, 113 ff. (= *Mani*, 185–87).

[89] See Nyberg, ed., *Le Livre du Triomphe*.

[90] In this context the human being is compared to a chained slave who is asked to perform an impossible act (e.g., al-Muqammiṣ, *ʿIshrūn Maqāla*, chap. 12, fol. 53), or to a donkey given an order to fly like an eagle (Theodore Abū Qurra, "Maymar yuḥaqqiqu liʾl-insān ḥurriya thābita," *Mayāmir Thāudūrūs Abī Qurra* (ed. Q. Bāsha; Beirut, 1904) 10–11.

objection to Manichaeism: dualism is false, he says, because of the reality of God's commands and prohibitions.[91]

A substantial part of the discussion of theodicy in many Mu'tazilite works, however, does not speak directly about Manichaeans, but rather about the predestinarians, known as the *Mujbira*. Their doctrine of predestination is said to be untenable because it would mean that God created people for heaven and hell regardless of what their deeds might be, and because only those who act out of free choice can be called agents. Since the *Mujbira* deny this freedom to choose, human beings are not the real agents of their acts, and punishing them for their acts is unjust.[92] Quite often, the skirmishes between the *Mujbira* and the *'Adliyya* are presented as a totally inner problem in Islamic and also in Jewish writings. Al-Muqammiṣ, for example, gives a well rounded discussion of the flaws in the doctrine of the *Mujbira*, without mentioning the dualists at all in this context.[93] Nevertheless, the terminology he chooses is strikingly similar to the terminology known to us from Manichaean jargon and from monotheistic anti-Manichaean vocabulary. For al-Muqammiṣ sets out to prove that God is wise and just (*ḥakīm, 'adl*), and not, as the determinist doctrine would imply, stupid and unjust (*jāhil, safīh, ẓālim*), whose acts are futile (*'abath*), oppressive, and tyrannical (*ẓulm, jawr*). And indeed, al-Māturīdī tells us, using again the same terminology, that it is in antidualistic context that these terms were used and developed.[94]

Similarly, a standard argument in the polemics against the *Mujbira* is that we must consider human beings the sole agents of their acts, because of the impossibility of ascribing one act to two agents.[95] This is a major argument in anti-Manichaean polemics, which is developed at length in those sections of the theological works that deal with the creation of the world.[96] In all likelihood, it is from this context that it was borrowed and passed into the argument about free will. And yet, the dualists are not usually mentioned when this argument is adduced in the context of free will.

Finally, a famous prophetic tradition (*ḥadīth*) says that the *Qadarites* are the Zoroastrians of Islam (*al-Qadariyya majūs hādhihi al-umma*).[97] Whether the

[91] *Mughnī*, 35:4–36:7.

[92] The problem of human acts is thoroughly discussed by D. Gimaret, *Théories de l'acte humain en théologie musulmane* (Paris: Vrin, 1980). On the *Mujbira*, see ibid., 61.

[93] *'Ishrūn Maqālā*, chap. 12, and see G. Vajda, "La finalité de la création de l'homme selon un théologien juif du IX[e] siècle," *Oriens* 15 (1962) 61–85. See also 'Abd al-Jabbār, *Mughnī* 8.330: 6ff., who repeatedly compares the *Mujbira* to the *Majūs*.

[94] *Tawḥīd*, see n. 85 above.

[95] E.g., Sa'adya, *Amānāt*, 4.4, pp. 156:31–156:4.

[96] Ibid., 1.3, pp. 53–54.

[97] See the use of this *ḥadīth* by al-Māturīdī, *Tawḥīd*, 88:13–89:1 (against the Mu'tazila, and where the issue is God's free will) as well as by a Mu'tazilite, Ibn al-Murtaḍā, *Bāb dhikr al-Mu'tazila*

name *Qadariyya* was given originally to supporters of free will or to predestinarians remains a moot point. At any rate, this *ḥadīth,* used by both parties, testifies to their awareness that, notwithstanding the political aspects of the Muslim debate over free will,[98] the issue of *qadar*—God's omnipotence or human beings' ability to act—was raised in the course of the theological encounter with dualism. This *ḥadīth* speaks specifically about Zoroastrians, but, as mentioned above, in the context of free-will (including the attacks on *Qadariyya* and *Mujbira*), the dualism intended was often Manichaeism.

This is most clearly demonstrated in an Arabic epistle of the Melkite theologian Theodore Abū Qurra (ninth century) who tries to prove that "man has real freedom."[99] Quite a few times in the course of this short epistle, Abū Qurra begins his argument with an apostrophe to the Manichaean (*Yā Mānī*). He includes in his work a correction of a Manichaean interpretation of a verse from the Gospel that the Manichaeans take as a proof of predestination and that Abū Qurra interprets as referring to human intentions.[100] Nevertheless, the epistle is not really anti-Manichaean, since it is clear from the outset that Abū Qurra directs his work against someone who denies free will, but believes that God is equitable.[101] The reference to Manichaeism is made only as *ilzām,* that is, in order to force the opponent to see the outrageous logical outcome of his claims. This last fact led Armand Abel to suggest that it is with Muslims that Abū Qurra really argues here.[102] This suggestion must, however, be modified, for there is no clear sign of anti-Muslim polemic in this work.[103] In all likelihood, Abū Qurra, like al-Muqammiṣ, is affected by the Muslim interiorization of the Manichaean ethical challenge. He polemicizes with the (presumably Christian) predestinarian as the Muslim would polemicize with a *mujbir.*

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min kitāb al-munya wa'l-amal (ed. T. W. Arnold; Leipzig: Harrassowitz, 1902) 10:4. On the name "Qadariyya" see Watt, *Free Will,* 48–53; Sahas, *John of Damascus,* 105 n. 1.

[98] See, e.g., Watt, *Free Will;* J. Van Ess, "Les Qadarites et la Ghailāniya de Yazid III," *SI* 31 (1970) 269–86; H. Laoust, *Les schismes dans l'Islam* (Paris: Payot, 1965) 44.

[99] See n. 90 above.

[100] Abū Qurra, "Maymar yuḥaqqiqu," 15, in reference to Matt 12:33.

[101] Ibid., 10, 17–18. An outline of Abū Qurra's anti-Manichaean polemics is given by S. H. Griffith, "The Controversial Theology of Theodore Abū Qurrah (c. 750–c. 820 A.D.): A Methodological, Comparative Study in Christian Arabic Literature" (Ph.D. diss., Catholic University of America, 1978) 238–40.

[102] Abel, "Les sources arabes," 33.

[103] To be sure, Christian authors had to beware Muslim scrutiny in their Arabic polemical writings, and usually avoided attacking Islam openly. This caution, however, did not prevent Abū Qurra, as well as other Christian theologians, from polemicizing against Islam. In such cases Abū Qurra alluded to Islam through the use of Quranic verses or of such veiled references as "the outsiders" (*al-barrāniyūn*). For an analysis of such transparent hints see now S. H. Griffith, "Theodore Abū Qurrah's Arabic Tract on the Christian Practice of Venerating Images," *JAOS* 105 (1985) 66–68.

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Probably more than Judaism and Islam, Christianity is inherently prone to dualistic challenges. But this very fact also provides the answer for Christianity's rather impressive immunity to Manichaeism: in the second and third centuries, Christian thinkers had successfully developed theological tools in order to counter the Gnostic threat. These tools were ready for renewed use against Manichaeism, which challenged Christianity when it was becoming the leading religion in the Roman Empire. Manichaeism was soon to be pushed into a defensive position and into the underground. It is possible—although the sources are too scarce for one to be certain—that a resurgence of the Manichaean challenge occurred during the reign of Justinian I, in the first half of the sixth century. Such a resurgence would explain the rigor of Justinian's legal measures against the sect, and also the relative abundance of refutations stemming from that period.[104] In any case, there was clearly no Manichaean danger in Byzantium after the sixth century, and in all probability the argumentation that reached John of Damascus and Theodore Abū Qurra had been transmitted to them in a rather abstract way, with no reference to an actual polemical context. Other Byzantine theological works from the sixth to the eighth century make only random allusions to Mani, his doctrines, and his followers.[105]

The lack of a serious Manichaean threat to Byzantine Christianity does not mean the absence of any Manichaean influence on Byzantine theology. When the late Jean Gouillard writes that Byzantine refutations of Manichaeism "s'intéressent plus à tel ou tel article de doctrine qu'à l'inspiration d'ensemble," he is probably wrong.[106] 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, whereas in other polemical contexts the main emphasis was on problems of christology and trinitarianism.

The very reappearance of anti-Manichaean polemical works by Christian, Jewish, and Muslim theologians in the early Islamic period testifies, along with the accounts of Muslim historians, to a Manichaean resurgence under the

[104] See n. 34 above.

[105] See, e.g., from the sixth century Leontius of Byzantium *De sectis* 3.2 (PG 86.1, 1213); Theodore of Raithu *De incarnatione* (PG 91. 1485 C–D). From the seventh century we have George the Higoumen, *Chapters to Epiphanius concerning Heresies,* (ed. M. Richard, *Epetēris Etaireias Byzantinōn Spoudiōn* 25 [1955] 331), who mentions the Gospels of Philip and of Thomas, and Anastasius Sinaita, *Viae Dux, passim* (K.-H. Utheman, ed., *CC* ser. graeca 8 [Turnhout-Louvain: Brepols-Louvain University, 1981]), see index; cf. particularly XXII 3.34 (p. 298) which seems to imply direct contact with a Manichaean.

[106] J. Gouillard, "Une hérésie protée: le manichéisme des Byzantins," *Cahiers du Cercle Ernest Renan* 127 (1982) 157–65 esp. 159.

Umayyads, and to their presence in the early Abbasid period. But the testimony goes deeper than the mere popularity of anti-Manichaean polemics. The comparison of Muslim and Christian polemics highlights the similarity of Muslim authors with the earlier Christian polemicists, and in all probability the dependence of the former on the latter. On the other hand, the comparison also emphasizes the differences between polemics in Greek and in Arabic. The pronounced concern of Arabic-writing theologians for specific points of physics, and still more their concern for free-will, appears to reflect the slightly different challenge that Manichaeism represented to the monotheistic religions after the rise of Islam. This would imply that anti-Manichaean polemics do not carry only fossilized *topoi* but rather reflect an actual encounter with Manichaeans. The content of the polemics also corroborates the evidence of Muslim historians and heresiographers about an active Manichaean presence. This is particularly manifest in the writings of *mutakallimūn* from eastern provinces such as al-Māturīdī.

Some sixty years ago H. S. Nyberg suggested that the confrontation with Manichaeism had had a major impact on the shaping of the Muʿtazila.[107] Our survey of the treatment of free will in theology written in Arabic corroborates this suggestion, and also shows that this influence was not merely a heritage from Christian literature. The Manichaean direct challenge is in the background of the Muʿtazilites' attack on the *Mujbira,* as it is in the background of Julian of Eclanum's attack on Augustine. To the best of our knowledge there is no similar phenomenon of interiorization of the dualist challenge in eastern Patristic literature, which could have exerted a direct influence on Islamic thought. This fact suggests that Christian theological influences, which no doubt existed, are not in themselves enough to explain the structure of the Islamic discussion of free will.[108]

It could be argued that the discussion of free will, the *Mujbira* topic included, should be explained as an inner development within Islamic thought, without any need to appeal to outside influences. The plausibility of such an argument, however, rests upon the assumption that there was no Manichaean presence in the East—or at least no Manichaean intellectual and spiritual challenge—during the formative period of Islamic thought. Such an assumption ignores the cumulative and consistent evidence from Muslim sources, of which some theological aspects were presented and discussed in this article.

[107] "Zur Kampf," 427–48, 430–31. See also Sh. Pines in *Cambridge History of Islam*, 2. 791.

[108] The possibility of Christian influence on the Qadariyya was discussed last by Sahas, *John of Damascus*, 104–6, and by M. Cook, *Early Muslim Dogma: A Source Critical Study* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univeristy Press, 1981) 149–50, 156.

To summarize the results of our inquiry, it appears that Manichaean presence and doctrine constituted a significant challenge to both early Byzantine and early Muslim theology, although this challenge was of a slightly different nature in both cases. Moreover, it appears that the emphasis of this challenge was on ethical rather than on purely theological issues. Anthropological conceptions of the Manichaeans—and hence their approach to the problem of free will—seem to have been felt by both Christian and Muslim theologians as more immediately threatening than their theological dualism and its "materialist" sequel.