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# Manichaean Eschatology: Gnostic-Christian Thinking about Last Things

*The past decades have seen the publication of new Manichaean texts such as the Greek Mani-Codex and new editions of pivotal eschatological texts such as the Coptic Sermon on the Great War and Mani's Šābuhragān. When combined with previously discovered Manichaean texts and, for instance, polemics from the Church Fathers, these texts throw a new light on Manichaean eschatology. The present chapter aims at presenting some of these new insights, while stressing that Manichaean eschatology, both according to Western and Eastern sources, awards the central position in eschatological events to Jesus.*

## 1 Introduction

The newly-discovered texts have revolutionised our understanding of Manichaeism. Up to the 1980s, many scholars saw Manichaeism as an offshoot of Iranian religious traditions, in particular because of its “dualism” and a number of its eschatological concepts, such as the Great War at the end of time and the conflagration (ἐκπύρωσις) of the world through fire. Since the discovery of the Mani Codex, however, we know for certain that the prophet Mani, the founding father of Manichaeism who was born in 216 CE in present-day Iraq and died in 276 or 277,<sup>1</sup> was raised in a Jewish-Christian community of Elkesaites. This means that the young Mani grew up in a sort of *kibbutz* among Jews who believed Jesus to be the Messiah and venerated a certain Elchasai as the final prophet. Not Iranian, but Jewish and Christian ideas made up the basis of the gnostic religion of the Manichaeans, a church (ἐκκλησία) which spread from Mesopotamia as far as Roman Africa and Spain in the West and China in the East. Astonishingly, recently small communities have been discovered near Quanzhou on the South China-coast who continue to venerate Mani as the Buddha of Light.<sup>2</sup>

From the Greek Mani Codex we also learn that Mani was an eschatological prophet and that his first disciples considered themselves to live in apocalyptic

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1 According to Sayed Hasan Taqizadeh, the most likely date is February 26, 277; see Taqizadeh and Henning, “The Dates of Mani’s Life,” 107. For discussion, see e.g. Böhlig and Asmussen, *Manichäismus*, 309–310; Böhlig, “Manichäismus,” 30; Sundermann, “Studien zur kirchengeschichtlichen Literatur,” 367–369.

2 For general introductions to Mani and Manichaeism, see e.g. Samuel N. C. Lieu, *Manichaeism in the Later Roman Empire*; Gardner and Lieu, *Manichaean Texts*; van Oort, “Mani;” van Oort, “Manichaeism.” On Quanzhou, see esp. Lieu’s contributions to *Medieval Christian and Manichaean Remains*.

times.<sup>3</sup> We find the same in Mani's own writings, in particular the so-called *Šābuhragān*, composed to convert šāh-in-šāh Šābuhr I.<sup>4</sup> We gain the same impression from a third text, the *Sermon on the Great War*, which has been transmitted in Coptic and was discovered in Egypt at the end of the 1920s.<sup>5</sup> These texts can be characterised as strongly eschatological.

## 2 The Eschatological Cologne Mani Codex

The first source of crucial importance in this context is the Mani Codex that was discovered in Egypt shortly before 1970. Due to its acquisition by the University of Cologne, it is usually referred to as the Cologne Mani Codex, or *CMC*.<sup>6</sup> On each of the tiny parchment codex' very small pages (4.5 to 3.5 cm) we find about 23 lines written in Greek majuscules. The codex contains a biography of the young Mani in the form of accounts by his earliest disciples. Mani grew up in a baptising sect whose members hailed the Jewish-Christian prophet Elchasai<sup>7</sup> as their founder (ἀρχηγός).<sup>8</sup>

Reading the *CMC* one is reminded of Rudolf Bultmann's *Theologie des Neuen Testaments*.<sup>9</sup> If I may call to mind its opening sentences: "Jetzt ist die Zeit gekom-

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**3** Koenen, "Manichaeism: Apocalypticism." This groundbreaking article remains the text for research on Manichaeism; the present overview draws heavily on it as well.

**4** The most recent and best edition of all the fragments, with English translation, is MacKenzie's, "Šābuhragān," (1979; 1980). But see also, for instance, *Manis kosmogonische Šābuhragān-Texte*, ed. Hutter, and German translations of essential parts of the Middle Persian text in Böhlig and Asmussen, *Manichäismus*, 234–239.

**5** The key new edition is *Studies in the Sermon on the Great War*, ed. Pedersen, 7–42. See also Pedersen's doctoral dissertation "Studies in the Sermon on the Great War," and his "Der große Krieg." The still often quoted *editio princeps* was by Polotsky, *Manichäische Homilien*, 7–42. Partial English translation (by Iain Gardner) with focus on the *Sermon's* final passages in Gardner and Lieu, *Manichaeism*, 221–226; partial German translation in Böhlig and Asmussen, *Manichäismus*, 234–239.

**6** First preliminary edition ("Vorbericht"): Henrichs and Koenen, "Ein griechischer Mani-Codex;" *editio princeps* of *CMC*, c. 1–72.7, in: *ZPE* 19, 1–85 (with extensive commentary); of *CMC*, c. 72. 8–99.9, in: *ZPE* 32, 87–199 (with very extensive commentary); of *CMC*, c. 99.10–120, in: *ZPE* 44, 201–318 (with very extensive commentary); of *CMC*, c. 121–192 in: *ZPE* 48, 1–59. An ample commentary on the final section has been published by Römer, *Manis frühe Missionsreisen*. A complete edition was published by Koenen and Römer, *Der Kölner Mani-Kodex: Über das Werden seines Leibes*. Moreover, a diplomatic text has been edited by Koenen and Römer, *Der Kölner Mani-Kodex: Abbildungen und diplomatischer Text*.

**7** For the main facts (with relevant literature) on Elchasaios (or Alchasai, Elkesai, Elxaios, Elxai), who is said to have received the revelation written about in the *Book of Elchasai* in Mesopotamia in 116–117, see my German entry "Elkesaiten" (English "Elkesaites") "Elkesaites," 416.

**8** *CMC* c. 94. 10–11 (= *Der Kölner Mani-Kodex*, ed. Koenen and Römer [dipl. text], 186).

**9** Bultmann, *Theologie des Neuen Testaments*.

men! Die Gottesherrschaft bricht herein! Das Ende ist da!” According to the New Testament scholar Rudolf Bultmann and others, Jesus was an eschatological prophet and he calls on his hearers to make a decision (“Der Ruf zur Entscheidung”). The crucial sign of the *eschaton* is the appearance of the prophet Jesus and his call.

The *CMC* argues the same, and describes the Life of Mani as part of the history of salvation. Its title is Περὶ τῆς γέννης τοῦ σώματος αὐτοῦ: “On the Genesis of His Body.” “Body” means both Mani’s physical body *and* his church. The *CMC* is not the work of one author, but comprises excerpts from the testimonies of Mani’s first disciples. Just as the evangelists gave their account of Jesus’ deeds and words (cf. Acts 1:1), in this codex Mani’s disciples give their account of his life and teachings. The disciples include Salmaios the Ascetic; Baraies the Teacher; Timotheos; Abjesous the Teacher; Innaios the brother of Zabed; Za[cheas?]; Kustaios, the Son of the Treasure of Life. We will encounter Kustaios again below as the author of the *Sermon on the Great War*.

The *CMC*’s central message is the revelation of τὰ γενόμενα (“what happened”) and τὰ γενησόμενα (“what will happen”).<sup>10</sup> In other words, Mani’s revelation deals with the entire *past*, which includes the termination of the original separate state of “light and darkness”, their ensuing mixture, and the first wars: and it deals with the *future*, the real ἔσχατα, including the Great War, the Last Judgment, and the restoration of the original separate states of “light and darkness”. Evil will be enclosed in the βῶλος or tomb. Does this mean, τὰ ἔσχατα ὡς τὰ πρῶτα: the end like the beginning? Not quite, for as we will see, there are important differences.

Let us first examine how Mani is depicted as an eschatological prophet in the *CMC*. He tells the members of the community of Jewish baptists that their daily washings of food and body are of no avail. Real purity is the purity through γνώσις: “It is the separation of light from darkness, death from life, living waters from turbid ones” (84); “[...] you [should keep] the commands of the Saviour (= Christ) [so that] he may redeem [your] soul from [destruction] and from (85) perdition.” Mani then recounts, in this same excerpt from Baraies the Teacher, that some accepted his words (“they treated me as prophet and teacher”, 86), but that the majority rejected him. They said: “Is *he* the one concerning whom our teachers prophesied when they said, ‘A young man will [rise up from] our [midst] and will come [forward] as a new [teacher] (87) to call into question our whole doctrine, just as our forefathers have spoken of the Rest of the Garment?’” The forefathers meant here are the Jewish prophets of old. Because these Baptists regarded Elchasai as their founder (ἀρχηγός, 94), we may explain the rather enigmatic expression “the rest of the garment” (ἡ ἀνάπαυσις τοῦ ἐνδύματος) as referring to the Elkesaite idea that the true prophet,

<sup>10</sup> Cf. *CMC*, 26.1–2 (= *Der Kölner Mani-Kodex*, 52, ed. Koenen and Römer). According to the latter, one may also translate (cf. e.g. Gardner and Lieu, *Manichaean Texts*, 51): “[...] those things which had happened or were to happen [...].” Or, in rather archaic English: “that which will come to pass.”

having dressed himself in the “garments” of the body of the successive incarnations, finally entered the Rest (ἀνάπαυσις). In other words, they considered Elchasai the final prophet. Now, however, some of them wondered whether Mani could be part of this tradition: was *he* the final prophet? The majority of the Baptists denied this and regarded him as one of the apocalyptic pseudo-prophets, and even tried to kill him.<sup>11</sup>

We see here that both Mani’s opponents, as well as his disciples, stood in the Jewish-Christian tradition of the prophet Elchasai, who received the apocalyptic revelation written in the *Book of Elchasai* in Mesopotamia in the year 116 or 117.<sup>12</sup> The difference is that the disciples considered *Mani* to be the final prophet. It could be that they already used the expression “seal of the prophets”, although this title is transmitted only in medieval Muslim sources such as the writings of al-Biruni and al-Sharastānī and thus may be an expression exclusive to Muslim writers.<sup>13</sup> Anyhow, in the *CMC*, Mani and his importance are discussed in eschatological terms. After a number of (previously completely unknown!) Jewish apocalypses<sup>14</sup> and also some passages from the apostle Paul (2 Cor. 12; Gal. 1) have been quoted, it states that Mani’s revelation is the final one and that his disciples became “the seal of his apostleship” (οἱ δὲ μαθηταὶ αὐτοῦ ἐγένοντο σφραγῖς αὐτοῦ τῆς ἀποστολῆς, 72).<sup>15</sup>

In the Coptic *Kephalaia*, texts on Manichaean doctrine that seem to have been directly inspired by Mani’s own teachings, it is emphatically stated that Mani was sent to the last generation.<sup>16</sup> He was not only Jesus’ final prophet, but also the Paraclete.<sup>17</sup> In the words of Mani as transmitted by his disciple Timotheos in the *CMC*, his function was “to scatter the bread on my people”.<sup>18</sup> Even Augustine says that some of Mani’s disciples considered his name to be Mannichaios (with double N), i.

<sup>11</sup> For the further development of the controversy, see *CMC*, c. 94–106 (= *Der Kölner Mani-Kodex*, c. 186–210, ed. Koenen and Römer,). A fine analysis of context and background can be found in Reeves, “The ‘Elchasaite’ Sanhedrin.”

<sup>12</sup> Cf. above, note 7.

<sup>13</sup> See e.g. Stroumsa, “Seal of the Prophets;” Colpe, *Das Siegel der Propheten*.

<sup>14</sup> See e.g. Gruenwald, “Manichaeism and Judaism;” Reeves, *Heralds of that Good Realm*.

<sup>15</sup> Thus the reading according to Koenen and Römer, *Der Kölner Mani-Kodex*, 50. Their diplomatic edition (*Der Kölner Mani-Kodex: Abbildungen und diplomatischer Text*, c. 142, ed. Koenen and Römer) reads σφραγῖς. For the expression, one may compare the apostle Paul in 1 Cor. 9:2.

<sup>16</sup> *Kephalaia*, c. 179, ed. Polotsky and Böhlig, 16–17. Translation: Polotsky and Böhlig, vol. 1, 179: “Ich dagegen bin jetzt in dieser letzten Generation (γενεά) gesandt worden.” Cf. the English translation by Gardner, *Kephalaia*, 189: “Furthermore, I myself was sent now, in this last generation.”

<sup>17</sup> Cf. *CMC*, c. 70, which speaks of “τοῦ παρακλήτου πνεύματος τῆς ἀληθείας” (Gardner and Lieu, *Manichaean Texts*, 58: “[...] through the Paraclete, the spirit of truth”). On Mani as the Paraclete promised in Jn 14, see e.g. Sundermann, “Paraklet;” van Oort, “The Paraclete Mani.”

<sup>18</sup> *CMC*, c. 107: στάξει δὲ τὸν σῖτον ἐπὶ τοῦ λαοῦ μου.

e., the shedder of manna.<sup>19</sup> Jewish tradition has it that the miracle of manna would be repeated at the end of the world.<sup>20</sup>

To summarise: the *CMC* depicts Mani's life as the beginning of eschatology. With his deeds and words, the last days are imminent. His life initiates the final wars of "light and darkness", Good against Evil. In all of these features, he is heir to the Jewish eschatological expectations in general, and of the Jewish-Christian ones in particular.

### 3 Mani's Šābuhragān and his Disciple Kustaios' *Sermon on the Great War*

We can identify the same characteristic of Mani's mission in the fragments of the *Šābuhragān*, the Middle Persian text he composed for Šābuhr I.<sup>21</sup> The work's aim was to win the (already more or less convinced) Zoroastrian king over to Manichaeism, and it is for this reason that the Manichaean deities and other aspects of the worlds of "light and darkness" bear Persian names. Several of the *Šābuhragān*'s sections are deeply influenced by the Synoptic Apocalypse (Mk. 13; Mt. 24; Lk. 21) and the eschatological content of the twenty-fifth chapter of Matthew.<sup>22</sup>

This essential feature of the *Šābuhragān* is also clearly reflected in the Coptic *Sermon on the Great War*.<sup>23</sup> The term "Great War" seems to be Iranian,<sup>24</sup> but most of the sermon is clearly inspired by Jewish and Christian traditions<sup>25</sup> (including, perhaps, the Apocalypse of John<sup>26</sup>). The *Sermon* or *Logos* is said to be composed by

19 Augustine, *De haeresibus*, 46.1: [...] *Mannichaeum uocant, quasi manna fundentem*.

20 Cf. e.g. the annotations of Henrichs and Koenen to *CMC*, 107, in: *ZPE* 44, 265 n. 361, and the still leading study of Borgen, *Bread from Heaven*.

21 See for MacKenzie's text edition and translation, note 4, above.

22 This last aspect is specifically discussed in Hutter, "Mt 25:31–46 in der Deutung Manis."

23 See for the editions of Pedersen and Polotsky, note 5, above.

24 As repeatedly stressed by Widengren; see already his *Mani und der Manichäismus*, 70, 150, n. 3.

25 See in particular the analysis of Pedersen, *Studies in the Sermon on the Great War*, and the brief annotations in his text edition in *The Sermon on the Great War*, ed. Pedersen, 7–42.

26 Cf. Pedersen, in particular his diagrams of biblical allusions and quotations in *Studies in the Sermon on the Great War*, 53–64 (which are followed by thorough analyses of the available material, 64–79). As regards the Apocalypse, Pedersen concludes (75–79) that its use by the Manichaeans is "possible", although one should bear in mind (1) that an expression such as "the cup of wrath" (*The Sermon on the Great War*, ed. Pedersen, 7, l. 25,) or "the second death" (*Kephalaia*, ed. Polotsky and Böhlig, 104.106.150) could have been derived also from other (Jewish) texts, and (2) that the Manichaean New Testament seems to have consisted only of "the Gospel" and "the Apostle" (i.e., Paul) (cf. e.g. Tardieu, "Principes de l'exégèse manichéenne"). For the "possible" reminiscences of Apocalypse in the *Sermon*, see also the corresponding annotations in *The Sermon on the Great War*, ed. Pedersen, 7, l. 14.

Kustaios,<sup>27</sup> one of the authors of the *CMC*. The *Sermon* speaks of persecutions, in all probability those under Bahrām II (277–293) and perhaps Hormizd II (303–310).<sup>28</sup> It was originally written at the end of the third or the beginning of the fourth century, somewhere in Mesopotamia and probably in East-Aramaic.<sup>29</sup>

The *Logos* deals with Manichaean eschatology in great detail. It opens with apocalyptic predictions about a time of disaster: robberies, wars, battles; death, hunger, refugees; and so on.<sup>30</sup> Then follows a discussion of the wars of the saviours against Error (πλάνη): Zarathustra against the pre-Zoroastrian religion; Jesus against the errant Jews; Mani against the magi.<sup>31</sup> According to the *Sermon* (like the *CMC*), the final cycle of history begins with Mani, whose mission is painted as ending in new disaster and error, and the coming of the Great War.<sup>32</sup> Weeping is a strong characteristic of eschatological feelings; one may compare Jesus, Enoch (in the *Apocalypse of Enoch*<sup>33</sup>), Ezra (in 4 Ezra): all true prophets are full of tears.<sup>34</sup> After the Great War comes the peaceful rule of the Great King.<sup>35</sup> This rule lasts from the end of the war until – within Mani’s own generation – the Antichrist comes.<sup>36</sup> During the Great King’s peaceful rule, the end is like the beginning and even trees will speak.<sup>37</sup> As is the case with the pseudo-prophets in the *Šābuhragān*,<sup>38</sup> the Antichrist will be defeated quickly.<sup>39</sup> Then comes Jesus the Splendour (called Xradešahr in the *Šābuhragān*, i.e., the God of the World of Wisdom or Nous<sup>40</sup>) and the Last Judg-

27 See e.g. the page headings in *The Sermon on the Great War*, ed. Pedersen, 27, 31, 35, 39 [the last two are missing in Polotsky’s edition]; cf. Pedersen, *Studies in the Sermon on the Great War*, 87–93.

28 Cf. e.g. Pedersen, *Studies in the Sermon on the Great War*, 87.

29 E.g. Pedersen, *Studies in the Sermon on the Great War*, 80–87; Pedersen, “Der große Krieg,” 62.

30 *Studies in the Sermon on the Great War*, ed. Pedersen, 8, 6–10, 28. It is not easy to make a clear-cut division of the text. For convenience’s sake, I mainly follow Koenen’s global division (Koenen, “Manichaean Apocalypticism,” 298–307). For Pedersen’s perhaps more sophisticated summary of the *Sermon*’s sections, see his *Studies in the Sermon on the Great War*, 170–171.

31 *The Sermon on the Great War*, ed. Pedersen, 10, l. 28–31.

32 *The Sermon on the Great War*, ed. Pedersen, 12–21, 27.

33 Cf. *CMC*, c. 58ff.

34 On weepings, see in particular Pedersen, *Studies in the Sermon on the Great War*, 113–115 and 200–222. Pedersen *inter alia* considers the possibility that the eschatological weepings of the Manichaeans are connected with their Bema-festival and also that they possessed “books of weepings”, one of which (*The Weeping*) circulated under Mani’s name.

35 *Studies in the Sermon on the Great War*, ed. Pedersen, 21, 28–33. It is important to note that in the Elchasaite tradition (cf. e.g. Epiphanius, *Panarion*, 19.3.4) the Great King is Christ.

36 *The Sermon on the Great War*, ed. Pedersen, 34.

37 Cf. *CMC*, 10.1ff. and 98.9ff. for the speaking of trees (thus preventing the suffering of the divine Light). One may compare *Testament of Abraham* 3, 1–3 and the *Genesis Apocryphon* found in cave 1 of Qumran.

38 *Šābuhragān*, 1–10, transl. MacKenzie, 504–505.

39 Cf. *Studies in the Sermon on the Great War*, ed. Pedersen, 28, l. 4.

40 Cf. e.g. “Šābuhragān,” 17, transl. MacKenzie, 505.

ment.<sup>41</sup> The description of the Judgment is similar to that found in Matthew 25: the sheep (i.e., the Manichaean Elect and the worthy Auditors) will be separated from the goats.<sup>42</sup> Under the rule of Jesus the Splendour, gods, angels and the Elect will live together in a new golden age.<sup>43</sup> Again, the trees will be green and talk; all evil will be removed from the world and mankind will listen to the true religion.<sup>44</sup> Then follows the dissolution and destruction of the world. Through the Porter or Omophoros (Ὠμοφόρος),<sup>45</sup> i.e., the Column of Glory or Milky Way, identified with the cosmic Jesus), the sons of the Living Spirit will leave the world.<sup>46</sup> Primal Man will unveil his face and attract them to himself in Paradise.<sup>47</sup> The whole earth will be subjected to ἐκπύρωσις:<sup>48</sup> fire sets free the last particles of light. Darkness will be imprisoned in a βῶλος or Tomb.<sup>49</sup>

**41** *The Sermon on the Great War*, ed. by Pedersen, 35–38. Cf. “Šābuhragān,” 42ff., transl. MacKenzie, 504ff.

**42** On the (fairly complicated) question of the use of Mt. 25 in Mani’s and Kustaios’ text respectively, see Pedersen, *Studies in the Sermon on the Great War*, 127ff.

**43** *Studies in the Sermon on the Great War*, ed. by Pedersen, 39, l. 1–18. Cf. “Šābuhragān,” 130 ff., transl. MacKenzie, 508ff.

**44** An interesting feature in this context is that the believers, if they wish so, “will strip themselves of their body, and receive the victory with him [i.e., Jesus], and find the road levelled from him up to the kingdom of life” (*Manichaean Homilies*, ed. Pedersen, 39, 15–18). Another is that, according to “Šābuhragān,” 130ff., transl. MacKenzie, 509, “when god Xradešahr [i.e., Jesus] will care for the world, then will day, month and year come to an end [...]” The last feature is also stressed in other texts, for instance, 2 *Henoch* 17.

**45** Only named once in the *Sermon* as we have it (*The Sermon on the Great War*, ed. Pedersen, 40, l. 6), but several times in, for instance, the *Kephalaia*. As his name (“one who bears on the shoulders”) indicates, this figure has also been identified as Atlas, but as far as I can see he has another role. In an explanatory note to his translation of *Keph.* 25, 23–25, Böhlig, *Manichäismus*, 328, note 11, remarks: “Die Säule der Herrlichkeit ist nicht mit dem fünften Sohn des Lebendigen Geistes zu identifizieren. Weil dieser, der Atlas bzw. Omophoros, den Kosmos trägt, heißt er so. Weil die Säule der Herrlichkeit aber das Licht aus der Welt emporträgt, hat die den Beinamen ‘der große Omophoros’ bekommen. ‘Groß’ dient hier zur Differenzierung.” Clackson and others in *Dictionary of Manichaean Texts*, 88 s.v. Ὠμοφόρος, list – apart from the occurrences in the Coptic Manichaica as “Omophorus, Atlas, Burden-bearer, Porter” – the texts in which it is used in epithets of the Column of Glory, the Perfect Man and in epithets of the Sons of the Living Spirit.

**46** *Studies in the Sermon on the Great War*, ed. by Pedersen, 39, l. 18 – 41, l. 11. One may compare “Šābuhragān,” 159ff., transl. MacKenzie, 511ff.

**47** Koenen, “Manichaean Apocalypticism,” 304, interestingly compares the *Sermon*’s account that the appearance of First or Original Man results in the destruction of the world with Apoc. 20:11: on the appearance of “the white throne and the One sitting upon it”, “the earth and the heavens fled from his presence, and there was no place for them”.

**48** Here I use, following Koenen, “Manichaean Apocalypticism,” 304, the general eschatological-apocalyptic term, though it should be noted that – as far as I am aware – the term is not used in Greek or (as a loan word) Coptic Manichaica.

**49** Strictly speaking, the term βῶλος does not appear in the *Sermon*, but cf. Pedersen, *Studies in the Sermon on the Great War*, 379ff. Still the best study on the Manichaean βῶλος is Decret, “Le ‘globus horribilis’ dans l’eschatologie manichéenne” (repr. in Decret, *Essais sur l’Église manichéenne*, 7–13).

Curiously, this βῶλος is situated in the middle of the New Aion, both structures having already been built at the time of the creation of the world. May we call this some sort of supra-lapsarism?<sup>50</sup> Or absolute determinism?<sup>51</sup> Paradise as the outer sphere and the New Aion as the inner sphere encircle the βῶλος.<sup>52</sup> In the New Aion, the Father of Light unveils his “image” (εἰκῶν) to the redeemed and all light will merge into Him.<sup>53</sup>

Indeed, Kustaios’ *Logos* speaks of the New Paradise *and* the Eternal Paradise. The Eternal Paradise appears to refer to the original kingdom of God the Father of Greatness and New Paradise to the New Aion of Primal Man or Christ. It is not wholly clear whether the New Aion will last forever, like the Father’s eternal Paradise.<sup>54</sup> If not, one may speak of some Messianic *intermezzo*,<sup>55</sup> after which Christ “will hand over the Kingdom to God the Father” (1 Cor. 15:24–28).

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Apart from the βῶλος (for the incarceration of the male demons and evil doers), several texts – probably including Kustaios’ *Sermon*; cf. *Manichäische Homilien*, ed. Polotsky, 41 note to line 6; Pedersen, *Studies in the Sermon on the Great War*, 379; *Manichaean Homilies*, ed. Pedersen, 41 – also mention the τάρφος (for the incarceration of the female ones).

**50** The subject of supra- (and infra-) lapsarism has been much discussed in Calvinist dogmatics. See e.g. Barth, *Kirchliche Dogmatik*, 136ff. Interestingly, Berkouwer, *Divine Election*, 254, with regard to the supra- and infralapsarianism discussion asks “whether theology has not become a *gnosis* which can never become quite transparent to the Church and can never really affect the Church’s belief” (his italics).

**51** As a rule, Greek and other Eastern church fathers accused Mani and his followers of (absolute) determinism. See e.g. Klein, *Die Argumentation in den griechisch-christlichen Antimanichaica, passim*, and the fine discussion (with ample references to texts and studies) in Pedersen, *Demonstrative Proof in Defence of God*, 173ff.

**52** Graphically visualized, the βῶλος is also the lowest place.

**53** In the words of Kustaios (*Studies in the Sermon on the Great War*, ed. Pedersen, 41, l. 14–16): “The veils will be rolled back and gathered, and he will unveil his image for them. All the light will submerge into him.” Cf. for background e.g. Pedersen, *Studies in the Sermon on the Great War*, 394–395 and – in particular for the picture of the veil and the revelation of the Father – Pedersen, *The Veil and the Revelation* (with specific reference to Revelation 20:4 and Matthew 5:8 as its possible background c.q. parallels).

**54** As stated above, it is – like the βῶλος – “built” at the time of the creation of the world. On this and other activities of the “Great Builder” or “Great/First Architect”, see e.g. *Kephalai*, ed. Polotsky and Böhlig, 82, 8–12 and 118, 8–12.

**55** The term (in the sense that Christ’s incarnation and subsequent kingdom was God’s temporary “emergency measure” in reaction to sin and the Fall) was coined and advocated in particular by the Utrecht theologian Arnold A. van Ruler in his extensive dogmatic writings, to begin with in his Groningen dissertation “De vervulling der wet”. The term was taken up by e.g. Jürgen Moltmann, but the meaning the latter attributed to the term differed from Ruler’s.

At the end of the *Logos* one finds a remark on the ἀνδριάς or (Last) Statue.<sup>56</sup> Unfortunately the passage is damaged. From other sources<sup>57</sup> we know that this Statue forms itself from the last particles of Light liberated by the ἐκπύρωσις; it becomes “the Perfect Man”. In all likelihood, this term is reminiscent of Eph 4:13 and thus refers to Jesus.<sup>58</sup>

## 4 Concluding Remarks

My overview is indeed a brief one that could be elaborated with many details.<sup>59</sup> What strikes me in particular is the evident Judaeo-Christian substratum underlying many features of Manichaean eschatology. Evidently, this derives above all from Mani’s own origins in a Jewish-Christian *kibbutz* of Elkesaites.

It would be possible to provide a different description of Manichaean eschatology,<sup>60</sup> and even to present an account featuring a dizzying number of names derived from Persian and Chinese languages.<sup>61</sup> These are found, however, in texts that

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**56** *Manichäische Homilien*, ed. Polotsky, 41 l. 21, who translates “Ur[mensch]” and in a note remarks: “Auch nach den Kephalaia soll der Urmensch im Neuen Äon ‘der ἀρχηγός seiner Brüder’ sein;” *Studies in the Sermon on the Great War*, ed. Pedersen, p. 41 l. 21, with references to *Kephalaia*, c. 28.34–c. 29.4 and c. 54.19–24, ed. Polotsky and Böhlig, for the eschatological role of the Last Statue.

**57** E.g. the *Kephalaia*; see all places indicated in *Kephalaia*, ed. Gardner, 300 s.v. “Last Statue;” cf. Clackson et al., *Dictionary of Manichaean Texts*, 61.

**58** Cf. e.g. Stroumsa, “Aspects de l’eschatologie manichéenne,” 173, who also refers to *Psalms-Book* 59:17: “Jésus est l’Homme parfait dans la colonne (στύλος).”

**59** Such as, for instance, the curious teaching that the world fire will last for exactly 1468 years. Perhaps this idea is borrowed from Egyptian thinking: a Sothis period of 1461 years plus an eschatological “year week” of seven years. See e.g. Ogden, “The 1468 Years of the World-Conflagration in Manichaeism,” 105, who for the apocalyptic “week” refers to 4 Ezra 7:43 in particular. His opinion is endorsed by, a.o., Stroumsa, “Aspects de l’eschatologie manichéenne,” 167, note 20; Koenen, “Manichaean Apocalypticism,” 316, 321–326; Sundermann, “Manichean Eschatology,” 572a/63. But see also Stocks, “Manichäische Miscellen II,” who refers to the chronographic works of Julius Africanus and Hippolytus: according to Africanus, Jesus’ resurrection happened in the year 5532, while the world will last for 7000 years. In this way, the eschatological period after Jesus’ resurrection is 1468 years.

**60** A highly original description of Manichaean eschatology, stressing both its Jewish-Christian and Gnostic (mainly Nag Hammadi) affinities, has been provided by Stroumsa, “Aspects de l’eschatologie manichéenne” (repr. in Stroumsa, *Savoir et Salut*, 259–273). Gardner, “The Eschatology of Manichaeism” offers a detailed and highly reliable account on the basis of Western (mainly the *Kephalaia*) and a number of Eastern sources. More general accounts are provided by Sundermann, “Manichaean Eschatology” (now in his *Manichaica Iranica*, 1.59–72, with bibliography and addenda) and in the less reliable (mainly while superannuated) overview by Jackson, “A Sketch of the Manichaean Doctrine.”

**61** See e.g. Durkin-Meisterernst, *Dictionary of Manichaean Texts*, and Mikkelsen, *Dictionary of Manichaean Texts*.

are both much younger and much more syncretistic than the texts discussed above. In the *Šābuhragān* we hear Mani's *ipsissima verba* and, to a considerable extent, the same goes for the *Logos* and the *CMC*.

The crucial point is that Manichaeism was not an offshoot of Iranian thought, but a genuine Gnostic-Christian religion: gnostic in the sense that its central message is that the Nous<sup>62</sup> rescues the Psyche from the Hyle, and Christian, because in essence all Saviour figures in the Manichaean myth are representations of Christ.<sup>63</sup>

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<sup>62</sup> I.e., in essence, the revealing Wisdom or Gnosis which comes from the spiritual and eternal world and liberates from the temporal world of matter. On the varied aspects of the “Nou” in Manichaeism, see e.g. Tongerloo and Oort, *The Manichaean NOUS*.

<sup>63</sup> See above for (in any case!) the eschatological figures of Jesus the Splendour *sive* Xradešahr; the Omophoros; Primal Man; and the Perfect Man. For more eschatological representations of Jesus, see e.g. Rose, *Die manichäische Christologie*, esp. 132–140 for his analysis of Mani's *Šābuhragān* and Kustaio's *Logos*.

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