In this essay I concentrate on what is merely a small part of a larger Manichaean cosmogonical narrative. In order to understand this small part, it is useful first to summarize the turning points of the history of Manichaeism, and then give a brief overview of the Manichaean sources used. In this first part, my presentation will provide general and simplified information in order to make some basic facts accessible to those who are not students of Manichaeism. The most substantial portion of the essay elaborates on a single image – the “Sea of Fire” – and associated concepts by collecting and comparing the available Chinese and non-Chinese Manichaean texts. The aim is to show how the Chinese Manichaean texts at our disposal derive in certain ways from a stock of Western-language forebears, and how certain themes and linguistic forms from the latter texts remained in the Chinese counterparts. Another aim is to show how such themes are related to both Manichaean religious ideas and Chinese concepts.
Mānī during the time of the last Arsacid ruler, Ardashīr (r. 213–224 AD). According to Manichaean sources, he received several private revelations during his years in this community, including two major ones from his heavenly Twin (Gk.: syzygos) that gave him the knowledge (Gk.: gnōsis) of how the universe came into being and why the human race was created. After finding contradictions between his own revelations and the teachings of the Elchasaitic community, Mānī left them and made his first public appearance in 240 AD.

At that point he started his mission. First, in 240–241 AD, he traveled to the farthest part of the empire, northwestern India (Tūrān, Sindh) by sea, where he converted the formerly Buddhist king of Tūrān kingdom, Tūrān-sah. After his return from India, Mānī continued his mission by converting two brothers of the ruling Sasanian house, Mihr-sah (Lord of Mesene) and Pērōz, after which in 242 he gained an audience at the main court of Sābuhr I (r. 241–272 AD). Mānī remained in the emperor’s retinue and was later authorized to disseminate his teachings in the Persian Empire (245–255 AD).

Between 255 and 260 Mānī was proselytizing in the northeastern part of Iran, then settled in Weh-Ardahīr on the western bank of the Tigris (near Ctesiphon) in order to organize his church. He sent missionaries to India and the Roman Empire, including Egypt, Parthia and Marw. Missions to Palmyra, Georgia, Armenia, Asia Minor and the Arabian peninsula were also launched. While Sābuhr’s successor, king Šahrūmz I (r. 272–273 AD), still supported Mānī, nonetheless with the enthronement of Bahram I (r. 274–277 AD) the successful spread of the new religion encountered a substantial obstacle: the Zoroastrian priests, especially Kerdīr the Mowbed, considered the new religion a threat to their own power, and persuaded Bahram I to imprison Mānī in Bēth Lapāt (Gondēšāpūr), where he was chained for twenty-six days, before dying on February 26, 277.¹

Despite the death of its founder, the new religion spread quickly in the Roman Empire. Mār Sīsin, Papos, Mār Zakū and Abzaxyā created several Manichæan communities in Rome, Alexandria and Upper Egypt, with some writings in Greek and Latin, and many scriptures in Coptic (Sub-Akhmimic or Lykopolitan dialect). Roman emperors tried to stop the spread of Manichaeism by legal prohibitions (for example, Diocletian in 302, Valentinian in 372, Justinian in 527). In addition, Manichaeism came under heavy attack by Christian apologists who

considered it a dangerous heresy. The most famous opponent was Augustine of Hippo (354–430 AD), who himself had been a Manichaean between 373–382. In several writings exclusively dedicated to the subject (such as Contra Faustum, Contra Felicem, Contra Fortunatum, Contra epistolam Fundamenti) and in various other works, Augustine made every effort to delegitimize Manichaeism. Christian theologians and leaders (for example, Leo, the Great in 445) succeeded to the extent that Manichaeism slowly disappeared from the Roman Empire by the 600s.

The mission to the East was based on the third century achievements of Mār Ammō, later on Manichaens further developed their religious communities. With additional centers in Abaršahr, Marw, Balkh–Āmū Daryā, and with more and more Parthian and Sogdian converts, the spread of Manichaeism entered into a new and more successful phase. With the eastern shift, Manichaeism entered the Transoxanian regions where Manichaean scriptures in Parthian, Sogdian and, later, Uyghur languages were written. In 694 AD Manichaean missionaries reached the court of the Chinese empress Wu Zetian 武则天 (r. 690–705 AD).

The history of Manichaeism in China can be roughly divided into two phases: from 694 to 842 Manichaeism was basically a religio licita (between 731–750 allowed only for foreigners). The first known Manichaean missionary arrived at the Chinese court in 694, and the empress welcomed the new teaching. In 732 in an edict by the emperor Xuanzong 玄宗 (r. 712–756 AD) Manichaens were accused of pretending to be Buddhists, and with the exception of “Western barbarians” (xihu 西胡), presumably referring to Sogdians, they were prohibited from their practice. The Uyghur Bögü Khan officially adopted Manichaeism as a state religion in 762/763. When the rebellion of An Lushan 安祿山 and Shi Chaoyi 史朝義 (755–763 AD) was terminated by the military intervention of the Uyghurs, the dependence of the Chinese court on the Uyghurs forced the Chinese emperors to allow the religion. Several Manichaean temples were built in Luoyang 洛阳 and other prefectures (Jing 荊, Yang 揚, Hong 洪, Yue 越), and scriptures were translated into Chinese. After their defeat by the Kirghiz in 840, the steppe Uyghurs fled, portions settling in Qoço (Turfan) and continuing to practice their religion for at least 150 years; they produced important pieces of

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3 Fozu tongji T. 49, 2035: 374c, 474c, Da Song sengshilüe 大宋僧史略 T. 54, 2126: 253b.
4 Fozu tongji T. 49, 2035: 370a, 378c, 474c, Da Song sengshilüe T. 54, 2126: 253c.
Manichaean art.\textsuperscript{5} When Chinese emperors no longer were dependent on Uyghur help, emperor Wuzong 武宗 (r. 840−846 AD) could launch a massive attack against all foreign religions in China in 843−845, including Manichaeism, Zoroastrianism and Buddhism.\textsuperscript{6}

As can be gleaned from a Chinese historical source (\textit{Minshu 閩書}), it was after 845 that Chinese Manicheans moved from the northern part of the country to the southeast, especially to Fujian and Zhejiang. Under the guidance of a certain \textit{hulu fashi} 呼祿法師 (\textquotedblleft \textit{hulu} probably referring to Uyghur \textit{uluy}, or great dharma-teacher), Chinese Manicheans seem to have reorganized their apparently extant small communities and survived at least until the sixteenth century.\textsuperscript{7} Besides the written sources that report about their presence in these regions, we also possess concrete bits of evidence: a Manichaean temple with a unique statue of Mānī, archaeological finds of bowls with the inscription \textit{Mingjiao hui} 明教會 ("Community of the Religion of Light"), and several Yuan-Ming-era paintings (presently preserved in Japan) that attest to a Manichaean presence in southeastern China.\textsuperscript{8}

\textit{Manichaean Texts}

Similarly to later Manichaean missionaries, the founder Mānī, who was the author of six works in Syriac and one in Middle Persian, considered translation into local languages as the most important part of the mission. Whenever Manicheans entered a new region, they translated Mānī’s works and composed in Mānī’s spirit new works in the local languages.

In the West, aside from the apologetic literature of the Church Fathers, we possess original Manichaean works, such as the Greek Cologne Mānī Codex (found in Egypt in 1969 and preserved in Cologne), the Tebessa Codex (found in Algeria in 1918, housed in Paris), and the presently published three great Coptic works (the \textit{Psalm-book}, the \textit{Kephalaia} and the \textit{Homilies}), with some new findings from Kellis (Dakhleh Oasis in Upper Egypt).

\textsuperscript{5} Zsuzsanna Gulácsi, \textit{Manichaean Art in Berlin Collections}, Corpus Fontium Manichaeorum, Series Archaeologica et Iconographica 1 (Turnhout: Brepols, 2001).

\textsuperscript{6} Xin Tangshu 新唐書 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1975), j. 217, p. 6133; Jiu Tangshu 舊唐書 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1975), j. 18, p. 594.

\textsuperscript{7} He Qiaoyuan 何喬遠, comp., \textit{Minshu 閩書}, j. 7 (Fuzhou: Fujian renmin chubanshe, 1994), vol. 1, pp. 171−72.

From the Christian apologetic literature, I will quote relevant passages from the fourth-century works of Titus of Bostra (Contra Manichaeos), St. Ephrem (Prose Refutations), Serapion Thmuitanus (Adversus Manichaeos), Hegemonius (Acta Archelai, 330–348 AD) and Augustinus (De natura boni). From our point of view, the most important Coptic works are the fourth-century Psalm-book, a collection of about 360 psalms for various liturgical occasions, such as the Psalms of the Bema, or addressed to various divinities (for example, Psalms to Jesus), and the fourth-century Kephalaia, allegedly expounded by Māni in response to the questions of his disciples on cosmogony, cosmology and numerous other topics. While the Psalm-book was mainly used in a liturgical context, the Kephalaia was relatively more doctrinal. The present article also uses excerpts from the Coptic materials excavated from Kellis in modern times. Unlike the archaeologically excavated psalms and letters of the Kellis material, the codices of the Coptic Psalm-book, Homilies and Kephalaia, which ultimately derive from Medinet Mādī (Gk.: Narmoûthis), were purchased from dealers between 1930–1932 and are presently housed in Dublin and Berlin.

Moving eastward, aside from a handful of comments by Syriac and Arabic authors (including Th. bar Kōnî, an-Nadīm, al-Bûrûnî), we have several original Manichaean writings at our disposal: Middle Persian, Parthian, Sogdian and Uyghur fragments, nearly all deriving from the Turfan region and preserved in Berlin, and three Chinese Manichaean scriptures – the Compendium, the Hymnscroll, and the Traité – all found in Dunhuang, Cave 17.

The Middle Iranian fragments, usually given a number preceded by the letter M (for Manichaean), include ecclesiastic history, cosmological...
gononical and cosmological descriptions, prayers and confessions, letters
and postscripts, various parables, and beautiful hymns to the church
leaders and the divinities of the Manichaean pantheon. The most im-
portant Middle Iranian texts for us here are those composed in Parthian
by Mānī’s followers: the third-to-fourth-century Angad rōsnān (“Rich in
Light”) and Huyadagmān (“Fortunate for Us”), which are hymn-cycles
on the lamentations of the soul suffering in the bondage of matter (hylē)
and its desire to return to the Realm of Light. Though Uyghur Man-
ichaean texts also comprise cosmogonical, cosmological and historical
texts, various hymns, and prayers, the most typical examples are pieces
of an elaborated confessional literature (Xāstvānīfī).

For the purposes of this article, at this point we must pay atten-
tion to the three Chinese Manichaean texts.

The Compendium (Moni guangfo jiaofa yilüe 摩尼光佛教法儀略) is an introduction to basic con-
cepts written in Chinese by a Manichaean high priest in 731 AD at the
behest of Xuanzong (S.3969, P.3884). Our most important source will
be the so-called Hymnscroll (Moni jiao xiabu zan 摩尼教下部讚; referred
to in the main body of the present article as h, with a following num-
ber, for example, “h.19” would indicate the nineteenth column of the
Hymnscroll manuscript). It was found in Dunhuang and is housed in the
British Library (S.2659); it was translated from a Middle Iranian lan-
guage by a certain Daoming 道明. It is a long manuscript (1044 x 28
cm) consisting of hymns to various divine beings (Jesus, Mānī, the Fa-
ther of Light, Light Envoys, Five Lights, and others) which were sung
by the Manichaean believers at diverse liturgical occasions. The other
important Chinese source for this article will be the so-called Traité
(Bosi jiao canjing 波斯教殘經; referred to, below, as tr, also followed
by column numbers of the manuscript). It too was found in Dunhuang
and is housed in Beijing at the National Library China (BDoo256); it

“Manichaean Literature in Iranian Language,” in Ronald E. Emmerick and Maria Macuch, eds., Ehsan Yarshater, gen. ed., The Literature of Pre-Islamic Iran: Companion Volume I [Lon-

12 The Huyadagmān is quoted according to Werner Sundermann, trans., The Manichaean Hymn-cycles Huyadagmān and Angad Rōsnān in Parthian and Sogdian (London: SOAS, 1990;
hereafter MHA), including Sundermann’s emendations; the Angad rōsnān is quoted from Mary

13 A good collection of translated Middle Iranian and Uyghur texts is Hans-Joachim Klim-
keit, trans., Gnosis on the Silk Road: Gnostic Texts from Central Asia (New York: HarperSan-
Francisco, 1993; hereafter GSR).

14 For a concise summary of the Chinese Manichaean texts, see Gunner B. Mikkelsen,
“More Light on the Chinese Manichaean Texts from Dunhuang and Turfan: A Publication
Overview and Some Comments on X. Tremblay’s Sérinde,” Manichaean Studies Newsletter
18 (2003), pp. 25–32.
contains general material on Manichaean cosmogony followed by a detailed narrative on the works of the so-called Light-Nous, an important figure in the complex Manichaean pantheon. This text (621 x 21.5 cm) was also translated from Middle Iranian, presumably Parthian, and in addition has Middle Persian, Sogdian and Uyghur parallels.\textsuperscript{15}

\textit{Consistency and Inconsistency in the Manichaean Doctrines}

The fundamental structure of the mythological and cosmogonical background of Manichaeism remained remarkably consistent from Upper Egypt to southeastern China. The Coptic texts and the Chinese scriptures, as well as the Middle Iranian and Uyghur fragments between them, basically reveal a consistent religious system, as far as the Two Principles, Three Periods and the majority of a highly complex series of emanations constituting the Manichaean cosmogony are concerned. Moreover, they fundamentally also share the same value-system (ethics) and hierarchical church organization, which mirrored these cosmogonical concepts.

The theory of Two Principles refers to two eternally present realms – Light and Darkness; this duality, which also entails a fundamental opposition, never ceases to exist. The concept is usually termed an ontological dualism, which is often considered as the most essential constituent element of the Manichaean doctrine. In fact, an equally important, though less well-known, concept is that of the Three Periods, which divides universal history thus:

First Period: The empires of Light and Darkness, having existed side by side, ultimately saw an attack launched by Darkness against the Realm of Light.

Second Period: As a response, the king of the Realm of Light, the Father of Greatness, defended his kingdom by emanating various divine figures (Mother of Life, Friend of Lights, Light-Nous, to name but a few). After several mythological events, the Light that was swallowed and captured by the forces of the Darkness is retrieved through the creation of the universe which, with help from Manichaean believers (especially the “chosen ones,” or elects), works like a huge purifying machine: it distills the captured light.

\textsuperscript{15}These three Chinese Manichaean scriptures are abbreviated thus: \textit{TR. = Traité; H = Hymnscroll; C = Compendium}. The texts are quoted according to their ms. column. Due to technical reasons some character variants are quoted in their standard form. They were also included in \textit{Taishô shinshû daizôkyô}; for \textit{Compendium}, see \textit{T. 54.2141A: 1279C–1281A}; \textit{Traité} is at \textit{T. 54.2141B: 1281A–1286A}; and \textit{Hymnscroll} is at \textit{T. 54.2140: 1270B–1279C}. Buddhist texts are quoted according to the \textit{Taishô}. All other primary sources are indicated in the footnotes. Translations of all Chinese texts are those of the author.
particles and transports them back to the Realm of Light. This is also the period of human history, in the last phase of which the maximum quantity of Light has been saved, people are judged, and after a great fire the world collapses.

Third Period: The two realms become separate again forever, this time without the possibility of contacting one another in the future.

The consistency of this structure and these fundamental religious tenets, however, does not mean that there were no differences among regional versions of Manichaeism. Such differences could concern actual religious practices (for instance, monasteries, confessional rituals, and the importance of certain festivals), doctrinal issues like the role of the Third Messenger and Jesus, or the final fate of light particles, and literary metaphors and expressions (as will be seen later in this paper).

The consistency that we do see for centuries, ranging from Persia to China, is nonetheless surprising, especially when one considers the Manichaean missionaries’ technique in Eurasia: they did not only translate their words into the language of the empire they aimed to “conquer,” but they also sought out religious analogies that could make their rather peculiar system more accessible to potential converts. They used Christian terminology in the West, Zoroastrian in Iran, and Buddhist in the East. It should be stressed that Christianity, and especially the figure of Jesus in a Manichaean interpretation, played a pivotal role in the entire system, even in the Buddhism-inspired Chinese scriptures. Though Manichaeism is frequently termed as par excellence a so-called syncretistic religion, it was, in fact, not syncretistic but synthetic in its origin, and exceptionally flexible and adaptive in its mission.16

In China, for example, Manichaean missionaries appropriated the contemporary Buddhist discourse of the Tang dynasty and applied the unique terminology of popular Buddhist sutras in their translation process.17 Thus original Manichaean works were rendered not merely into Chinese, but into Buddhho-Chinese garb. Chinese Manichaean

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scriptures, as will be clear from the examples cited, abound with typical Buddhist expressions such as *buddha* (*佛*), *hell* (*diyu* 地獄), *samsara* (*lunhui* 輪迴), *nirvana* (*niepan* 涅槃), wish-fulfilling jewel (*ruyi bao* 如意寶), dharma-gate (*famen* 法門), and bliss (*anle* 安樂, Sk.: *sukhā*), which, however, appear in an unmistakably Manichaean context.\(^{18}\) While sifting through the plethora of sutras in Cave 17 (Mogao), Paul Pelliot was himself misled by the seemingly Buddhist idioms of the so-called Manichaean *Traité*.\(^{19}\) The linguistic dexterity and the terminological ingenuity of the Manichaean translators is mirrored in the natural use of the Buddhist vocabulary to express a Manichaean message. On the other hand, Buddhists (as with Christians in the West) often attacked Manichaeans because of this appropriation of the Buddhist terminology. In their critiques the heretical nature of Manichaeism was frequently stressed.\(^{20}\)

Being one of the most widely and wildly persecuted religions in human history, until the twentieth century Manichaeism was known only from the apologetic literature of Christian Church Fathers or the objective descriptions of Theodorus bar Kōnī or Ibn al-Nadīm. With the discoveries in Turfan and Dunhuang, as well as the Egyptian Medinet Mâdi, scholars have gained a new vista on this extinct religion: for the first time the original voice of Manichaean priests and common believers could be heard. With more finds later on (Cologne Mānī Codex, Tebessa Codex, Kellis, Sogdian letters from Bezeklik), we are now in a position to state with certainty that despite the multiple linguistic and conceptual translations, the fundamental parts of the Manichaean system is consistent in all regions, while certain doctrinal, ritual and literary aspects have a local feature. For the most part, though the texts themselves are cached in various languages, the Manichaean cosmogonical and cosmological system constitutes a relatively coherent unity, which, despite the oft-persecuted religion’s fragmentary legacy, can still be reconstructed.

As an explanatory metaphor, one can consider the Manichaean cosmological system as a gigantic three-dimensional puzzle, the different layers of which are the various linguistic traditions and the puzzle pieces being the individual Manichaean concepts. Fundamental con-

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\(^{18}\) See e.g. Mikkelsen, “Skilfully Planting the Trees of Light,” pp. 102–3.

\(^{19}\) Mikkelsen, “Skilfully Planting the Trees of Light,” pp. 90–93.\(^{20}\) *Fozu tongji T. 49.2035: 370a: “demonic teaching, heretical law” (*mojiao xiefa* 魔教邪法).* Wang Yangde 王延德, who visited Gaochang between 981–984 AD, remarks that “there are also Manichaean temples (at Gaochang), monks from Persia practice their religion there. This is what the Buddhist sutras call a heretical teaching.” (*Songshi* 宋史 [Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1977], j. 490, p. 14112).
cepts (such as the Two Principles, Three Periods, Father of Light) appear in almost all transmitted texts, therefore these pieces in the puzzle are present at all levels. Other, more subtle details (such as the names of the five sons of the Living Spirit) are preserved only in certain traditions, therefore these are present only at certain levels (for example, the Sogdian and the Greek lists of these five sons are not complete, therefore there are missing pieces at the Sogdian and the Greek level, but are preserved at the Coptic or Chinese level). Therefore, certain cosmogonical events can be reconstructed on the basis of texts in all the languages of Manichaeism, while others can be gleaned from only two or three sources in certain linguistic traditions.\textsuperscript{21} Thus, as far as the basic ideas are concerned, a Coptic source might indeed be a good analogy for a Chinese sentence from the \textit{Hymnscroll}, even if we cannot always trace the exact path between them. Naturally, the closer the analogy, the more secure the explanation is, thus researchers of Manichaeism attempt to recover the philologically secure antecedents of the respective texts. However, in some cases these are simply not available: the vast bulk of Coptic material cannot be interpreted in the light of a similarly great amount of Greek or Syriac source scriptures, thus more remote analogies are required.

The model introduced above was primarily designed for written documents, since the fundamental sources for reconstructing the Manichaean cosmogonical and cosmological system are texts written in various languages from Coptic to Chinese, while the single large reservoir of a Manichaean pictorial tradition, the Uyghur Manichaean art from Turfan, has not yielded a comprehensive pictorial representation of the Manichaean system comparable to the “picture” that emerges from the written material. This situation has changed in 2010 with the publication of a recently identified Chinese Manichaean painting, preserved in a Japanese private collection.\textsuperscript{22}

One of these Chinese Manichaean paintings depicts the entire cosmological system in an astonishingly detailed manner, providing the first, almost complete, pictorial representation of the Manichaean cosmology. It thus adds a second, pictorial, layer to the Chinese “textual” level of the puzzle. No comparable finding has ever surfaced from another cultural tradition, thus presently the only “double (pictorial

\textsuperscript{21} This is also true of other aspects of Manichaeism: we know from many sources that Mānī wrote a large number of letters, but it is only an-Nādim’s \textit{al-Fihrist} which preserved their titles.

\textsuperscript{22} Yutaka Yoshida 吉田豊, “Shinshutsu Manikyō kaiga no keijijō 新出マニ教絵画の形而上,” \textit{Yamato bunka} 大和文華 121 (2010), pp. 1–34.
and textual) level” of the three-dimensional Manichaean puzzle is the Chinese one. Though this painting attests to the sophisticated knowledge that southeastern Chinese Manichaeans might have possessed at a relatively late period (13–15th c.), curiously, no such coherent and detailed knowledge is present in any of the extant Chinese Manichaean writings. Regardless of the possibility that there might have existed Chinese scriptures which contained such information but were lost, at present the only way to decipher the Chinese painting is to make use of the non-Chinese (for example, Parthian or even Coptic) written material, that is, we can fill in the gaps of the Chinese level of the puzzle with pieces from non-Chinese levels.

The entire Manichaean system basically revolves around one goal: the rescuing of Light particles imprisoned in the world, itself a mixture of Light and Darkness, and delivering them to their original home, the Realm of Light. Since these two principles are opposed in all aspects, it is natural that Light, being entrapped and “chained” by Darkness, is suffering in the world, the par excellence metaphor of which is the soul (light) suffering in the body (darkness, matter). The sufferings of Light or the Light-Soul in matter (hylē) is a recurrent topic in various Manichaean hymns, as this is the best symbol of the Manichaean attitude to the world and their eternal longing for the return to the pure land of Light. These sufferings are usually vividly described in a metaphorical language, treated below.

From the Coptic Psalm-book to the Chinese Hymnscroll, Manichaean hymns abound with highly sophisticated images, a characteristic that fits in perfectly with Mānī’s original intentions. With a book published in 1978, Victoria Arnold-Döben became the first, and so far the only, scholar to attempt to map the fundamental images and symbols used by the Manichaeans. Arnold-Döben’s seminal work demonstrated that Manichaeans not only possessed a coherent set of religious concepts, but they also expressed these concepts with the help of a surprisingly consistent matrix of images (trees, treasure, jewel, merchants, ships, sea, harbors). This metaphorical richness can be possibly attributed to the fundamentally mythological character of the Manichaean system. “As a full-fledged Gnostic system of thought, Manichaeism represented

23 I use “metaphor” in its broad, general sense and do not confine it to the realm of literature, though I analyze religious narratives with an apparent literary dimension. On the great variety of metaphors, see e.g. Raymond W. Gibbs, Jr., ed., The Cambridge Handbook of Metaphor and Thought (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008).

the last significant outburst of mythological thought in the world of antiquity.”

Based on a mythologically perceived cosmogonical description, Manichaeanism possesses the poetic and symbolic imagery of mythologies. Though Manichaean metaphors often have a regional flavour (a Christian one in the West and a Buddhist one in the East), I greatly rely on Arnold-Döben’s insight that Coptic, Middle Iranian and Chinese Manichaean metaphors share a great amount of elements. On the other hand, the fundamental tenet of the present paper is to show some regional differences that emerge from these shared metaphors.

Although it remains a standard work of reference to this day, Arnold-Döben’s book, as one would expect in the case of any work of this kind, has left room for further research: it did not fully exploit the Chinese sources, and, needless to say, it did not cover all the metaphors.


This mythological language abounds with visual metaphors which might be partly traced back to the founder’s fascination with visual imagery. According to the Cologne Mānī Codex, the most reliable biography of Mānī that we possess, the founder based his religious system on explicitly visual revelations; see 2.2–13.2; 18.1–23.1, Ron Cameron and Arthur J. Dewey, trans., Cologne Mani Codex (P. Colon. inv. nr. 4780); “Concerning the Origin of His Body”, Early Christian Literature series 3; Texts and Translations, Society of Biblical Literature 15 (Missoula, Montana: Scholars Press, 1979), pp. 9–15, 18–23. On other sources and on Mānī’s Twin as his source of authority, see L.J.R. OrI, Mani: A Religion-Historical Description of His Personality (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1967), pp. 77–95. The Cologne codex also lists those of Mānī’s predecessors who shared with him the feature of receiving some kind of visual revelation (Cologne Mānī Codex 48.1–62.1; Cameron and Dewey, Cologne Mani Codex, pp. 36–49). Mānī himself stated that he distinguished himself from previous prophets not only by writing down his teachings but also by making a separate work (Eikēn) which visually illustrates his doctrines. (See Jes P. Asmussen, “Arzānges” in Encyclopaedia Iranica Online [vol. 2], 1987, available at www.iranica.com; Lieu, Manichaism, pp. 175–77; Werner Sundermann, “Was the Ardhang Mani’s Picture-book?” in Aloïs Van Tongerloo and Luigi Cirillo, eds., Il manicheismo – nuove prospettive della ricerca. Quinto Congresso Internazionale di studi sul manicheismo, Napoli, 2–8 settembre 2001 – Atti (Turnhout: Brepols, 2005), pp. 373–84; Zsuzsanna Gulácsi, “Mani’s “Picture-Box” 2. A Study of a Chagatai Textual Reference and Its Supposed Pictorial Analogy from the British Library (Or. 8212–1919),” in ibid., pp. 149–66; idem, Mani’s Picture-Book: Searching for a Late Antique Mesopotamian Pictorial Roll and Its Mediaeval Transformation in Central and East Asian Art (Leiden: Brill, forthcoming). Scribes and illustrators were sent along with the Manichaean missionaries to ensure a high quality of translations (reunited fragments M216c and M1750/R; GSR: 205–6; Lieu, Manichaism, p. 175). Manichaean art, especially book art, was unparalleled in its time and is still observable even in a fragmentary state: Hans-Joachim Klimkeit, Manichaean Art and Calligraphy (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1982); Zsuzsanna Gulácsi, Manichaean Art in Berlin Collections; idem, Medieval Manichaean Book Art: A Codicological Study of Iranian and Turkic Illuminated Book Fragments from 8th-11th Century East CE (Leiden: Brill, 2005). The importance of visuality is also noticeable in the literary works.

Arnold-Döben, Die Bildersprache, p. 5.

It should be also stressed that myths and metaphors were probably reality for the Manichaens, see e.g. In Epictetum Encheiridion (27:71,44–72,15) which states that “they [Manichaens: G.K.] do not use them [their mythological narratives: G.K.] as myths nor do they think that they have any other meaning but believe that all the things which they say are true (i.e. literal)”; quoted in Jason D. BeDuhn, The Manichaean Body in Discipline and Ritual (Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000), p. 265.
used in Manichaean scriptures. The present paper investigates a here-
to-fore unstudied image, the Sea of Fire (\textit{huohai 火海}). This Chinese im-
image was born from the conceptual matrix which was present in diverse
sources, but it seems that it was only in China where it reached a rela-
tively full-fledged form. By collecting materials and parallels relevant
to the Sea of Fire, this study perhaps will contribute to further research
that may one day constitute an encyclopedic analysis of Manichaean
metaphors and images.

**THE EXPRESSION “SEA OF FIRE” IN THE CHINESE MANICHAICA**

From a sinological point of view, the expression Sea of Fire is of
special interest, since, as will be made clear, it appears foremost in the
Chinese Manichaean corpus. We see the phrase altogether six times
in the \textit{Hymnscroll}, four occurrences in the first two hymns addressed to
Jesus: “A Hymn in Eulogy of Jesus” (\textit{Zan Yishu wen 諕夷數文, h.7–44});
and “A Hymn in Eulogy of Jesus, Second Canto” (\textit{Zan Yishu wen di’er
die 諏夷數文 第二疊, h.45–82}). These two hymns are placed at the head
of the collection, thus their importance is undeniable. “Sea of Fire” also
features once in the \textit{Traité}, although all previous editions and transla-
tions have rendered it mistakenly.\footnote{While the manuscript has “\textit{huohai 火海},” all editions give “great sea (\textit{dahai 大海});” see \textit{Édouard Chavannes and Paul Pelliot, “Un traité manichéen retrouvé en Chine.”} \textit{JA, X° série,}
translations render “\textit{dahai}” accordingly as “dans la vaste mer” (Chavannes and Pelliot, “Un
traité,” p. 588), or “in das grosse Meer” (\textit{ernst Waldschmidt and Wolfgang Lentz, “Die Stel-
lung Jesu im Manichäismus,”} \textit{Abhandlungen der königlichen preussischen Akademie der Wissen-
schaften 4} [1926], p. 48; \textit{Helwig Schmidt-Glintzer, ed. and trans., Chinesische Manichaica: Mit
textkritischen Anmerkungen und einem Glossar} [Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz, 1987], p. 103).}

\textit{h.19–26}. Now we sincerely implore and supplicate that we
should be removed from the poisoned fire-sea of the body of flesh,
its soaring waves are boiling and bubbling ceaselessly, the \textit{makaras}
surface and submerge to swallow (our) vessel. [\textit{h.20}] Originally
this is the palace of Māra, the country of \textit{rākṣasa}, and also the
dense forests, the marsh of reeds and rushes, where all the evil
wild beasts jostle intermingled with one another, where the poi-
sonous insects and venomous snakes gather. [\textit{h.21}] This is also
the body of the Demon(ess) of Greed, and also Pĕsus [Beisus] with many forms, the fivefold pit of the land of darkness, and also the lightless courtyards of the five poisons. [H.22]. And also the three merciless, poisoned seedlings, and also the five poisonous springs of ruthlessness. \[H.25\] The armour and the weaponry of all demon-kings, the poisonous net of all opposing teachings, which sinks the precious wares and the merchants, which can cloud the light-buddhas of the Sun and and Moon. [H.26] The gates of all hells, the roads of all rebirths, in vain do they agitate against the eternally established nirvāṇa king, in the end they will be burnt and imprisoned in the eternal hell.\[H.29\]

Beneficent and glorious Jesus buddha, raise (your) great compassion and forgive our sins! Listen to these words of suffering and pain, and deliver us from this poisoned sea of fire!\[H.32\]

We wish you would still the huge waves of the sea of fire! Through the curtain of dark clouds and dark mist let the sun of Great Law shine everywhere, that our hearts and soul may be always bright and pure!\[H.47\]

Power in the power of the Unsurpassable Honoured of the Lights, King in the wisdom of the unsurpassable sweet dew, who gives cintāmani universally to sentient beings, and leads them out of the deep sea of fire!\[H.85\]

We should resolutely choose and peacefully concentrate on the gate of true teaching, (we must) diligently seek for nirvāṇa to cross the sea of fire!\[H.35\]

While the Five Poisoned Springs can be explained by the Manichaean concepts of the Land of Darkness (e.g. M183/I, M39; Jes P. Asmussen, Manichaean Literature: Representative Texts Chiefly from Middle Persian and Parthian Writings, Persian Heritage Series 22 [New York: Delmar, 1975], p. 139), in the case of the Three Poisons it is worth recalling the Buddhist notion of san du 三毒, that is, desire (tan[yu] 貪[欲]), Sk.: råga, anger (zen[hui] 聲[恚]), Sk.: doṣa) and ignorance (yu[chi] 愚[癡], Sk.: moha). This reference is important for the very reason that the “fire of the three poisons” (san du huo 三毒火) appears in Buddhist texts; e.g., Dafangguangfo huayanjing 大方廣佛華嚴經 (T. 10.293: 826n.26–27) mentions it together with the poison of five desires: “[The bodhisattva] “is not burnt by the fire of the three poisons, is not hurt by the poison of the five desires...” 不為一切三毒火,五毒不中。”

I must seek absolution, to despise and hate the deep sea of fire! 轉波沸涌无暂停,魔竭出入吞舩舫。元是魔宮羅剎國,復是稠林籚葦澤。諸惡禽獸交橫走, 蕪集毒虫及蚖蝮。亦是惡業貪魔躰, 復是多形卑訴訢斯; 亦是暗界五重坑, 復是无明五毒院; 亦是无慈三毒苗, 復是无惠五毒泉。... 一切魔王之甲仗, 一切犯教之毒網, 能沈寶物及商人, 能翳日月光明佛。一切輪迴之道路, 徒搖常住涅槃王, 竟被焚燒囚永劫。
H.363. Rescue the light-nature from all perils that it may be able to leave the huge waves of the sea of fire, the whole community wishes that it may be so forever!\(^{36}\)

TR.338. Using this net of Light, fish for us and save us from the sea of fire, place us in the jewel-boat!\(^{37}\)

The notion of a Sea of Fire was also associated with other Manichaean expressions that, as we will see, were not isolated concepts, but often related by connotation to the Sea of Fire. Thus the Chinese sources quoted above associated the following motifs with it:

1. **Body of flesh**: H.19 (roushen 肉身);
2. **Poison**: H.19 (du 瘋); H.29 (毒);
3. The Land of Māra, the Five Pits: H.20 (the palace of Demon/ess, or Mogong 魔宮); H.21 (the body of the Demon/ess of Greed, tanmo ti 貪魔體); H.21 (the fivefold pit of the Land of Darkness, anjie wu chong keng 暗界五重坑); H.21 (the five lightless, poisonous courtyards, wuming wu du yuan 无明五毒院); H.26 (gate to hell, diyu zhi menhu 地獄之門戶); H.47 (deep, shen 深);
4. Monsters, demons, wild beasts: H.19 (makara, mojie 魔竭); H.20 (the country of rāksasas, luocha guo 罗剎國); H.20 (evil wild beasts, zhu e qiushou 諸惡禽獸); H.20 (poisonous insects, duchong 毒虫; venomous snakes, yuanfu 蚣蝮); H.21 (Pesus, beisusi 異訛[訛]);
5. Tossing waves: H.19 (tossing waves boiling and bubbling, tengbo feiyong 腾波沸涌); H.32, H.363 (huge waves, da botao 大波濤);
6. Swallowing ships and treasures: H.19 (swallowing ships, tun chuanfang 吞船舫); H.25 (sink precious wares and merchants, chen baowu ji shangren 沈寶物及商人); TR.338 (jewel-boat, baochuan 寶舩);
7. Net: H.25 (poisonous net of opposing teachings, fanjiao zhi duwang 犯教之毒網); TR.338 (net of Light, mingwang 明網);
8. Rebirth: H.26 (the roads of rebirth, lunhui zhi daolu 輪迴之道路);
9. Deliverance: H.19 (leave, li 留); H.29 (leading out, yin wo li 引我離); H.32 (soothing, xi 息); TR.338 (fish for us and save us, laodu 撈渡).

From such associations, the Sea of Fire can be seen as fundamentally related to the Realm of Darkness (Land of Māra, monsters) and its primal representative in Manichaeism, the human body (body of flesh). It is also closely related to metaphors such as tossing waves, swallowing up of ships, nets, and with religious notions such as rebirth and the desire to be liberated (deliverance). As will become clear, the fire of the sea undoubtedly derives from the notion of the Land of Darkness, and thus refers to a sort of “hellish” fire.

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\(^{36}\) 請救普厄諸明性，得離火海大波濤，合眾究竟願如是！

\(^{37}\) 據此明網於火海中，撈渡我等，安置寶舩！
In what follows I investigate the above nine motifs one by one, and though I naturally stress the importance of the Chinese parallels, following the general tradition of Manichaeism research, I will also survey the non-Chinese analogies, even if they are to be found as far away in time or space as Greek and Coptic sources.

I will attempt to map the conceptual matrix of the nine motifs that underlies the Chinese (and Parthian) Manichaean expression “Sea of Fire”. Mapping in this case means to draw a chart of associated metaphors and concepts from the Chinese sources, and simultaneously compare this chart with a similar one from the non-Chinese tradition.

I argue that although “Sea of Fire” itself, with the exception of a single Parthian parallel, is not to be found in any other Manichaean text, the majority of the related concepts in the Chinese corpus can be identified in non-Chinese Manichaean writings. As I survey the terms, I clarify the exact meaning of Sea of Fire and demonstrate its partial indebtedness to Buddhist vocabulary. I contend that the imagery pervading the first two hymns of the Chinese Hymnscroll shares many elements with the imagery of the Parthian Angad rōśnān, and thus I can conclude that these two hymns of the Chinese Hymnscroll were most probably translated from a rather similar Parthian hymn.

CONCEPTS RELATED TO THE SEA OF FIRE

In the colophon to the Hymnscroll written, supposedly, by the translator Daoming 道明, it is unambiguously stated that the hymns presented in the collection are translations.

H.417–22. From the 3,000 pieces of the original fan text, I translated more than twenty. Though the texts, the eulogies, the songs and the prayers were originally composed according to the four regions, the translations by Daoming were based entirely on the fan text.梵本三千之 / 梵本三千之 / 經、讚、偈、願，皆依 / 又緣經、語、偈，願，皆依四 / 訳製焉，但道明所翻譯者，一依梵本。

The only problem in interpreting the colophon is that “fan 梵” originally denoted Sanskrit or another type of Indic language, but Sanskrit must be ruled out, since there is no trace of any Manichaean text in Sanskrit. Probably, the use of fan reflects Daoming’s strategy to legitimize the sacred origin of the Manichaean hymns by lending them a past similar to the way in which Buddhist sutras were frequently presented as translations from Sanskrit. We must ask which language does fan specifically refer to?
Since W. B. Henning’s discovery, it is common knowledge among Manichaean scholars that one of the Chinese hymns, *Tan mingjie wen* (In Praise of the World of Light; h.261–338), has a slightly fragmented but available Parthian original (the first canto of the *Huyadagmân*). However, this fact is not conclusive for the question we are pursuing, since this hymn might have had Sogdian or Uyghur versions, presently lost, which might bear even a closer resemblance to the Chinese translation (there are in fact extant Sogdian and Uyghur fragments, though these do not show a greater similarity to the Chinese version than to the Parthian one). Moreover, even if *Tan mingjie wen* had been translated from Parthian, it is not mandatory that all the hymns of the collection were as well, and Daoming could have termed both as “fan,” since we cannot expect a Tang-era translator to have used our notions of a linguistically correct terminological distinction between Parthian and Middle Persian.

There is one linguistic clue, however, which suggests that Parthian was the source language of the two Jesus-hymns. The Chinese transcription of Pēsūs appears in h.21, and although E. Waldschmidt and W. Lentz assumed that it is the transcription of Sanskrit *vihimsā* (“harm,” “harmfulness”), S.N.C. Lieu has correctly identified it with Pēsūs (a demonic figure). Pēsūs has only Parthian and Sogdian occurrences, and as we know that the Chinese Hymnscroll practically does not contain any Sogdian transcription, it seems safe to assume that Pēsūs was

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38 Walter B. Henning, “Annotations to Mr. Tsui’s Translation,” app. to Tsui Chi, ‘Mo Ni Chiao Hsia Pu Tsan: The Lower (Second?) Section of the Manichaean Hymns,’” *BSOAS* XI (1943–46), pp. 216–19.


43 Ibid.

transcribed from a Parthian original. Consequently, it will be useful to search for further Parthian analogies for these two Chinese hymns.45

Werner Sundermann expressed a view on Parthian as the source language of Chinese Manichaean scriptures as follows:

I would like to submit one general observation I cannot convincingly explain. Most Chinese Manichaean texts which draw on an Iranian pattern or original go back to or were immediately translated from a Parthian original. The Chinese Traité manichéen was, if I am right, translated from a Parthian text. In any case, it comes ultimately from a Parthian version. Two of the three so-called phonetic hymns [in the Hymnscroll: G.K.] are Parthian compositions; only one is Middle Persian. The Chinese hymn In Praise of the World of Light depends on a text composed in Parthian, the first canto of the Ḥuyadagmán. … The first Chinese hymn In Praise of the Five Lights draws on the Parthian Sermon on the Soul. Is that by mere coincidence, or did Parthian Manichaean literature play a particular role for the Chinese Manichaean tradition?46

Parthian by this time was confined to the ritual sphere; its users, however, were ethnically not Parthians but Sogdians. It is usually acknowledged that Sogdians played a major role in spreading various religions, including Manichaeism, in the areas of the Silk Road. “The Manichaean missionary legations that arrived at Chang’an during the eighth and ninth centuries were mainly teachers and merchants of Sogdian extraction.”47 It is also generally assumed that while the Sogdian language was a sort of lingua franca on the Silk Road, Sogdian Manichaean preserved Parthian as a sacred medium.48 The Hymnscroll, for example, included two Parthian hymns transcribed into Chinese (h.154–58, h.176–83).49 As mentioned before,50 Xuanzong’s edict in 732 AD, which forbade the Chinese from practicing Manichaeism, made an exception for the Western hu 西胡 people, presumably identifiable

50 Lieu, Manichaeism, 228–29.
as Sogdians. This would mean that by the first half of the eighth century there were Sogdian Manichaean communities in China. According to the trilingual Karabalgasun inscription, the Uyghur khaghan met four Sogdian Manichaens in Chang’an, and Sogdians remained influential during the Uyghur Manichaean period, that is, the eighth to tenth centuries.

Returning to the original topic, the closest analogy to our nine associated concepts, and more specifically \( h.19-26 \), is the first part of the Parthian *Angad rōsnān*, where the metaphor of being tossed about in the sea is used to describe the sufferings of the light-soul in the material world. In this hymn we also encounter the only exact equivalent of a sea of fire, or fiery sea (\( z(r)y \) ‘dwryn), as well as another important, though not literal, analogy.

Their [demons’, enemies’] fury gathered, like a sea of fire / The seething waves rose up that they might engulf me.

It was tossed and troubled as a sea with waves. Pain was heaped on pain, whereby they ravage my soul. / On all sides the anguish reached (me); fire was kindled, and the fog (was full) of smoke. / The wellsprings of Darkness had all been opened. The [giant] fishes transfixed me with fear.

In the following nine sections, I analyze the nine motifs associated with the Sea of Fire, see above. The close reading of the texts, which requires ample quotations, is intended to establish hitherto unnoticed parallels between Chinese and non-Chinese Manichaean texts.

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51 Ibid., 231–32.
54 Trans. M. Boyce (MHP: 117). *Angad rōsnān* I,19 (MHP: 116): ‘\( mwšt \) hwyn dybh o \( cw’gw \)n \( z(r)y \) ‘dwryn / ‘\( pw \)d \( pwšt \) wrm \( h’wyng \) o \( kw’w \) m ngwyng. In locating Middle Iranian texts, I found D. Durkin-Meisterernst’s online text-editions (http://www.bbaw.de/forschung/turfanforschung/dta/mirtext/wmirtext.html) extremely useful. When I cite the English translation of a non-Chinese text, first I give the name of the translator and the source of the translation, then the identification of the text, its source and the original text. When I cite from a non-English translation (typically German), I give the identification of the text, the source of the translation, and the source of the original text, implying that I translated the German text into English.
55 Trans. M. Boyce (MHP: 115). *Angad rōsnān* I,13–15 (MHP: 114): ‘\( ’sjyft \) \( pwšft \) o / ‘\( cw’gw \)n zry\( \)h pd wrm / ‘\( wd \)d \( drd ’mwšt o \) / ‘\( kw \)m gryw wyg’nynd / ‘c hwr ‘rg o / ‘hwr ‘njwgyft p\( rfy\)t / pdy\( d \) d\( wdr \) o / ‘\( w \)d nyzm’n d\( w \)d\( y\)y / ‘\( w\)j(d) wy\( š\)d b\( w\)d ‘\( h\)ynd o / ‘h\( r\)wyn t’\( r \)x’ngy / [\( … \) m’]sy’g’\( n \) o / pd\( g\)yft hym pd trs.
The Body of Flesh

H.19 expressly links Sea of Fire with the body of flesh (see above), and later on, without making it explicit, unfolds this metaphor. In the Chinese Manichaean texts the body of flesh is contrasted with the soul (\textit{tr.2}: \textit{benxing} 本性; \textit{tr.71, h.90}, \textit{h.406}: \textit{mingxing} 明性), or light-elements (\textit{tr.29}: \textit{wu mingxing} 五明性) imprisoned in it, which are sometimes depicted in the process of being liberated from the body. The following Chinese citations illustrate the relation of body to the soul.

\textit{tr.2.} The body of flesh and the original nature [soul]: are they one [the same] or two (different entities)?

\textit{tr.188.} ... similarly to the light-soul which resides in that dark body...

\textit{tr.71–72.} Thus the great envoy of Wise Light [the Light-Nous] with skilful means sifts and rescues the light-nature from this body of flesh, so that it can attain liberation.

\textit{h.393–94.} If the day of impermanency [death] arrives, we rid ourselves of this abominable body of flesh, all the buddhas, saints and wise surround us everywhere...

The Manichaean praxis of “exhausting the body and saving the soul” (\textit{c.105–6}: \textit{laoshen jixing} 勞身救性) refers to the aforementioned liberation – something achieved with the help of ascetic rules. As the Chinese sources attest, the body of flesh has several characteristics: it is poisonous, evil, greedy and lustful (\textit{tr.23}: \textit{du'e tanyu} 毒惡貪慾), ignorant (\textit{h.49}: \textit{wuzhi} 无知), and has several additional features:
Thus this body of flesh, which is also called the Old Man, is nothing but bone, sinew, vein, flesh, skin, hatred, fury, lust, anger, ignorance and greed, gluttony, lust. These thirteen together constitute the body, and thus resemble the lightless realm without beginning.\textsuperscript{64}

The creator and ruler of the body of flesh is the Demon(ess) of Greed\textsuperscript{65} (\textit{h.94}: \textit{roushen tanmo zhu} 肉身貪魔主), thus it is not surprising to see the finite body paralleled with an infinite number of demons of a poisonous nature (\textit{TR.112–13}). As the Demon(ess) has concealed herself in the human body (\textit{h.90}), at the time of death not only does the soul leave the body, but the Demoness also emerges from her hiding-place. Thus, \textit{“When the body of flesh perishes, the Demon(ess) comes out”} (肉身破壞，魔即出; \textit{h.95}). Also, \textit{h.23} claims that \textit{“all male and female demons emerge from the body of flesh”} (一切魔男及魔女，皆從肉身生緣現).

The concept that the body inherently belongs to the Land of Darkness is also attested in various non-Chinese sources, as in the following quotations. It shows us that the Chinese sources are faithfully preserving a general Manichaean association.

Because (Mānī) claims that God created the universe from these two (principles), the man’s body deriving from the Evil, but his soul from the Good.\textsuperscript{66}

And if this body which clothes us possesses the same nature as Darkness, as they [the Manichaeans: G.K.] assert, and this soul which is in us possesses the same nature as Light...\textsuperscript{67}

The allotment of light is the soul in men, while that of darkness is their body and their material construction.\textsuperscript{68}

\textsuperscript{64} 如此屍身，亦名故人，即骨、筋、脈、肉、皮、怨、嗔、婬、怒、癡及貪、饞、婬，如是十三共成一身，以像無始無明境界。

\textsuperscript{65} As \textit{tanmo} 貪魔 is evidently identical with \textit{²z} (see Jes P. Asmussen, “²z,” in Encyclopaedia Iranica Online [vol. 2.], 1987, available at www.iranica.com), I use Demoness to express her female character, though the Chinese word does not imply this aspect.


“The body is inherently sinful, derived from the evil nature”
... the soul, as they say, “derived from a chaste root.”
They say: the root of all body is Darkness...
The body which belongs to Evil from its nature.
The Manichaeans say: “We wear the body of Satan, but the soul belongs to God. ... Because the soul is good, and the body is evil.”
They say that their bodies derive from the clan of Darkness.
(The Manichaeans) claim that “the body is evil, and the soul is from good.”

“...the demonic Æz who built this body...”

Yielding to the desires of the body (especially gluttony, the most conspicuous one) is to be avoided by the elect, the Manichaean priests or “chosen ones”, since these desires originate from Darkness. The strict ascetic rules observed by the Manichaean elect are in fact part of a struggle against the human body and its desires, and ultimately a struggle against Darkness, their originator.

TR.168. Its [one of the “dark trees”] colour is to be passionately fond of the hundred flavours of drink and food, thus benefitting their body of flesh.
The third [characteristic of the elect: G.K.] is that whenever he walks or stays, sits or lies, he does not favor his body of flesh by seeking all kinds of fine and comfortable robes, bedding, drink and food, soups and potions, elephants and horses, and carriages to glorify his body.\(^{77}\)

“Body of flesh” (Chin.: roushen 肉身; Parth.: tmb’r; Sogd.: tmb’r, tanb’r;\(^{78}\) and Uygh.: āt’ōz),\(^{79}\) is explicitly called “infernal” (tmy t’mp’r) in a Sogdian letter.\(^{80}\) In the Manichaean system, the body is thus associated with Darkness and its attributes. Furthermore, similarly to the Chinese sources, other Manichaean texts also link this carnal body to the motif of ocean or fire, as evidenced by the following excerpts.

And this body, that is upon you; consider (it) thus. It has been entirely made and created by tricks and deceit. Deep within it, many are the powers, the ideas, the intentions, the thoughts which are (all) bubbling and stirring. Thus is (its) mien, like the ocean Samudra (in) which the disturbances are many.\(^{81}\)

The fire that dwells in the body, its affairs are drinking and eating, but the soul thirsts always for the Word of God.\(^{82}\)

… together with the fire and [the lu]st [that] dwell in men and

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\(^{77}\) 三者若行,若住,若坐,若臥,不寵其身,求諸細滑衣服卧具,飲食湯藥,象馬車乘,以榮其身。

\(^{78}\) E.g. M131/1/79 (Henning, Ein manichäisches Bet- und Beichtbuch, p. 45); M801a/43/1 (ibid., p. 38); cf. Mikkelsen, “Skilfully Planting the Trees of Light”, p. 102.


women, inflaming [them] inward to one another.\textsuperscript{83}

And [she [Åz: G.K.] placed] greed and lust in [the middle [of
the body: G.K.]], imitating [the Call and the] Answer [and raging
fire was the same as the Column of Glory].\textsuperscript{84}

And who jailed you [god of Light: G.K.] in this dark prison,
this incarceration, this place of no refuge, which constitutes this
body of flesh? ... And who made you a servant of his shameless,
dark, unquenchable, vile fire?\textsuperscript{85}

We can thus conclude that both the Chinese and the non-Chinese
sources basically associate the human body with Darkness, and also
link the human body to the motif of fire and/or ocean.

\textit{Poison}

In two cases, the \textit{Hymnscroll} (h.19, h.29) designates the Sea of Fire
as poisonous (\textit{du}). In the Chinese sources its poisonous nature is closely
linked again with the Land of Darkness: the Demoness of Greed and
the demons possess a poisonous heart and nature (\textit{tr.21, tr.29: du xin}
\textit{毒心}; \textit{tr.113: du xing \textit{毒性}}, and poisonous, evil thoughts (\textit{tr.68: du'e
siwer \textit{毒惡思惟}}); demons derive from the poisonous race (h.191: \textit{hei'an du
lei 黑暗毒類}), and burn with a chaotic, poisonous flame (h.193: \textit{zadu yan
雜毒焰}).

In the human body they plant poisonous trees of death (\textit{tr.35: wu
du si shu 五毒死樹}; h.69: \textit{wu du shu 五毒樹}), which produce poisonous
fruits (\textit{tr.36: du guo 噩果}). During the process of salvation, the Envoy
of Light binds the poisonous snakes and wild beasts (\textit{tr.53–54: zhong
dushe ji zhu e'shou 組毒蛇及諸惡獸}) and fells the poisonous trees (of death)
(\textit{tr.55: zhanfa dushu 斬伐毒樹}; \textit{tr.157–158: faque wu zhong du'e sishu 伐
卻五種毒惡死樹}), overturns the dark earth of the poisonous, evil, dark
greed and lust (\textit{tr.152: fan du'e tanyu andi 翻毒惡貪慾暗地}).

The already quoted description of Māra’s palace abounds with
the term “poison”, as does that of the two dark nights\textsuperscript{86}:

\textsuperscript{83} \textit{Kephalaia} 26,15–17: τετε τοι [τριδο]ν η [τὶ]

\textsuperscript{84} M\textsubscript{z240}/R\textsubscript{5}/6 (Werner Sundermann, \textit{Der Sermon vom Licht-Nous. Eine Lehrschrift des
östlichen Manichäismus. Edition der parthischen und sogdischen Version
[Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 1992], pp. 62–63): \textit{wd 'l}’z \textit{wd \textit{w}rjwg (p)[d *mdy'n n's't] \textit{pd xrwštgu} (p)\textit{xtg (n)\textit{ysn}}... [Using an analogy from another fragment, the last part \textquote["wrdig y\textit{r}nd y\textit{t}ndktyc / prw nwp tfr'wn cyk t / pr pw'nwt ɔ kyy / xwty 'ycy x'y'tny / tmb'r (…)] \textit{r tf yyy} / kwn' sp'shy / wnyy rwrt ñmy / 'r xwrdyy wynyy / pw 'mb'ir nwβznyy...}

\textsuperscript{85} Trans. H.-J. Klimkeit (GSR: 149–150), slightly modified. M\textsubscript{131}/I/73–79, 91–95 (Henning, \textit{Ein manichäisches Bet- und Beichtbuch}, pp. 44–45): ky \textit{fynd} \textit{lyh kyy} / prksf\textit{pr} prymynd / prm \textit{r}’c \textit{ndktyc / prw nwptfr'wn cyk t / pr pw'ntf kyy} / txty \textit{ycy x'y'tny / ñmb'ir (…)} \textit{tfr kyy
/kwn'} \textit{sp'shy / wnyy rwrt ñmy / 'r xwrdyy wynyy / pw 'mb'ir nwβznyy...}

\textsuperscript{86} In the \textit{al-Fihrist} (Gustav Flügel, \textit{Mani, seine Lehre und seine Schriften. Ein Beitrag zur
Geschichte des Manichäismus. Aus dem Fihrist des Abû'l-faradsch Muhammad ben Ishak al-
H.20. Originally this is the palace of Māra, the country of rākṣasa, and also the dense forests, the marsh of reeds and rushes, where all the evil wild beasts jostle intermingled with one another, where the poisonous insects and venomous snakes gather. H.21. This is also the body of the Demon(ess) of Greed, and also Pēsūs with many forms, the fivefold pit of the land of darkness, and also the lightless courtyards of the five poisons. H.22. And also the three merciless, poisoned seedlings, and also the five poisonous springs of ruthlessness. ... H.24. The dark mother of all the demon-kings, the source of all evil deeds, and also the heart of the fierce and poisonous yakṣa, and also the reflection in the thoughts of the Demon(ess) of Greed. H.25. The armour and the weaponry of all demon-kings, the poisonous net of all opposing teachings, which sinks the precious wares and the merchants, which can cloud the light-buddhas of the Sun and the Moon.

TR.213–17. Moreover, next there are the two types of dark nights. As for the first night, it is the Demon(ess) of Greed, her twelve hours are bone, sinew, veins, flesh and skin, and also hatred, fury, lust, anger, ignorance, greed, hungry fire, these ones are the impure poisons, thus they resemble the Land of Darkness that is without beginning and without light, the first dark night. The second dark night is the wild, poisonous desire which is flaming and blazing; the twelve hours are the twelve dark and poisoned thoughts. This dark night resembles the sign of the primeval rise of the demons.
Several non-Chinese sources also testify that poison is a typical characteristic of the Land of Darkness, the samsāra and more specifically the human body:

And that Āz and Ahriman, darkness and gloom, evil-smelling hot wind and the poison of death, the wrathful burning and the poison of the demons.\(^{90}\)

In [the existence] of a mad, savage, poisonous animal, ceaselessly like this, being submerged in the dust of forgetfulness of rebirths.\(^{91}\)

...as I have been born in this terrible, phantasmic house, this castle of death, this poisonous form, the body made of bone...\(^{92}\)

In connection with the Sea of Fire, \(H.2.2\) mentions the Five Poisonous Springs (\(wu \ du \ quan\)), which can be explained by the notion of Five Dark Pits, a primeval attribute of the Land of Darkness. The motif of {poisonous} springs of Darkness also makes an appearance in non-Chinese texts:

The wellsprings of Darkness had all been opened. The [giant] fishes transfixed me with fear.\(^{93}\)

Poisonous springs gush from him, and from him are breathed out [smoky] fogs...\(^{94}\)

He has flung much poison and wickedness from that deep ...\(^{95}\)

This lying body of death is a nameless poison. The Old Man is a nameless poison. Just like the flood which damages the tender sowing, just like the fire.\(^{96}\)
...the poison stinging scorpions, ... with their floods of death.  

At this point it is also worth citing some non-Chinese analogies for the paradoxical compound of fiery springs and fountains. In these excerpts fire and water appear together as attributes of the Land of Darkness.

Lo, the Darkness I have subdued, lo, the fire of the fountains [I have / extinguished] it...  

For I have removed myself from the bitter / ... and come to port before the sea became stormy. / The ... salt sea, I was not washed [in it / ever, nor did I [receive the] slavery of / the fire of insatiety before my eyes (?)  

They knew not the Church, they fell into the fire, they did not / understand. Let no man [add toil to us: G.K.]. / The desire [is] the Flood; the eye of malice / is the fire.  

He [Living Spirit: G.K.] closed the fountains of / fire that they might not again send up darkness, he / quenched the furnaces of fire...  

Water and springs in the Realm of Light are naturally precisely the opposite of the descriptions above: they are fragrant and marvelous, as they contain the water of life.  

h.290. The hundred creeks, the rivers and the sea, the water springs, the water of life in their depth is fragrant and wondrous, if (someone) enters them, he does not drift, nor does he drown, there are no tides which would cause any harm.
In the Chinese scriptures, the motif of the sea (of fire) is linked to the Land of Darkness and — in the Chinese, Buddhism-inspired terminology — Māra (Mo 魔), its lord: the *Hymnscroll* mentions Māra’s palace, Māra’s body, the gate of hell, and the five lightless, poisonous courtyards (again, see number 3 of the motifs listed above). The association between the sea and the Land of Darkness also appears in non-Chinese sources:

[The First Man, who is in the Darkness] His ship is his four sons who are swathed over his body. The sea is the la[nd of darkness ...] / ...] his net is [...] and his powers.¹⁰⁴

[The sea is] [the] error of the universe, the law of sin...

...and the deadly pool of hell

The sea motif in these texts is always connected to the Land of Darkness, just like the motif of depth (shen) and the fivefold pit (wuchong keng). It is to be noted that the first significant events of the Manichaean cosmogony (the attack of Darkness, the descent and suffering of the First Man, and his being led up from the pit of darkness by the Mother of Life and the Living Spirit) serve both as an archetype of and, at the same time, an explanation for the suffering and deliverance of the soul/light (actually the sons/weapons of the First Man).

TR.8–10. You must know that before this universe came into being, the two envoys of Light, the Pure Wind and the Benign Mother entered the dark pit of the Lightless Land, in order to pull out the valiant, ever-victorious (Primeval Thought, who wore) the armor of great wisdom, the five kinds of light-body; they took him and ascended, they led him out from the five pits.¹⁰⁷


¹⁰⁴ *Kephalaia* 28.12–15: περξατ πε περξατ [ν]ψυρη ετβαλε α/μι περξατα διαλατσα πε μα [γ] πιδακε ... / ... περξατ [ν]ψυρη ... / ... περξατα.


¹⁰⁷ 汝等當知，即此世界未立以前，淨風、善母二光明便入於暗坑无明境界，拔擢聰健、常
Relying on this column, the seeds of truth can get out from the five kinds of lightless, dark pits. This resembles the function of the five-five sons of the Primeval Thought and the Pure Wind as supporting columns for the five light bodies in the macrocosm.¹⁰⁸

The fivefold pit (h.21, tr.145–46) or the five pits (tr.10: wu keng 五坑) appear both in the Hymnscroll and the Traité. These five pits are evidently the same as the five worlds/pits of the Land of Darkness referred to in other sources (Syriac: 'ālma; Parth.: 'hrw; Copt.: ("]γ") ποιμεν, τάμεια; Gk: κόσμοι, ἄντρα; Lat.: antra).¹⁰⁹ In his Enchiridion Epicteti, Simplicius designates the Darkness as “five-formed” (πενταμφόρφος).¹¹⁰ The following quotations attest to the presence of this notion in diverse non-Chinese sources.

The quarrelsome Prince of Darkness has subdued those five pits of destruction, through great ... (?) terror and wrath.¹¹¹

But the Kingdom of Darkness consists of five store-houses...¹¹²

... the five abysses of the Dark.¹¹³

... in the five trees that are in the five [worlds of] the land of darkness.¹¹⁴

(The Living Spirit) “in order to create that great structure, the New Paradise, over it, he filled the five ditches of death and levelled (them).”¹¹⁵
These Five Pits belong to the original state of the Land of Darkness, and are not to be confused with the Three Ditches, which were created during the cosmogonical process, although the qualities stored in them are quite similar to the ones treated here (water, darkness, fire). The reason for this is that Three Ditches store the elements of Darkness removed from the world by the Three Vessels. In the following I quote non-Chinese sources to illustrate the motif of three dark ditches.

And the waste and the accretion of the Three Vessels, they of [water and of] darkness [and] of fire, which had been discharged upon (the earth), he gathered them and [and deposited them in the] sea that is within the walls and the vessels; because of this sea waters are salty. For they have received salt and bitterness from the washing out and cleansing of the three vessels.\(^\text{116}\)

And all around the same earth, he made four walls and three ditches. And he imprisoned the demons in those three inner ditches.\(^\text{117}\)

The first is the ditch of water, the second is that of darkness, and the third is fiery...\(^\text{118}\)

Those three poisonous dark ditches and the conflagrations...\(^\text{119}\)

The qualities deposited in the Three Ditches are good analogies, because they exhibit the unmixed forms of the dark principle. On the other hand, the hymns on the sufferings of the soul cannot be connected with the notion of Three Ditches, as light is not present there in any form. It should be also emphasized that during the cosmogonical process the Living Spirit, in order to create the eight earths,\(^\text{120}\) seems to abolish the Five Pits, though this cosmogonical event was probably unknown to the Chinese Manichaean community. But even if it had been well-known, this presumably would not have prevented them from using the metaphor of dark pits and sea to express the sufferings of the soul tormented by the Darkness.
The pits are furthermore logically associated with depth, mentioned in *H.47* as “deep pit” (*H.49*: *sui keng* 遁坑) or “bottomless pit” (*H.104*: *wudi keng* 无底坑) in the Chinese sources, and its analogies (abyss, falling) can be found also in non-Chinese ones, as below:

I shall deliver (thee) from all the waves of the sea, and from its deep wherein thou hast gone through these drownings.\(^{121}\)

Thou wast held back within the abyss, where all is turmoil; thou wast made captive in every place. / Thou wast suspended amid all rebirths. Thou hast suffered ravage amid all cities.\(^{122}\)

Nor is there [limit] for the Darkness in depth.\(^{123}\)

And all who enter there fall head first into the deep abyss. And there they begin to boil in merciless oppression. … [s]o also the boiling souls [are suffering(?)] pain [an]d will never die.\(^{124}\)

In one direction on the border of this bright and holy land there was a land of darkness deep and vast in extent, where abode fiery bodies, destructive races.\(^{125}\)

Thou shall [not] fall (?) within… [where all] (is) full of fire, distress and stabs.\(^{126}\)

They will fall into the deep and be devoured in death. They will clothe themselves in darkness, distress, and fire.\(^{127}\)

The bottomless nature of the Land of Darkness is evidently, though not explicitly, related with the Manichaean concept of its “position”: it is infinite in the south, which actually also means the downwards direction.\(^{128}\)

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\(^{121}\) Trans. M. Boyce (MHP: 147). *Angad rōsnān* VI,45 [MHP, p. 146; MHA, p. 17]: [‘w] zrry jfr’n o kw pd hwyn nx’bd swd ’yy / [kr’](n) ‘(z)(d)’c hw o ’wd (’c) hwyn wmn’n.

\(^{122}\) Trans. M. Boyce (MHP: 167). *Angad rōsnān* VIIa,13−14 [MHP: 166]: ’wt nhxt ’yy ’[w] jfr o cy hwyn ’šwb / ’wt kyrd ’yy [wrd]g o pd hwyn wy’g’n / ’wt ’gws(t ’yy) o pd hwyn ’jwn / w (bwd ’y) y w(y)ngd o pd(hr) hwyn šhr’y’s’n.


\(^{124}\) T II D 52 reunited with T I TM 378 4−7, 11−12 (MHA, pp. 31−32): rty wyspy ky ZY wō’y-δ cyantrp’r’/tys’nt ptkwn ’wpt’nt / ZKwyn’y ykwk z-wb’k c’orr’r’ZYwr/’fr’y-z’-nt ’yšty prpw z-rnc tr’n(kw) (…) [m’y](ō) ZY m[s pt’w]’(nt) xw rw’nt / ’yšy-’n(tc) ZKw’b[z]Y Y kō’[c]w L’ myr’nt.


\(^{126}\) Trans. M. Boyce (MHP: 99). *Huyadagmān* Vb,21 [MHP, p. 98; MHA, p. 15]: […]ny (k) [f’]h’ ndr o pd[...][nd](...)-(c)’[t]c / [cy hm]g prwr’dwr o tm(g) [‘w](d) wxs”g.

\(^{127}\) Trans. M. Boyce (MHP: 165). *Angad rōsnān* VIIa,2 [MHP: 164]: qfyn’d pd jfr’n o x’zd (b)jwx’ynd pd mn’ / [w]’l pd(sm)wcyn’d ’w’t’ o ’w’(tm)n’g w ‘dwr.

\(^{128}\) Byard Bennett, “*Iuxta unum latus terra tenebrarum*: The Division of Primordial Space in Anti-Manichaean Writers’ Description of the Manichaean Cosmogony,” in Paul Mirecki
Though the sea itself is a metaphor of the Land of Darkness, the creatures in it do not have an aquatic, but a fiery nature, which is the manifestation of the greed and lust (tanyu 貪慾; Middle Persian and Parthian āwarţōg) inherent in them. This is a rather important motif, as it will ultimately serve as an explanation for the fiery nature of the sea itself. The following citations exemplify the fiery character of the demonic creatures.

Thou hast put to shame the demons and devils of fire...129

I am in the midst of my enemies, the beasts surrounding me; / the burden which I bear is of the powers and principalities. / They burned (?) in their wrath, they rose against me ... they / burnt (?) me in their fire...130

They became lions in the day through their devouring fire.131

They [beasts, enemies: G.K.] burn in their fire...132

Thou shall [not] fall (?) within... [where all] (is) full of fire, distress and stabs.133

The fifth [property of the King of Darkness: G.K.] is his burning, which burns like an iron as if poured out from fire.134

And they escaped from hell which is ever aflame.135

The hideous form ... and the (ugly) form; he scorches, he destroys...136

129 Psalm-Book 64,28: λέγειν θείλαμι κηρύζετε.

130 Psalm-Book 54,13–15, 17–18: ψάχνετε ὑπάλλαξε χρείας θείλαμι κωτε ἀπαί / τετυπο εἴσθανα τάραξαν ἑτεράνοε θείλαμι / αὐτοί θείλαμι ἀρτήρι ἀκοί ... (k)απ'τη[ς] κηρύζετε...

131 Psalm-Book 156,11: λέγετε γίνεται λέγετε ὑπέρτοιον. The lion as a symbol of darkness (or hylé) – most probably of Biblical origin – also makes an appearance in the Coptic sources (e.g. Psalm-Book 69,20–21; 107,24–25; cf. Lindt, The Names of Manichaean Mythological Figures, p. 203). Moreover according to the Manichaean and general Near Eastern astrological tradition, the lion can be paralleled with fire. For another explanation see Martin Schwartz, “From Healer to Hylé: Levantine Iconography as Manichean Mythology,” Journal of Inner Asian Art and Archaeology 1 (2006), pp. 145–47.

132 Trans. I. Gardner. P. Kell. Copt. 2/C1: 47–48 (Gardner, Kellis Literary Texts, p. 66); c pornography ἡ τετυπετε...

133 Trans. M. Boyce (MHP: 99). Huyadagmān VIb,21 (MHP, p. 98; MHA, p. 15): [.....ny] (k)ljf'h ʻndr o p(d).[.][ndl]....(j).[.][.] / [cy hml]r pwr ʻdwr o tr(g) [w]'d(w) wxs/=g.

134 Kephalaia 31,6–7: ὑπάλλαξεν νεωρὼ χρόνῳ ἐτρωχόν ιτε πούρινη θείλαμι εὖ τετυπετε.


136 Trans. M. Boyce (SPA, p. 442). M507 R 1–2 (SPA, p. 441; RMMP: am, p. 96): dyw (d)w[r](c)yh[r [... ] ῦ(ν) w(c) h'ywy wg'[n]yd]...
And [she [Āz: G.K.] placed] greed and lust in [the middle [of the body: G.K.], imitating[the] Call and the] Answer[ and raging fire was the same as the Column of Glory].

The Dark Tree is [Greed]. And its trunk is the Great Fire.

The first hunter [of Darkness: G.K.] is the King of they who belong to the darkness, who hunted after the living soul with his net at the beginning of the worlds. His net is his fire and his lust...

And from all sides it is clothed in fierce anger. And fully installed are (there) the blaze and the flame and the merciless fire. And those who are dwelling there are merciless demons.

In the eulogy portion of the Traité, the Great Saint figures as a skilful and wise captain on the vast sea (tr.325: juhai qiaozhi chuansi 海巧智舩師), and just after this appellation he is named as the merciful helping hand for those who suffer in the pit of fire (tr.325: huokeng cibe jiuishou 火坑慈悲救手). The pit is associated with fire not only in the Traité (tr.325), but also in the Hymnscroll. These instances, however, refer to the mixture of the two principles and the state of the mixed universe that the suffering light-soul wishes to leave.

h.35. We only wish that Jesus would send down his mercy to free us from the bonds of demons. Presently we reside in the pit of fire; lead us quickly and give us peace in the pure land!

Monsters, Demons, Beasts

The Land of Darkness and the subaquatic world associated with it abound in various types of monsters and beasts: makaras and rakṣasas, venomous insects and snakes, and so forth (number 4, above). These monsters also appear as the representatives of Darkness and enemies of the soul in other contexts.

h.49–50. All dependants of the ignorant body of flesh, together with those who are in the gloomy pits, the demonic nature that obstructs inside and outside, always harming our pure body. h.50. All the evil beasts beyond all comparison, all the unclassifiable
poisonous snakes, ... 142

H.65. We are the light-sheep of the Great Saint, who shed tears, cry and complain: the wolves and the other wild beasts abruptly snatched us from the good light-flock. 143

TR.43−48. The five light-bodies were fettered and suffered like this, they forgot their original nature, as if they were mad or drunken. They were in a state similar to this: if there was a man who wove a basket from snakes with their heads all inside, spitting venom everywhere. He took another man whom he hung inside with his head downward. This man would be covered by venom, and as he was upside down, his mind would be confused, he would not even have time to think of his parents, relatives and his former happiness. Now the five light-natures, fettered by the demons in the body of flesh, suffering day and night, were just like this. 144

TR.52−55. When the Envoy of Light appears in the world, he teaches and converts the sentient beings, thus freeing them from suffering. First he sends down the wonderful sound of Law through the gates of ears; next he enters the old habitation and with the great, wonderful spell he fastens all the poisonous snakes and wild beasts so that they could not move. Next he takes the axe of wisdom and fells the poisonous trees, removes their trunks and stumps and also the soiled grass. He purifies and adorns the palace, placing there the throne of Law, and takes the seat. 145

In the Coptic Kephalaia there are several references to marine monsters: one of them consists of fire and lust [114,3−115,4], the other is the sea-giant (136,23−26). Similarly, other non-Chinese sources refer to monsters which are associated with water or fire. 146

142 无知肉身諸眷屬，併是幽邃坑中子。內外塗盡諸惡幢，常時害我清淨躰。一切惡獸無能比，一切毒蛇何能類。

143 我是大聖明羔子，垂淚含啼訴訣冤。卒被犲狼諸猛獸，劫我離善光明牧。

144 其五明身，既被如是苦切禁縛，廢忘本心，如狂，如醉。猶如有人以眾毒蛇編之為籠，頭皆在內，吐毒縱橫；復取一人倒懸於內，其人爾時為毒所逼，及以倒懸，心意迷錯，無暇思惟父母親戚及本歡樂。今五明性在肉身中為魔囚縛，晝夜受苦，亦復如是。

145 若有明便出興於世，敦化衆生，令脫諸苦。先從耳門，降妙法音；後入故宅，持大神呪，禁眾毒蛇及諸惡獸，不令自在；復置智斧，斬伐毒樹，除去种种，並令清淨，嚴飾宮殿，敷置法座而乃坐之。

146 The description of the world-sea (sm’wtr, Sk.: samudra) which appears among the Sogdian parables seems to symbolize the opposite of the image treated here, nevertheless the figures of beasts, monsters and demons are still present in it (Sundermann, Ein manichäisch-soghdisches Parabelbuch, p. 21). It is to be noted, however, that this is basically a Buddhist motif, not a Manichaean one (Werner Sundermann, “Eine buddhistische Allegorie in manichäischer Überlieferung,” in R.E. Emmerick and D. Weber, eds., Corolla Iranica. Papers in Honour of Prof. Dr. David Neil MacKenzie on the Occasion of His 65th Birthday on April 8th, 1991 [Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 1991], pp. 198−206).
And into them Āz mixed her own self. And that part that had fallen into the sea, from that became one hideous, cruel and terrible Mazan [i.e., “monster”, a kind of demon]; and he tottered out of the sea and began sinning in the world.\(^{147}\)

They said that “we came, meanwhile we were travelling in the middle of the sea, there came up a whale from the sea” \(^{148}\) …

…the habitation of the robbers, which / is the body of death, for which every man has wept. / The sea and its waves thou hast destroyed by thy faith (?); / the beasts that are in it, that would submerge thy … / thou hast overpowered (?) them in thy voyaging: they knew not nor / comprehended thee.\(^ {149}\)

their [the enemies’: G.K.] poison stinging scorpions, / … with their floods of death...\(^ {150}\)

The fish in the sea, the demons in their caves.\(^{151}\)

They became lions in the day through their devouring fire.\(^ {152}\)

They [beasts, enemies: G.K.] burn in their fire…\(^ {153}\)

These examples suggest that the Sea of Fire does not refer to a flaming sea, but much more to a sea populated by monsters with fiery nature (uncontrolled passions, lust). The recently found Manichaean painting (ca. 13–14th centuries) from a Japanese private collection, referred to in my introduction, provides a remarkable parallel. It depicts the Manichaean cosmological system with the ten firmaments above and the eight earths below, and several other typical Manichaean motifs.\(^ {154}\)

In the lower part, just above the eight earths, one can see the created

\(^ {147}\) Trans. J. Asmussen (Manichaean Literature, p. 124). M7981/I/R/5−15 (= T III 260 B I) (RMMP: y, pp. 64−65): "°'wš'n xwd "z / xwyš gryw 'ndr / 'my xt °° 'wd h'n / yk bhr 'y 'w dry'b / 'wbyst h'nyš / mzn 'yw dwšcyhr / 'pr 'wd shmyyn / 'cyš bwd 'wd 'c / dry'b 'b' 'skrws t / 'wš nwys t 'ndr / shr wyn h kww'n."


\(^ {150}\) Trans. I. Gardner (Kellis Literary Texts, p. 64). P. Kell. Copt. 2/37−38 (Iain Gardner, Kellis Literary Texts, p. 64): [ ]ε απογορε πιπηκεταγου / [ ]w απακακαλυγμος πτε πιμον."

\(^ {151}\) T II D 259 V 90−91 (Bang and Gabain, Türkische Turfan-Texte, pp. 192−193): ταλαι ογουζ- ταικι καταζ καταζ .. ινκαρλεται καταζ ογουζ-λαρ.

\(^ {152}\) Psalm-Book 156,11: ΑΓΡΙΜΟΥΝ ΕΠΟΥΓΟΥΥΝ ΓΠΤΕΤΕ ΏΡΕΓΟΥΥΝ."


world with the Buddhist symbol of Mount Sumeru (also appearing in Manichaean texts). Mount Sumeru is surrounded by an island (meaning continents) on which various mythological scenes are depicted. The whole island seems to float on a dark sea. At four points of the sea, one can discern the heads of three monsters, twelve heads altogether. The most conspicuous feature of these sea monsters is the fire which comes out of their mouths. This new piece of evidence unexpectedly corroborated my previous interpretation.

The *mōjie* (makara) mentioned in *H. 19* is worth analyzing independently, as it appears directly after the poisoned sea of the carnal body. The text, moreover, links it with the motif of sinking ships.

*K. 1.9*. Now we sincerely implore and supplicate that we should be removed from the poisoned fire-sea of the body of flesh, / its tossing waves are boiling and bubbling ceaselessly, the *makaras* surface and submerge to swallow (our) vessel.155

*Mōjie*魔竭 is, as seen above, a Chinese transcription of the Sanskrit *makara*, which denotes an aquatic monster that often threatens maritime merchants. Aside from eight examples in the whole Buddhist Canon, this word is basically always written with another *mo* character (摩). The scribe of the *Hymnscroll* might have had two reasons to use “魔”: first, to avoid association with Mangni忙你 (as used in the *Hymnscroll*), whose standard name, though not Mangni忙你 (as used in the *Hymnscroll*), contains this character; secondly, 魔, signifying anything demonic (Māra), is obviously much more suitable for the negative meaning of the *makara* figure. In his *Yiqie jing yinyi*一切經音義, compiled in 810, Huilin慧琳 defines the *makara* as follows: “*Mōjie [makara]* is a Sanskrit word; it denotes a huge fish in the sea which swallows all aquatic creatures and swallows the boats and the ships.”156 According to a Buddhist legend, well-known in the Tang era, and retold, for example, in the famous *Fayuan zhulin*法苑珠林 compiled by Dao Shi道世 in 668, the triple repetition of Buddha’s name once saved a ship of merchants from the makara.157

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155 我今懇切求哀請・願龍肉身離火海・騰波沸涌無暫停・魔竭入出吞舟舫。
156 *T*. 54:2128:577A.24: 摩竭者，梵語也，海中大魚吞噬一切諸水族類及吞船舶者。It is interesting to see that the motif of a *makara* destroying a ship laden with treasure was already present in the *Mahābhārata* [J. Ph. Vogel, “Errors in Sanskrit Dictionaries,” *BSOAS* 20.1/3 [1957], pp. 563–64 [pp. 561–67]].
157 Though it most probably had no role in the choice of the word, it is still interesting to note that one of the chief characteristics of *makara* is its hybrid nature (crocodile, elephant, rhinoceros, dolphin, sometimes other animals) [Gail H. Sutherland, *The Development of the yakṣa in Hinduism and Buddhism* [Albany: SUNY Press, 1991], p. 35; Filippo Salviati, “The “Fishdragon”: The Makara Motif in Chinese Art and Architectural Decoration,” *Environmental Design: Journal of the Islamic Environmental Design Research Centre* 1–2 [1997–99], pp. 238–51], which is a salient feature of the Land of Darkness, and its king (*e.g.* Kephalaia).
The *Sûtra of Great Compassion* says: “Buddha said to Ânanda: ‘... Once an influential merchant travelled with other merchants, and a *makara* wanted to swallow their ship. They called ‘Nama Buddhâya’ thrice and were all saved from the peril.’”\(^{158}\)

In the Manichaean *Hymnscroll* (*h.*19), the supplication for the removal of *makaras* who want to swallow the ship probably evoked this story and the similar “rescue-narratives”, especially those associated with Guanyin, which were extremely popular in Tang times.\(^{159}\)

**Tossing Waves**

The negative associations connected with the image of the sea derive from the fact that according to the Manichaean imagination the sea produces huge and perilous waves (see list, number 5), partly caused by the monsters below, partly by the storms, thus travellers can never feel safe: they have no solid ground under their feet, so they are like wanderers whose safe home lies in another world (*h.*249, *h.*251, *h.*260: *liulang* 流浪).

*h.*249. We also tell you, beneficent light-brothers: select the wonderful (light-)bodies consciously and thoughtfully, you should be brave and wise captains of the ships, who carry over these wave-tossed other-worldly sons.\(^{160}\)

*h.*251. Our noble race has been tossed by the waves for so many years, quickly return them to their original home, to the place of happiness!\(^{161}\)

*h.*260. As for the wave-tossed, otherwordly, one-morning guests [the elect], invite and gratify them, the adorned monasteries should be always pure, you should industriously handle the clothes and the food, thus escaping the sea in pairs.\(^{162}\)
The non-Chinese sources also show the richness of the notion, sometimes more precisely specifying that the chaotic, rough and stormy sea is troubled by the breath or agitation of the monsters in the depths.\textsuperscript{163}

None can be confident while he is in the midst of the sea / and has not yet come to port. / For he knows not the hour when the storm shall rise / against him.\textsuperscript{164}

Guide for me my Spirit in the midst of the stormy sea.\textsuperscript{165}

... in the breath that the sea gi[ant] will breathe and draw it into him that he might disturb the sea.\textsuperscript{166}

It [fashioned the trees] [up/on] the dry [land]; but in the sea it immediately took form and made a great uprising in the sea.\textsuperscript{167}

Who will take me over the flood of the tossing sea, / The zone of conflict in which there is no rest?\textsuperscript{168}

(The First Man) like a humble shepherd among the wild animals, a helmsman in the middle of the roughness of the sea, like a sovereign in the middle of fight and battle. ... Quickly he came down [like] a rock (thrown) into the sea.\textsuperscript{170}

The ceaseless and stormy streams of waves also serve as appropriate metaphors to express the notion that – in contrast with the tranquility, peace and stability of the Realm of Light – the Land of Darkness is characterized by chaotic movements and incessant changes.\textsuperscript{171}
**Ships and Treasure**

As is evident from V. Arnold-Döben’s analysis, the motif of ships carrying treasure and being menaced by waves and monsters is widespread in Manichaeism.\(^{172}\) This motif is also connected with the Sea of Fire in the Chinese sources as monsters swallow ships and sink treasure and merchants (as above). These elements are also described in other parts of the Chinese Manichaica.

\textit{TR.325.} [The Great Saint] is also a skilful and wise captain on the vast sea….\(^{173}\)

\textit{H.77.} Increase our memory in every hour, remove the demon-mouts which are able to swallow, if you remove the demon-mouts which are able to swallow, we will forever be remote from the … of the evil-doing Demon(ess) of Greed.\(^{174}\)

\textit{H.250.} These are the precious treasures of the Light-honoured One, all of you should use the ship of your body to get them out from the sea, diligently heal the tormented ones with wounds and boils, for long have they been sad and waiting for rescue and custody.\(^{175}\)

\textit{H.252.} The upright sons of Light with perfect forms, quickly pull out [the light-elements] from the storehouse of greed and desire, search for precious treasure in the deep sea of suffering, and hasten to offer [them] to the Pure King of Nirvănà.\(^{176}\)

The motif of merchants’ seeking or carrying treasure on the sea which is full of enemies is based on the archetypical image of the First Man after the attack of Darkness.\(^{177}\) This primeval event repeats itself in the middle period of the cosmogony until it ceases to happen in the final era.

I know not where the Son of Evil saw it, he took thieves and sent them to it (?), the thieves poured upon the ship, they drew it out into the middle of the / sea, they wounded its helmsmen, they

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\(^{173}\) 亦是巨海巧智 / 船師 …

\(^{174}\) 一切時中增記念 , 令離能吞諸魔口 ; 令離能吞諸魔口 , 永隔惡業貪魔□。

\(^{175}\) 此是明尊無貴寶 , 咸用身舩般出海 ; 勤毉被刻苦瘡疣 , 久已悲哀望救護。

\(^{176}\) 正是光明具相子 ; 早拔離於貪欲獨 / 幽深苦海尋珍寶 ; 奔奉涅槃淨清王。

\(^{177}\) Arnold-Döben, \textit{Die Bildersprache des Manichäismus}, p. 64.
that were entrusted / with the treasure, they were endangered. They seized the treasure / of the Mighty one which is measureless and beyond counting, they stole / the wealth of the Living ones...\textsuperscript{178}

The First Man], our helmsman ... our first / guide, thou art our shepherd that feeds (?) us...\textsuperscript{179}

With the descent of the First Man, he and his sons, the light elements, sank in the Land of Darkness; using the metaphor under discussion, in the deep sea. While the First Man was led up, the light-elements – the pearls and the treasure stolen by Darkness – must be collected with the help of a ship steered by somebody essentially belonging to the Realm of Light (\textit{an elect}, the Light-Nous, Jesus, Mānī or Noah). These ships return the lost treasures to the safe harbour, the Realm of Light.\textsuperscript{180} The quotations below illustrate how non-Chinese Manichaeans used treasure and ship as metaphors.

Thou art the buried treasure, the chief of my wealth, / the pearl which (is) the beauty of all the gods.\textsuperscript{181}

... upon them, he spread out the great sea, / ... called it the sky, he spread out this / great sea, he built the ships and launched them on it, / the ships of the great traders, the faithful / men of Truth, the barks of the merchants, that will convey / up the distilled part to life. But he subdued the great / sea, he subdued the rebels also that are in it, he / sink the rebels also in it \textsuperscript{182}

Lo, the ship has put in for you, Noah is aboard, he steers. / The ship is the commandment, Noah is the Mind of Light. / Embark your merchandise, sail with the dew of the wind.\textsuperscript{183}

...hasten and come quickly, [board] the bark of the holy ones, that it may not set out and leave you behind.\textsuperscript{184}


\textsuperscript{183} Psalm-Book 157,16–21: εἰς παλαι ἴσοτοι ἄροις : πορε τελάλαν ἐρήμωμε / παλαι πε τετοποι : πορε πε πορες ἰσοτοι / τελα ἱερατεῖσεστα : ἱσοτοι ἴσοτοι ἐνταί

\textsuperscript{184} Psalm-Book 76,28–30: πραπ ἴσοτοι ἱμμοντ' ἀμμίναι νεβαὶ [μ] τελα] αἰσθητοῖ ἔτε
**Nets**

The symbol of the net in the Chinese Manichaean texts is usually applied as an instrument of Darkness: that of opposing (“heretical” from the Manichaean point of view) teachings which can trap the pure elect (tr.301–3, h.189, h.229) or the light-nature (h.90).

**tr.301–3.** His first [characteristic] is that he is good at removing the impurity from the heart, not letting greed and lust [reign], he can make his own light-nature attain constant freedom. He can think of women as empty and false concepts, he is not detained and hindered by beauty and charm. Like a bird which flies high, he cannot perish in a bird-net.185

**h.90.** The skilful craftsman who created the body of flesh is the mendacious and evil demon-king, the result was this cave-dwelling, with a net he caught the light-nature and also hid himself [within].186

**h.189.** And also always take care of the pure and wonderful community, remove hatred and fury, the soiled and impure teachings, advance courage and do not let them droop, remove the poison of the Demon-King’s inimical net!187

**h.229.** Earthly desires should not awake greed, nobody should be caught by the net of the demon-tribe! Let us praise the Light-Nous, he is the dharma-king, he can collect us from the trap of death!188

Similarly, in non-Chinese texts nets symbolize traps which seduce the pure chosen ones, especially with the temptations of sensual pleasures and the body, at the same time threatening them with rebirth.

The joy of earthly things, the pleasure of the [sensual] forms and the things of the world are like sweet food in which poison is mixed. It [the food] holds the soul in its [the demons’] net.189

Let us quickly break the nets of the body ...190

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186 勝造肉身由巧匠，即是非假惡魔王，成就如斯窟宅已，網捕明性自潛藏。

187 又復常鑒淨妙眾，令離怨嗔濁穢法；勤加勇猛無閒暇，令離魔王犯網毒。

188 世界諸欲勿生貪，莫被魔家網所着。堪譽惠明是法王，能收我等離死錯。


190 Psalm-Book 165,9: μαρινος ἐγόγγαλαν ὑψηλην ὑπεομ[α . . . .}
May we be ones who untie the net and the snare of birth and death.\textsuperscript{191} 
Tied up in death, the net of demons, where my soul is caught...\textsuperscript{192}

On the other hand, the net, which is a light-net in \textit{TR.338}, can also play a positive role, as it can save the sufferer from the waves of the Sea of Fire. This double function of the net is remarkably illustrated by the fifth \textit{kephalaion}, which circumstantially relates that both the representatives of the Realm of Light and those of the Land of Darkness make use of nets (\textit{\v{y}nc}) to pursue their goals.\textsuperscript{193}

\begin{tabular}{ll}
\textbf{HUNTER OF LIGHT} & \textbf{HIS NET} \\
1 First Man & ... and his powers \\
2 Third Ambassador & his light \\
3 Jesus the Splendour & light wisdom \\
4 The great counsel & Living Spirit \\
\hline
\textbf{HUNTER OF DARKNESS} & \textbf{HIS NET} \\
1 King of Darkness & his fire & lust \\
2 Evil counsel & (its powers) \\
3 Lust & \\
4 Darkness, sin & death & erroneous teaching \\
\end{tabular}

The light-net (\textit{ming wang 明網}), mentioned in col. 338 of the \textit{Traité}, is consequently not unique in the Manichaean tradition, as both the depiction of the light-form (\textit{\v{y}nc\textit{\nu\nu}\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\num
As fire is often associated with the principle of darkness, which is in turn closely connected to the world of rebirths, it is not surprising that a Parthian fragment correlates fire and rebirth:

And at the coming of Āz three ways of death are revealed, the hidden fire and the visible fire (both leading) to transmigration, and (good) smell and flowers to paradise.

Rebirth is a frequent theme in the Chinese Manichaean texts (TR.5.1-52, H.62, H.95, H.99, H.118, H.99, H.226, H.247, H.272), in certain cases one can also find it associated with sea and water. In the Buddhist expression shengsi [da]hai 生死[大]海, also used by the Manichaeans, dahai 大海 [ocean] is the Chinese equivalent of Sanskrit sūgara ("ocean"): it expresses a great and endless number (of lives), and is not necessarily related to the ocean itself. A similar case is the Chinese equivalent of Parthian gryw jywndg (Living Self), xingming hai 性命海 which has no marine association (H.12, H.73, H.224, H.331). Despite these facts, in the case of another frequently used, analogous Buddhist expression ("the flow of birth and death, shengsi liu 生死流), the aquatic nature cannot be denied. Both the "sea of birth and death" (TR.4.8, H.52, Ch 174 V: shengsi hai 生死海), and "the flow of birth and death" (H.74: shengsi liu 生死流) appear in the Chinese Manichaean texts.

Among others, the following elements might have contributed to the formation of these related notions: the image of the continuous undulation of the sea resembles the notion of impermanence (in Chinese: death), and the fact that both in terms of men and fish, the change of substance results in the change between life and death.

196 [We must] diligently seek for nirvāṇa to cross the sea of fire.

197 You led them across the sea of suffering, / You brought them near to good nirvāṇa.

198 Kephalaia (21,28-31) for example calls it one of the members of the Evil Tree.

199 Trans. W. Sundermann (“The Zoroastrian and the Manichaean Demon Āz,” pp. 335-36). M5750/V/i/4-12 (ibid., pp. 335): 'wd pd 'mdyšňyb 'y 'z sḥ r'h 'y mrg pyd'g bwd oo 'dwr 'y mng w 'dwr 'yg 'ṣq'rg 'w wdyšn oo w bwy 'wd 'sprmgn 'n 'w whyšt.


Next the Pure Wind made two light-ships which carry over the good sons from the sea of birth and death to their original realm, thus making light-nature happy forever.

The finite and the infinite, the body and the soul, how long have they been submerged and wounded in the sea of birth and death?

[Your] jewels are perfect, the leaves of mercy, sweet-dew and ever-fresh, they never wither, those who eat from it can cut the flow of birth and death forever, your fragrance fills the world.

This-and-this person has left his body of flesh, his deeds were not perfect, thus we are afraid that he will sink in the sea of sufferings. We only wish that the two great luminaries, the fivefold law-body, the pure teacher-elect with the power of great compassion would rescue that soul, and make him leave the cycle of rebirths, the solidified bodies, and all the hells, the boiling cauldrons and the blaze of furnaces.

To avoid the sea of birth and death of samsāra...

Though the expression “Sea of Fire” itself does not appear in Buddhist texts, some conceptual analogies (if the fire of Darkness is the ultimate cause of sufferings) do: the “sea of afflictions” or “flow of afflictions” (fannao [da]hai 煩惱[大]海, fannao liu 煩惱流), or the “sea of sufferings”, the “flow of sufferings” (kuhai 苦海, kuli 苦流) are repeatedly used. In Buddhist sources both notions are often supplemented by the expression of “birth and death”, that is rebirth (shengsi fannao hai 生死煩惱海, shengsi kuhai 生死苦海). These occurrences are important for the very reason that some of them are also used in Manichaean texts (H.93; 煩惱海; H.252, H.406; 苦海).

Despite the fact that the Syriac (tašpikā napišātā), the Greek (μεταγγισμὸς) and the Coptic (metaggismos) expressions refer to...
“pouring over”, “transfusion” (the soul from one body to another, from one vessel to another), one finds in the texts themselves hardly any reference to aquatic concepts behind the expressions. On the other hand, in connection with the Parthian words z’dmwrd (Sogd.: z’ðmwrd) and ’jwn, which are equivalent to Chinese shengsi 生死, the notion of waves and depth does appear.

Who will lead me beyond rebirths and free me from (them) all — / and from all the waves in which there is no rest?

Thou wast held back within the abyss, where all is turmoil; thou wast made captive (?) in every place. / Thou wast suspended amid all rebirths. Thou hast suffered ravage amid all cities.

Although the rolling sea might be an image of the difficulties of earthly life and the sufferings of the soul in the body, still it equally or even more prominently evokes the notion of the cycle of rebirths which is ultimately the root of sufferings for the light-elements. This association, as the sources suggest, is an Eastern Manichaean (Parthian, Chinese) development, in all probability inspired by the Buddhist terminology.

**Deliverance**

For the Chinese Manichaens, as seen from H.406–8, rebirth was nearly equal with eternal hell. However, it should also be added that this utmost fear of rebirth derives not only from anxious care for the particular individual, but for the light-nature, that is, the Living Soul, which is thus forced to proceed to new bodily forms, and is thus exposed to various kinds of suffering. The wish to terminate the

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211 See Casadio, “The Manichaean Metempsychosis”.


213 Trans. M. Boyce (MHP: 167). *Angad rōsnān* VIIa,13–14 (MHP: 166): ’w[t hlx tt ’yy ’w] jfr o cy hrwyn ’swb/ ’w[t kyrd ’yy [wr]dg o pd hrwyn wy’g’n/ ’w[t ’gws(t ’yy) o pd hrwyn ’jwn/ w (bud ’yy)w(y)ngndg o pd) hrwyn shyst’n.

214 Trans. M. Boyce (MHP: 172). *Angad rōsnān* VIIa,13–14 (MHP: 166): ’w[t hlx tt ’yy ’w] jfr o cy hrwyn ’swb/ ’w[t kyrd ’yy [wr]dg o pd hrwyn wy’g’n/ ’w[t ’gws(t ’yy) o pd hrwyn ’jwn/ w (bud ’yy)w(y)ngndg o pd) hrwyn shyst’n.


torment of light explains why it must be freed from all forms as soon as possible.

T II T 1319–Ch. 258a. He always rescues the light-nature, he removes them from all births and deaths: from the fields and the sand deserts, from the rivers and the seas, from the springs and sources, from the grass and the trees, and the seedlings and fruits, from the Four Courtyards and the Three Ditches, he pulls all of them out from land and water.\(^{219}\)

\[
\text{[You save the Soul, the Living / from the cycle of rebirths, / from the mountains and the [valleys / the ?] and the deserts, / from the rivers and] springs, from the [trees and] flowers, the walls and tombs, / from the earths of dry and wet.}^{220}\]

The rough sea with tossing waves as the metaphor of rebirth is also a fitting image to represent the liberation of the individual or the suffering Living Soul from it (see the Chinese terms, above, in the list of nine motifs).

\text{TR.48–49. Next the Pure Wind made two light-ships which carry over the good sons from the sea of birth and death to their original realm, thus making light-nature happy forever.}

\text{H.250. These are the precious treasures of the Light-honoured One, all of you should use the ship of your body to get them out from the sea, diligently heal the tormented ones with wounds and boils, for long have they been waiting for rescue and custody.}

\text{H.252. The upright sons of Light with perfect forms, quickly pull out (the light-elements) from the storehouse of greed and desire, search for precious treasures in the deep sea of suffering, and hasten to offer (them) to the Pure King of Nirvāṇa.}

\text{H.260. The wave-tossed, otherwordly, one-morning guests [the elects], invite and gratify them, the adorned monasteries should be always pure, you should industriously handle the clothes and the food, thus escaping the sea in pairs.}

As mentioned above, the archetypical image of this deliverance is the leading up of the First Man from the Land of Darkness, while other


similar descriptions, as exemplified by the following non-Chinese descriptions, also reflect the marine imagery.

He [the Living Spirit: G.K.] brought the First Man up from the contest, the way a pearl is [brought] up from the sea.\(^{221}\)

Who shall free me from every … (from) blazing fire and the distress of [destruction].\(^{222}\)

Lo, I have finished the contest; lo, I have brought to the shore, / no storm has overwhelmed it, no wave has seized it.\(^{223}\)

I passed above the sea / the traps of death...\(^{224}\)

Deliverance from the Sea of Fire and thus from the cycle of rebirth appears in hymns addressed to Jesus (\(h.26, h.52, h.74\)), of which we also have some non-Chinese fragments.

Lord Jesus, save my soul from this birth-death [rebirth], save my soul from this birth-death [rebirth]\(^{225}\)

Jesus—Maiden of Light, Mār Mani, Jesus—Maiden of Light, Mār Mani, have [mercy] upon me, oh merciful Bringer of Light! Redeem my soul from this cycle of rebirth, redeem my soul from [this] cycle of rebirth...\(^{226}\)

In several cases, rescue from the sea can be connected to Jesus, which in the Western sources at least can be explained by the Biblical references to his stilling the storm and the sea (Matthew 8,23−27, Mark 4,35−41, Luke 8,22−25).

In the midst of the sea, Jesus, guide me. / Do not abandon us that the waves may not seize us. / When I utter thy name over the sea, it stills its waves.\(^{227}\)

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\(^{221}\) *Kephalaia* 85,24−25: Αἰγὴ πυραρχή πρω̣με άγαρή άκαλ ημαγων τρε ἡ[ο]γιαμαραρίας τυ[ν]ή αγαρή ακαλ πολακασα.

\(^{222}\) Trans. M. Boyce (MHP, p. 133). Angad r±›nƒn IIIb,12 (MHP, p. 132): kym 'bd'cydyy o 'c hrw [.....] / wxşyndg 'dwr o 'wδ h(w) tng (')['bn's].

\(^{223}\) *Psalm-Book* 63,13−14: ε[ε]ὰ παγων αἰτιαί άκαλ ες παγων αἰτιμ ἀνηρο / άλε δαςμε περς αραγ ύπε ραίμε τορπί άμας.

\(^{224}\) *Psalm-Book* 69,23−24: αἰνικαλττε αἰτωάλακα ι… / άμογι άμογι...

\(^{225}\) M311/V/12−16 (Reck, *Gesegnet sei dieser Tag*, p. 142): yyšw / wxd'y bjw' mn rw'n 'c 'ymy 'z'dmwrδ' / bjw mn rw'n 'c 'ym / 'z'dmwrδ.

\(^{226}\) M38/V/7−13 (RMMP: dz, p. 196): yyšw‘knygrwšn(') / m'rw m'ny' yyšw‘knygrwšn / m'rw m'ny(') rw pd mn qr <'xšd'> / 'xšδ'gr twšn 'gr' bjw'h / mn 'rw' c 'ymy 'z'dmwrδ' / bjw'h mn 'rw'n 'c'y(m)[yy] / z'd[m(w)r]d... Cf. Majella Franzmann, *Jesus in the Manichaean Writings* (London and New York: T&T Clark, 2003), p. 44.

\(^{227}\) *Psalm-Book* 151,8−10: ερίτητε άμας άμας ἀριστή άμας / άποροιοτόκ άκαλ άισον ή ε νικερέ τορπί άμα / εἰρήνη άς άνεφ άριστοκρον άνεφ ως[εγε].
Thou madest the cross a ship for thyself, thou wast the sailor on it.\textsuperscript{228} … the cross was a ship, the souls were passengers.\textsuperscript{229}

In Manichaeism the suffering of Jesus is transposed to the suffering of the universal Living Soul, the Cross of Light, also called Jesus patibilis (\textit{Contra Faustum} XX,2), which is precisely why rescue from these continuous sufferings might be connected to his other aspect, Jesus the Splendor. The first two hymns of the \textit{Hymnscroll}, addressed to Jesus (\textit{Zan Yishu wen}; \textit{h.07–h.44}, \textit{h.45–h.82}) are to a large extent based on the chains of concepts discussed here (darkness, demons, monsters, body, suffering, desire, rebirth, and sea of fire). In addition to the hymns already analyzed, the following ones also contain references to this imagery: \textit{h.33, h.37, h.38, h.39, h.40, h.49, h.50, h.52, h.52, h.62, h.63}. Similarly, the first, sixth, and seventh parts of the \textit{Angad rōsnān} also include the same set of images. Though this Parthian hymn-cycle does not contain any overt reference to the figure of Jesus, W. Lentz hypothesized that he is the ultimate addressee of the \textit{Angad rōsnān}.\textsuperscript{230}

\textit{A Summary of the Results}

The chart below summarizes the majority of the associations cited in this article. A lack of associations (see the small circles) means that in the data available to me I could not find an explicit example: this, however, does not necessarily mean that no such reference exists or will one day be found.

The chart reveals that the majority of the Chinese images and associations can also be found in the Parthian Manichaean scriptures, which reinforces the argument for a strong relationship and interdependence. Interestingly, there are several Coptic parallels, which might indicate that some of these images go back to early periods of Manichaean religious history. Although the expression “Sea of Fire” appears only in the Chinese and the Parthian writings, the chart also shows that the majority of the associations (body, Darkness, waves, pits, poison) appear in connection with either fire or sea in other sources as well, thus it is the matrix of associations \textit{per se} that becomes important.

\textsuperscript{228} \textit{Psalms-Book} 123,33: αἱρεταγρος πεκ πξαι απνεεγ αραγ.

\textsuperscript{229} \textit{Psalms-Book} 123,35: ανταγρο πξαι αμπυγκεα πγογγ.

1. Body−Darkness (Äz)  
2. Body−Darkness−Poison  
3. Darkness−Poisonous springs  
4. Darkness−Pits−Depth  
5. Darkness−Pits−Sea  
6. Fire−Body  
7. Fire−Demons  
8. Fire−Sea, fountains  
9. Sea−Monsters/ 
    demons−Darkness  
10. Sea−Waves  
11. Sea−Monsters−precious 
    ship  
12. Sea−demonic net  
13. Sea−saving net  
14. Sea−rebirth  
15. Sea/fire−Deliverance  
16. Fire−Pit

(“Others” include Uyghur, Latin, Greek, Arabic and Syriac sources; “Darkness” designates the 
Land of Darkness and the principle of Darkness.)

All the presently available evidence supports W. Sundermann’s 
conclusion that both the Traité and the hymns of the Hymnscroll were 
translated from a Parthian original.231 The Chinese transcription of 
Pêsûs in h.21, as presented earlier, suggests that Pêsûs was transcribed 
from a Parthian original. Combining this fact with the shared imagery 
of the Chinese Zan Yishu wen and the Parthian Angad rōsnān, it seems 
clear that the first two hymns of the Hymnscroll were also translated 
from a Parthian original, most probably akin to the Angad rōsnān. In 
addition to the common imagery, the Parthian and the Chinese hymns 
also share their basic setting: after death the believer faces a desolate 
condition, threatened by the forces of Darkness, and only by the mercy 
of a Saviour can he escape these intimidations. The following motifs in 
the Zan Yishu wen attest that these two Chinese hymns ultimately refer 
to the condition experienced by the believer after his/her death: Je- 
sus as the Righteous Judge (h.48), confession and forgiving sins (h.11, 
h.27−29, h.44, h.46, h.48, h.54, h.64), symbolic gifts of paradise 
(h.30), eliminating rebirth (h.33, h.40, h.52, h.55, h.62, h.74), lead-
ing to Paradise (h.35, h.40−1, h.52).

Despite the fact that the exact equivalent of the Chinese expression appears only in the *Angad rōśnān*, and thus historically speaking the Chinese hymn might go directly back to a Parthian original, the motifs discussed above form a general conceptual matrix of images: the Land of Darkness is an unfathomably deep, poisonous, aquatic pit (a sea, an ocean), while the creatures in it (demons, monsters, beasts) are fiery in nature (because of their greed and lust), thus together they form the Sea of Fire which is the place of suffering and rebirth for the Light, the Living Soul, and consequently also for the individual soul. Nevertheless, it was only in the Chinese sources that, probably under Buddhist influence, the image of a Sea of Fire emerged explicitly from this set of related concepts.

**CONCLUSIONS**

In this study I have explored the religious connotations of the paradoxical term Sea of Fire, both in Chinese and non-Chinese sources. It should be stressed that the Chinese occurrence of the compound is most probably traceable to the original Parthian one, as it does appear once in the *Angad rōśnān*. However, in this essay I have tried to sketch the religious notions and associations surrounding it, and not the exact historical roots of the particular lexic compound. The comparative textual analysis here basically aimed at clarifying the exact meaning of the compound and demonstrating the presence of its associated notions in the entire corpus of Manichaeism, from the Coptic sources to the Middle Iranian and Chinese ones. The starting point was always one of the associated Chinese notions, for which I searched for non-Chinese analogies.

Firstly, it should be stressed that the metaphorical use of sea (*hai 海*) must be distinguished from its neutral meaning, used in listing natural phenomena, as well as from its use to refer to “a huge amount” and “inexhaustibility”, both of which appear in the *Traité* itself. In the present study it is always the first, metaphorical usage that is the object of analysis.

The motif of *huohai 火海* is clearly related to the Land of Darkness. Some Chinese and non-Chinese sources depict the Land of Darkness as aquatic, and at the same time refer to the fiery nature of the creatures within. The aquatic land of Darkness is frequently linked with the figures of monsters, beasts and demons. More specifically, the unique orthography of the word *makara* (*mojie 魔竭*) and the complex motives for its use were investigated. Another motif, that of deep, dark pits, is
also related to this general image. An exact equivalent of the Chinese Sea of Fire has been found in the Parthian *Angad rōsnān* (I, 19). After the analysis of the Chinese and non-Chinese sources, I concluded that the meaning of the compound Sea of Fire is not the self-evident “flaming sea” but a sea populated by the monsters of Darkness, emitting the inner fire of negative forces (for example, lust, passions). This interpretation was unexpectedly reinforced by the discovery of the presently available single complete Manichaean painting which portrays monsters in the sea with fire emanating from their mouth.

The body of flesh, linked with the Sea of Fire in both Chinese and non-Chinese sources, inherently belongs to the Land of Darkness, and is thus characterized by negative attributes, especially those connected with desire. Precisely for this reason the body of flesh is often associated with fire or stormy sea. Both the Chinese and the non-Chinese sources describe the image of the sea as stormy and billowy, which among other things refers to the chaotic movements of the sea, also a fundamental characteristic of the Land of Darkness, and the monsters in it. Chinese sources also correlate *huohai* 火海 with poisons or poisonous nature, a typical feature of the Land of Darkness. Similarly, the motif of dark, poisonous springs is a widespread image in Manichaean usage. The symbol of nets usually has negative associations which link it with the Land of Darkness, nevertheless, the only positive example (“light-net”) in the Chinese scriptures has parallels in the Coptic sources.

Both the Chinese and the non-Chinese texts contain references to the motif of seamen who travel amidst tossing waves and menacing creatures to collect treasure. This treasure is the soul, which derived from the Realm of Light but is now entrapped in the human body devised as a prison by the forces of Darkness. The incarnation and the subsequent sufferings of the soul in the body has its archetypical predecessor in the descent of the First Man into the pits of Darkness and his imprisonment full of sufferings. Leading up the First Man from the Land of Darkness with help from the Realm of Light (Mother of Life, Living Spirit) can be paralleled with bringing the soul-pearls from the depths of the inimical sea to the surface with help from the Light-Envoys and elects. The motifs of treasure/pearls (soul) suffering in the sea (body, Land of Darkness) and the tossing waves (cycle of rebirth) and being saved by the seamen (the elects, light-deities) are also found in the Chinese texts.

In the Chinese sources the notion of rebirth is clearly related to *huohai*, especially to its repeatedly emerging waves, while similar de-
scriptions can be identified in the Parthian Manichaean corpus. It can be surmised that – despite the fact that huohai itself does not actually appear in Buddhist texts – Buddhist analogies of the expression (fannao dahai 煩惱大海, shengsi hai, shengsi liu, kuhai, some of them also used in Manichaean texts) might have contributed to the formation of this association, as no such link can be found in Western Manichaean texts.

The rescue of the First Man from the abyss is the general archetype of light-soul/treasure being rescued from or carried over the deep and stormy sea. This deliverance from the Sea of Fire is sometimes linked with the figure of Jesus. The first two hymns of the Hymnscroll (Zan Yìshu wen) are fundamentally based on this imagery. This shared imagery in turn offers some reinforcement to the hypothesis advanced by W. Lentz that the Angad rōsnān was addressed to Jesus. In addition to the Zan Yìshu wen, the conceptual matrix connected with the image of fiery sea does make an appearance in several Manichaean texts, most prominently in the Angad rōsnān [I, VI, VII]. This correlates remarkably well with the conclusion reached by the Chinese transcription of Pësūs, and substantiates the claim that the Zan Yìshu wen was also translated from a Parthian original, thus corroborating W. Sundermann’s hypothesis that Parthian was the dominant source language of Chinese Manichaean texts.

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

C Compendium (Moni guangfo jiaofa yilüe 摩尼光佛教法儀略)
GSR Klimkeit, trans., Gnosis on the Silk Road: Gnostic Texts from Central Asia
H Hymnscroll (Moni jiao xiabu zan 摩尼教下部讚)
M Manichaean; indicating Middle Iranian fragments (usually followed by a number)
MHA Sundermann, trans., The Manichaean Hymn-cycles Huyadagmān and Angad Rōsnān in Parthian and Sogdian
MHP Boyce, The Manichaean Hymn-cycles in Parthian
RMMP Boyce, A Reader in Manichaean Middle Persian and Parthian
SPAH Boyce, “Some Parthian Abecedarian Hymns”
T Turfan; indicating mss. housed in Berlin Turfan collection (obtained in four German missions to Turfan, 1902–1914 (indicated as I, II, III or IV)

T. Taishō shinshū daizōkyō 大正新修大藏經
TR Traité (Bosi jiao canjing 波斯教殘經)