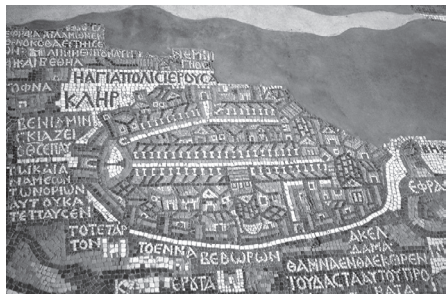

PATRISTIC STUDIES IN THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY

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MANICHAEISM AT THE CROSSROADS OF JEWISH, CHRISTIAN AND MUSLIM TRADITIONS

Mani and the Manichaeans have often served as convenient foils in much of the history of Patristic Studies. More often than not, Mani is simply seen as the arch-heretic *par excellence* against which the orthodoxy of others can be judged or condemned. He has frequently been viewed as the culmination of everything deviant, degenerate, and foreign to mainstream Christian discourse. Manichaean thought is a spectre that particularly haunts the world of Augustinian studies, where its influence (real or imagined) is almost always portrayed in a dark, negative light.[1] Manichaeans, of course, would have been greatly offended by this tenebrous caricature, but the questions must be asked – what have they contributed to the development not only of Christian tradition, but of late antique traditions in general? Is there anything in their legacy of enduring value? On one level, Manichaeans preserved ideas and traditions abandoned elsewhere in the Jewish and Christian worlds, while on another, Manichaeism serves as an important link between several of the major late antique religious traditions, the implications of which are only starting to be uncovered.

In its essence, Manichaeism is a liminal religion. Its unique amalgam of features have often made it difficult to define and classify in relation to neighbouring traditions. Growing up in

[1] This is being re-evaluated by J. Beduhn's recent multi-volume study *Augustine's Manichaean Dilemma, Volume 1. Conversion and Apostasy, 373-388 ce*, Philadelphia, 2009 and *Volume 2. Making a "Catholic" Self, 388-401 ce, 2013,* Philadelphia, 2013.

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mid-3rd century Iran, Mani was well-positioned to produce a far reaching and original religious message. Sasanian Persia, like its Parthian precursor, was religiously diverse. Not only could the Hellenistic traces of Macedonian colonies be felt throughout its territories, but also a strong Jewish and Christian presence manifested itself in a variety of forms – largely in Aramaic, a point I shall return to later. Moreover, Mani would have certainly been exposed to some form of Zoroastrian piety, as well as Indian religious traditions, be they Hindu, Buddhist, or even Jain.[2] This situation is born out, albeit in a somewhat sinister light, by the declaration of the Magian high-priest Kirdir, who under Bahram II famously celebrated his persecution of 'Jews (*yahūd*), Buddhists (*šaman*), Brahmans (*braman*), Syriac Christians (*nāsrā*), Greek Christians (*kristiyān*), and Manichaeans (*zandīk*)' in an inscription.[3] Mani's openness to other traditions may have intrigued King Shapur, but after the Great King's death he and his movement were perceived as subversive by both Persian and Roman authorities alike. As a result, the Manichaean movement occupied cultural, political, geographical, and theological spaces at the margins of the Roman and Sasanian worlds. It must be remembered, however, that Manichaeism is not unique in this regard, since, regardless of their later distribution, all of the major religions of the late antique Near East – Jewish, Christian, Muslim – emerged from the very same liminal matrix as Manichaeans themselves. What is forgotten, or wilfully overlooked, is the significant role played by the followers of Mani in this dynamic mix.

[2] Gh. Gnoli' 'Aurentes' The Buddhist "arhants" in the Coptic "Kephalaia" through a Bactrian Transmission,' *East and West*, 41.1 (1991), p. 359-361; M. Deeg, I. Gardner, 'Indian Influence on Mani Reconsidered: The Case of Jainism,' *International Journal of Jaina Studies*, 4-6 (2008-2010), p. 158-186; I. Gardner, 'Some Comments on Mani and Indian Religions from the Coptic Sources', in *New Perspectives in Manichaean Research* – ed. A. Van Tongerloo, L. Cirillo, Leiden, 2005; T. Pettipiece, 'The Buddha in Early Christian Literature', in *Millennium 6/2009: Jahrbuch zu Kultur und Geschichte des ersten Jahrtausends n. Chr.*, Berlin, 2009.

[3] Ph. Gignoux, *Les quatre inscriptions du Mage Kirdīr: Textes et concordances*, Studia Iranica 9, 1991. See J. Wiesehöfer, *Ancient Persia: From 550 BC to 650 AD*, London, 1996, p. 199.

1. *From Darkness to Light: The Rediscovery of the Manichaean Voice*

It has indeed taken a long time for Manichaeans to find their rightful place in the scholarly dialogue about late antique religious culture. Long considered little more than a heresiological curiosity, the impact of textual discoveries from the Turfan Oasis in the early twentieth century revolutionized modern Manichaean studies.[4] Unfortunately, in spite of the renewed energy and interest these finds generated, the Turfan texts led scholars down an errant path to a place where Manichaeism was conceptualized as another form of Persian religion, since the fragments retrieved were in various Middle Iranian dialects (Middle Persian, Parthian, Sogdian) and contained a significant amount of Zoroastrian technical terminology. One scholar in particular resisted this trend. In 1924, F. C. Burkitt gave a series of Donnellan Lectures on *The Religion of the Manichees*,[5] in which he maintained that Manichaeism took root in a rich, albeit eclectic, Christian soil – soil from Persia to be sure, but Christian soil nonetheless.

Burkitt's interpretation was validated in 1929 when a collection of Coptic manuscripts from Medinet Madi were recognized as once belonging to a Manichaean community.[6] In these texts, dated to the fourth or fifth century – much earlier than those found in Central Asia – the Christian elements come to the fore. For one thing, the Manichaeans call themselves the 'Holy Church', and, in the codex containing Mani's *Letters*, Mani designates himself 'an Apostle of Jesus Christ'.[7] This conception was made even more explicit some decades later with the publication of the tiny *Cologne Mani Codex*, which also

[4] A. Stein, 'Sir Aurel Stein's Expedition in Central Asia', *The Geographical Journal*, 46.4 (1915), p. 269-276. Aside from the many scholarly editions by Sundermann and others, see H.-J. Klimkeit, *Gnosis on the Silk Road: Gnostic Texts from Central Asia*, New York, 1993 and M. Boyce, *A Catalogue of the Iranian Manuscripts in Manichean Script in the German Turfan Collection*, Berlin, 1960.

[5] F. C. Burkitt, *The Religion of the Manichees*, Cambridge, 1925.

[6] C. Schmidt, H.-J. Polotsky, 'Ein Mani-Fund in Ägypten', *Sitzungsberichte der preussischen Akademie der Wissenschaften* (1933), p. 4-90. See J. Robinson, *The Manichaean Codices of Medinet Madi*, Eugene, 2013.

[7] Already noted by Schmidt, Polotsky, 'Ein Mani-Fund', p. 24.

contains excerpts from Mani's correspondence with the same introductory formula embedded into a hagiographic narrative of his early life in a sectarian community.[8] Now, Mani's fascination with and commitment to Jesus has come even more into focus with the recent publication of remains of yet another *Letters* codex from Kellis.[9] Here, Mani writes:

> My good saviour, the witness who is my father: He is [...] my redeemer from [...] all the time, the one whom my eyes gaze upon all the time; it is he who bears witness that you are [...] in [...] in love, like a beloved friend and a brother and a good companion' (*P. Kell. Copt. 53*).[10]

At the beginning of the twenty-first century, there should be no doubt that Manichaeism represents a parallel stream within the multiform topography of early Christian discourses. Manichaeism, therefore, or more properly the *Manichaean Church*, is not a 'Persian' religion in Christian guise, as was once imagined, but an indigenous form of Persian Christianity. Consequently, Manichaean writings and ideas ought to be considered in any broad-based and genuinely holistic examination of early Christian traditions. The confrontation between this Persian church and the rival 'orthodoxy' imported, or relocated by Shapur,[11] from the west is vividly portrayed in the imagined confrontation between the Bishop of Carchar and Mani in the *Acts of Archelaus*,[12] and more subtly so in the *Doctrine of Addai*'s overwriting of an earlier Manichaean mission to Edessa.[13]

[8] *Der Kölner Mani-Kodex: Über das Werden seines Leibes: Kritische Edition* – ed. A. Henrichs, L. Koenen, Opladen, 1988.

[9] See I. Gardner, S. N. C. Lieu, 'From Narmouthis (Medinet Madi) to Kellis (Ismant El-Kharab): Manichaean Documents from Roman Egypt', *The Journal of Roman Studies*, 86 (1996), p. 146-169; I. Gardner, 'The Reconstruction of Mani's Epistles from Three Coptic Codices (Ismant el-Kharab and Medinet Madi)', in *The Light and the Darkness: Studies in Manichaeism and its World* – ed. P. Mirecki, J. Beduhn, Leiden, 2001, p. 93-104.

[10] I. Gardner, *Kellis Literary Texts*, 2 vols., Oxford, 2007, II.

[11] Wiesehöfer, *Ancient Persia*, p. 201.

[12] J. Beduhn, 'Placing the *Acts of Archelaus*', in *Frontiers of Faith: The Christian Encounter with Manichaeism in the Acts of Archelaus* – ed. J. Beduhn, P. Mirecki, Leiden, 2007, p. 7.

[13] H. Drijvers, 'Addai und Mani. Christentum und Manichäismus im dritten Jahrhundert in Syrien'. in *III^e Symposium Syriacum 1980*, Rome, 1983, p. 75-185.

Even much later Islamic observers, such as 'Abd al-Jabbar, recorded the Manichaeans' insistence that they are the followers of Christ who possess the true gospel.[14] Still, in spite of all this mounting evidence, there is still a strong resistance to giving Manichaeans their due. Not so long ago, Michel Tardieu complained that no one really cared about Manichaean readings of the Bible,[15] although Charles Kannengiesser did include a chapter on Mani in his magisterial *Handbook of Patristic Exegesis* (2004) and Alexander Böhlig's dissertation *Die Bibel bei den Manichäern*, which has long circulated privately among scholars, has just been published by Brill (2013). These are important steps, but still more can be done to define the Manichaean contribution to the late antique religious landscape.

2. *Sibling Rivalries: Manichaeans and the Religions of the Late Antique Near East*

So if Manichaeans are to be seen as integral to the interactions and developments of late antique religions, what do such interactions look like? Are they primarily hostile, or mutually influential? Moreover, do they tell us anything about the common environment in which these traditions developed?

For one thing, it has long been evident that Mani was greatly influenced by some form of sectarian Judaism, one with important connections to the Dead Sea Scrolls. John Reeves, for example, examined the parallels between Iranian fragments from the Manichaean *Book of Giants*[16] and certain Aramaic texts from Qumran.[17] Moreover, the publication of the *Cologne Mani Codex* made it clear that the Elchasaite community in which Mani is said to have been raised also has significant points of con-

[14] J. Reeves, *Prolegomena to a History of Islamicate Manichaeism*, Sheffield, 2011, p. 96.

[15] M. Tardieu, 'Principes de l'exégèse manichéenne du Nouveau Testament', in *Les règles de l'interprétation*, Paris, 1987, p. 123-124.

[16] W. B. Henning 'Ein manichäisches Henochbuch', *Sitzungsbe-richte der Preußischen Akademie der Wissenschaften*, 5 (1934), p. 27-35; W. B. Henning, 'The Book of the Giants', *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies*, 11.1 (1943) p. 52-74.

[17] J. C. Reeves, *Jewish Lore in Manichaean Cosmogony: Studies in the Book of Giants Traditions*, Cincinnati, 1992.

tact with Second Temple Jewish sectarianism.[18] Mani appears to have been well versed not only in the so-called Enoch literature, but stories about other biblical forefathers as well, such as Adam, Seth, Cain, and Abel. He even endeavoured to provide a clever etymology for the name of Mount Sinai in his *Living Gospel*.[19] At the same time, later Jewish authors reacted negatively to Manichaean teachings and were offended by their dualism, as in the case of the Karaite theologian Yusuf al-Basir (11th cent), who lumped them in with Zorastrians and Christians, or the Spanish philosopher Abraham bar Hiyya, who believed that Mani was a heretic predicted by the prophet Daniel (11:20).[20]

Christians, who engaged with Manichaeans most directly, share with them a rather complex history. In addition to Mani's proclamation to be an 'Apostle of Jesus Christ',[21] Manichaean mythology is deeply rooted in an alternate trinitarian Father-Mother-Child schema which we also find in texts such as the *Secret Book of John*. Additional connections between other Nag Hammadi texts such as the *Gospel of Philip, Eugnostos*, and *On the Origin of the World* and Manichaean literature can also be found, although the lines of influence between the corpora are far from clear,[22] as is the case with similar motifs in other non-canonical writings such as the *Acts*[23] and *Gospel* of Thomas.[24]

[18] A. Henrichs, 'Mani and the Babylonian Baptists: A Historical Confrontation', *Harvard Studies in Classical Philology*, 77 (1973), p. 23-59; A. F. J. Klijn, G. J. Reinink, 'Elchasai and Mani', *Vigiliae Christianae*, 28.4 (1974), p. 277-289.

[19] W.-P. Funk, 'Mani's Account of Other Religions According to the Coptic Synaxeis Codex', in *New Light on Manichaeism: Papers from the sixth International Congress on Manichaeism; organized by the International Association of Manichaean Studies* – ed J. Beduhn, Leiden, 2009, p. 123.

[20] Reeves, *Prolegomena*, p. 136-137.

[21] This identification has been further reinforced by Zsuzsanna Gulácsi's recent identification of Mani's personal seal, see N. A. Pedersen, J. M. Larsen, *Manichaean Texts in Syriac: First Editions, New Editions and Studies, with contributions by Zsuzsanna Gulácsi and Myriam Krutzsch*, Turnhout, 2013.

[22] See T. Pettipiece, 'Towards a Manichaean Reading of the Nag Hammadi Codices', *Journal of the Canadian Society for Coptic Studies*, 3-4 (2012): p. 43-54.

[23] P.-H. Poirier, *L'Hymne de la perle des actes de Thomas. Introduction, Texte-Traduction, Commentaire*, Louvain-la-Neuve, 1981.

[24] W.-P. Funk, '"Einer aus tausend, zwei aus zehntausend": Zitate aus dem Thomasevangelium in den koptischen Manichaica', in *For the Children, Perfect Instruction: Studies in Honor of Hans-Martin Schenke on the Occasion of the Ber-*

Such similarities, of course, did nothing to garner any sympathy among western 'proto-orthodox' observers, so Christian authors in Roman lands tended to denigrate Mani as a Persian charlatan, or worse, as an illegitimate slave.[25] For instance, in his classic description, Hegemonius says in the *Acts of Archelaus*:

> When he saw Manes, Marcellus was first astonished at the garments he was wearing. For he wore a kind of shoe which is generally known commonly as the 'trisolium', and a multi-coloured cloak, of a somewhat ethereal appearance, while in his hand he held a very strong staff made of ebony-wood. He carried a Babylonian book under his left arm, and he had covered his legs with trousers of different colours, one of them scarlet, the other coloured leek-green. His appearance was like that of an old Persian magician or warlord (trans. Vermes).[26]

Even the Aramaic speaking Mandaeans interacted with Manichaeans in important ways, although this remains a subject that is far from being satisfactorily explored. For example, we find parallel descriptions of the 'King of Darkness' in *Kephalaia* Chapter 21 and the Mandaean *Right Ginza*, where the dark ruler is described as resembling a lion, eagle, serpent, and demon.[27] Yet, at the same time, the Mandaeans are harshly critical of their Manichaean cousins, since elsewhere in the *Right Ginza*, we read:

> There is another gate to perdition, which resulted from the mission of the Christ. They are the ones called *zandiqia* and *mardmania* ... they invoke wind, fire, and water and sing hymns of praise to the sun and moon ... they are termed elect ones whom Mar Mani has chosen.[28]

liner Arbeitskreis für koptisch-gnostische Schriften's Thirtieth Year – ed. H.-G. Bethge et al., Leiden, 2002, p. 67-94; J. K. Coyle, 'The Gospel of Thomas in Manichaeism?' in J. K. Coyle, *Manichaeism and Its Legacy*, Leiden, 2009, p. 123-141.

[25] Numerous polemical sources, including the *Acts of Archelaus*, tell an alternate story of Mani's origins as a slave-boy named Corbicius.

[26] M. Vermes, S. N. C. Lieu, K. Kaatz, *Acta Archelai (The Acts of Archelaus)*, Turnhout, 2001, p. 58.

[27] See T. Pettipiece, *Pentadic Redaction in the Manichaean Kephalaia*, Leiden, 2009, p. 55-56; M. Lidzbarski, *Ginza: Der Schatz oder Das große Buch der Mandäer*, Göttingen, 1978 [1925].

[28] Reeves, *Prolegomena*, p. 143-144.

Aside from Christians, Islamic writers have the most to say about Manichaeans and are among our most valuable witnesses, due in part perhaps to a possible Manichaean resurgence under the early Islamic regime.[29] Yet, as in the case of the Mandaeans, the full trajectory of influence between Manichaean and early Muslim communities has remained very much underexplored. For example, what do we make of the fact that, as al-Biruni suggests, Mani called himself 'Seal of the Prophets' long before Muhammad?[30] Indeed, we should not be surprised to find Manichaeans in pre-Islamic Arabia. They are attested by Titus of Bostra's lengthy fourth-century refutation and, in fact, according to the Persian geographer Ibn Rusta, Manichaeans reportedly came from al-Hira to Mecca,[31] possibly via Palmyra, where they had been received by Queen Zenobia.[32] Yet, even if we can demonstrate some historical proximity, can we also detect some deeper degree of interconnection? Tor Andrae suggested that the only definite trace of Manichaean teaching could be found in Muhammad's docetic Christology,[33] but surely we can see some broad similarities in the way in which both Mani and Muhammad characterized their respective missions to restore the primeval revelation given to humanity and as the last in a series of prophetic forerunners. As Mani proclaimed in his *Shaburagan*, a text he wrote specifically to announce his mission to the Persian court:

> Apostles of God have constantly brought wisdom and deeds in successive times. In one era they were brought by

[29] S. N. C. Lieu, *Manichaeism in the Later Roman Empire and Medieval China: A Historical Survey*, Manchester, 1985, p. 82-83.

[30] E. Sachau, *The Chronology of Ancient Nations: An English Version of the Arabic Text of the Athâr-Ul-Bâkiya of Albîrûnî, Or, Vestiges of the Past, Collected and Reduced to Writing by the Author in A.h. 390-1, A.d. 1000*. Lahore, 1983, p. 207; See Reeves, *Prolegomena*, p. 97; G. Stroumsa, 'Seal of the Prophets: the Nature of a Manichaean Metaphor', *Jerusalem Studies in Arabic and Islam,* 7 (1986), p. 61-74.

[31] T. Andrae, *Mohammed: The Man and His Faith*, New York, 1960, p. 105.

[32] M. Tardieu, 'L'arrivee des manicheens à al-Hira', in *La Syrie de Bysance à l'Islam, VII^e-VIII^e siècles: actes du Colloque international "De Bysance à l'Islam", Lyon, Maison de l'Orient méditerranéen, Paris, Institut du monde arabe, 11-15 septembre 1990* – ed. P. Canivet, J.-P. Rey-Coquais, Damas, 1992.

[33] Andrae, *Mohammad*, p. 112.

> the apostle al-Bud to the land of India, in another (era) by Zardasht to Persia, and in another (era) by Jesus to the West. Now this revelation has descended and this prophecy is promulgated during this final era by me, Mani, the apostle of the God of truth to Babylonia.[34]

In fact, both prophets claimed (or were said to claim) to represent the Paraclete promised by Jesus. Indeed, as the tenth-century Islamic scholar al-Nadim stated, 'Mani claimed that he was the Paraclete',[35] whereas this is an identification also famously applied to Muhammad in Qur'an 61.6. More specifically, the *Sira* of Ibn Ishaq cites a (non-Peshitta) Syriac version of Ioh. 15:23 and states that *munahhemana* refers to Muhammad.[36]

3. *Abstaining Aramaeans: The Lost Socio-Linguistic Matrix of Manichaeans and their Rivals*

While we can see that Manichaeans interacted with other late antique religions in a variety of concrete and specific contexts, there are some broader trajectories that unite them in fundamental ways, both ideologically and linguistically.

One of the characteristic features of late antique religiosity is the rise of the ascetic movement. In stark contrast to earlier Graeco-Roman values, which we tend to imagine as idealizing and valuing the body and its pleasures, the flesh increasingly became the battleground in a cosmic war waged for the soul. This ascetic tendency, which spreads through the eastern Mediterranean in the fourth century – shortly after the emergence of Manichaean communities[37] – is certainly present at the core of Manichaean ideology, particularly in terms of what was expected of the community's elite, the Elect. Yet, according to

[34] Cited by al-Biruni, see Reeves, *Prolegomena*, p. 103.

[35] *Fihrist* in Reeves, *Prolegomena*, p. 169.

[36] A. Guillaume, *The Life of Muhammad: A Translation of Ibn Ishaq's Sirat Rasul Allah*, London, 1955, p. 104.

[37] G. Stroumsa, 'Monachisme et Marranisme chez les Manicheens d'Egypte', *Numen*, 29.2 (1982), p. 184-201; L. Koenen, 'Manichäische Mission und Klöster in Ägypte', *Das römisch-byzantinische Ägypten. Aegyptiaca Treverensia*, 2 (1983), p. 93-108.

accounts of Mani's origins, his father Patek, while spending time in one of Ctesiphon's shrines, heard a voice call to him and say: 'Do not eat meat, do not drink wine and abstain from intercourse with anyone'.[38] A similar statement can be found in the second (unpublished) volume of Manichaean *Kephalaia* in connection with the Greek sage Anacharsis: 'Anacharsis the Blessed [...] thus spoke to him [...] Anacharsis the Blessed and [...] hear [...] Do not leave [...]*/ beasts! Drink no wine! Eat(?) no flesh (?) [...] wife! Beget no [...]'.[39] This same admonition is attested in an earlier third-century source, the Syriac teacher Bardaisan's *Book of the Laws of Countries*, which states that 'there is a law among the Indians for the Brahmans, which many thousands and tens of thousands of them are, not to kill, to worship idols, to commit no fornication, to eat no meat and to drink no wine'.[40] Moreover, it is also attested later in the seventh century, when Sebeos in his *Armenian History* attributes to Muhammad the teaching 'not to eat carrion, not to drink wine, not to speak falsely, and not to engage in fornication'.[41] It would seem then that this command functioned as a sort of ascetic slogan throughout Late Antiquity and may ultimately derive from Tatian and his Syrian encratite milieu.[42]

In fact, it is important to note is that this ascetic mantra frequently occurs in texts and traditions firmly rooted in Aramaic/Syriac religious culture. Mani, of course, communicated in an Aramaic dialect, as his father would have as well, and Coptic Manichaean writings were most definitely based on a Syriac foundation. Bardaisan represents one of our earliest sources of Syriac literature from Edessa, whereas the earliest Islamic traditions, if we accept the implications of Christoph Luxenburg's

[38] Al-Nadim, *Fihrist* in I. Gardner, S. N. C. Lieu, *Manichaean Texts from the Roman Empire*, Cambridge, 2004, p. 46-47.

[39] Chapter 312: [On the Seven Buddhas ... Anacharsis ... Chasro ...] (2Ke 310.9-310.14 unpublished). S. Giversen, *The Manichaean Coptic Papyri in the Chester Beatty Library*, Genève, 1986.

[40] H. Drijvers, *The Book of the Laws of Countries: Dialogue on Fate of Bardaiṣan of Edessa*, Assen, 1965, p. 43.

[41] R. W. Thompson, *The Armenian History Attributed To Sebeos – Part I: Translation and Notes*, Liverpool, 1999, p. 95-96.

[42] See Eus., *Hist. Eccl.* 7. 29 and Clem. Alex., *Strom.* 1.15.

ground-breaking study,[43] also contain a significant Aramaic/Syriac substrate. Add to this the fact that the Jewish, Christian, and Mandaean sources mentioned above also emerged from an Aramaic-speaking milieu and we can see a profound linguistic and cultural nexus interconnecting these varied strands of late antique religiosity – one strongly marked by an ascetic impulse. It is rather remarkable how little attention is paid to the common Aramaic roots of Christian, Jewish, Manichaean, Mandaean, and also Muslim traditions. This is partly understandable, since so much of this early Aramaic substratum has been lost or erased. Yet, in spite of this lacuna, we can see something of the palimpsest just below the surface of our normative textual traditions. After all, it is well-known that Aramaic served as a *lingua franca* throughout the ancient Near East since Achaemenid times, but somehow this obvious fact fails to translate into a recognition of what it actually implies. It implies that the opportunities for interchange between these traditions would have been far greater and lasted for far longer than their surviving literatures would have us believe.

In this sense, Mani really does stand at a crossroads of sorts, since he represents so many of the elements that characterize the religious culture of his time. Inspired by a deep sense of mission and election, an ascetically inclined, Aramaic-speaking prophet (some might say religious organizer) took elements of both Jewish and Christian predecessors and formed them into what he saw as a restoration of their originally revealed form. As a result, he created a movement that seems to have greatly stimulated the ascetic leanings of Late Antiquity and set the stage not only for the monastic movement, but also for a later prophet with a similar sense of mission and election to restore the revelation yet again.

[43] Ch. Luxenberg, *The Syro-Aramaic Reading of the Koran: A Contribution to the Decoding of the Language of the Koran*, Berlin, 2007.

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Abstract

After highlighting the rediscovery of primary Manichaean sources over the last century, this article examines the multiple points of interconnectedness that exist between Manichaeans and the religions of the late antique Near East and suggests a new approach to understanding the nature of their common social and linguistic milieu.