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Further Textual Evidence Pertaining to the Enigmatic ‘Mani-Citations’ of Severus of Antioch

DOI 10.1515/oph-2015-0026

Received September 15, 2015; accepted September 28, 2015

Abstract: The 123rd Cathedral Homily of the early sixth-century Monophysite patriarch Severus of Antioch features a series of textual citations drawn from a Manichaean work. Modern scholars have noted certain affinities these citations share with materials contained in prior Christian polemicists such as Titus of Bostra and Theodoret, and they have offered largely speculative suggestions about the possible identity of the written source. The present paper seeks to advance the critical discussion surrounding this source by calling attention to the existence of what appear to be ‘later’ versions of this same source in some Arabic language testimonia about Mani and Manichaeism.

Keywords: Severus of Antioch; Manichaeism; Aḥmad b. al-Ḥasan al-Misma‘ī

The following paper presents remarks based on my observations about some textual materials which were studied during the course of a lengthy project devoted to the identification, collection/collation, and Anglophone rendering and annotation of a significant number of Arabic language testimonia about Mani and Manichaeism.¹ The goal of the present short study is much more modest: I do not plan to resolve a century-old problem in the identification of an early Manichaean source, but I simply want to direct the attention of scholars to a probable instance of that very same early source’s utilization within a much later Arabic language text.

Let me first rehearse briefly the nature of the problem. Early in the twentieth century, it was observed that the early sixth-century Monophysite patriarch Severus of Antioch employed a series of textual citations drawn from an unnamed Manichaean work within his 123rd *Cathedral Homily*, a sermon whose heading notes that it ‘deals especially with the abominable impiety of the Manichaeans’ (ܩܘܪܒܢܐ ܕܩܘܪܒܢܐ ܕܩܘܪܒܢܐ ܕܩܘܪܒܢܐ ܕܩܘܪܒܢܐ ܕܩܘܪܒܢܐ).² It is perhaps one of the great ironies of the ecclesiastical polemics of the age that Severus himself suffered condemnation as a ‘Manichaean’ barely two decades later.³ While this homily of Severus was originally formulated in Greek, it survives only in two Syriac translations, the earlier of which was prepared

1 Reeves, *Prolegomena to a History*.

2 Brière, “Les Homiliae Cathedrales,” 124.2. The citations were excerpted and carefully studied by Kugener and Cumont, *Recherches sur le manichéisme II*, 83-172. In addition to Kugener-Cumont, translations of the citations are also available in Alfarc, *Les écritures manichéennes*, 2:27-30; Adam, *Texte*, 11-14; Asmussen and Böhlig, *Die Gnosis III*, 133-37; Reeves, *Jewish Lore*, 167-70; Lieu, *Manichaeism in Mesopotamia*, 48-52; Gardner and Lieu, *Manichaean Texts*, 160-63; Lieu, *Greek and Latin Sources*, 28-33.

3 Lieu, *Manichaeism in the Later Roman Empire*, 208.

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by Paul of Callinicum⁴ and then revised almost two centuries later by Jacob of Edessa.⁵ It is unclear whether either Christian translator deliberately included authentically Manichaean Aramaic terminology in their renderings of the Greek of Severus's extracts from his Manichaean source since it remains equally opaque just how long Mani's 'canonical' writings actually endured in their original language of expression.⁶ These citations consist of short narrative excerpts which present cosmogonic and cosmological information about the interactions between the two realms of Light and Darkness in vivid and in some cases unique imagery.⁷

Modern scholars have cataloged certain affinities these citations share with materials contained in prior Christian polemicists such as Titus of Bostra and Theodoret, and they have offered largely speculative suggestions about the possible identity of the written source (which is explicitly referenced by both Titus⁸ and Severus) which was apparently exploited in common by these eastern Christian writers. Older scholars such as Beausobre,⁹ Flügel,¹⁰ and Kessler¹¹ who were writing in an era prior to the publication of the Severus of Antioch citations opined that Mani's scriptural *Book of Mysteries* may have been this source. After the publication of the Severus homily, it became popular to equate this source with Mani's scriptural *Book of Giants*, but in light of the subsequent discoveries of substantial portions of the *Book of Giants* in both its Manichaean and non-Manichaean editions, we can now safely dismiss the *Book of Giants* as a likely candidate for the origin of the Severus citations.¹² More recently other suggestions for this common source have been offered, such as an expository work by the first-generation Manichaean disciple Addas (var. Adimantus),¹³ the obscure 'canonical' work known as the *Pragmateia*,¹⁴ or even Mani's *Living Gospel* in an epitomized form.¹⁵

The present paper seeks to advance the critical discussion surrounding this unknown written source by directing scholars' attention to the existence of what seems to be a chronologically 'later' version of a portion of this same source that is preserved under the name of an obscure tradent in a late tenth-century Arabic language report about Mani and Manichaeism. In order to sharpen the discussion, I will focus only on one particular narrative trajectory that is visible in a portion of the Severus fragments (and which is paralleled by Titus and Theodoret) and then map that same trajectory across what seem to be cognate Greek, Syriac, and Arabic language traditions.

The first part of the longest Severus citation of a Manichaean text reads as follows in the version of Jacob of Edessa:

These powerful things are written about Hyle (ܚܝܠܐ) and about its fruits and members. The cause that led them to ascend from here (their own realm) up to the Aeons (ܥܠܡܝܢ) of Light was their turbulence. In actuality,¹⁶ these members of the Tree of Death (ܥܝܢ ܕܡܝܬܐ) had no knowledge of each other. Rather than having perception of each other, each one of them was aware of nothing more than their individual sound(s), and saw only what was before their eyes. When a certain one cried out, they heard (it) and perceived in this (way), and would (then) proceed hastily toward the cry. They had no knowledge of anything.

4 Rahmani, *Studia Syriaca IV*, 45-89.

5 Brière, "Les Homiliae Cathedrales," 124-89.

6 Reeves, *Prolegomena*, 85-90.

7 Lieu, *Greek and Latin Sources*, xii.

8 The quotations in Titus of Bostra were recently surveyed by Poirier, "L'identification des citations et matériaux manichéens dans le *Contra Manichaeos* de Titus de Bostra." I am grateful to the author for sending me an offprint.

9 Beausobre, *Histoire critique de Manichéisme et du manichéisme*, 1:221-23, 427-28.

10 Flügel, *Mani: Seine Lehre und seine Schriften*, 355-56.

11 Kessler, *Mani: Forschungen über die manichäische Religion*, 197-98.

12 Note especially Reeves, *Jewish Lore*, 170-74.

13 Sfameni Gasparro, "Addas-Adimantus."

14 Michel Tardieu, *Manichaeism*, 94.

15 Bennett, "*Iuxta unum latus erat terra tenebrarum*"; idem, "The Conversation."

16 Another translation of this passage from here to the end of this first paragraph is available in the magisterial study of Henri-Charles Puech, "Le Prince des Ténèbres."

Thus they provoked and stirred each other up until they came unto the boundaries of the glorious Land of Light (ܘܡܢ ܘܠܘܢ ܘܠܘܢܐ ܘܠܘܢܐ ܘܠܘܢܐ). When they beheld that marvelous and surpassingly beautiful sight, which was a much more excellent (place) than their own abode, they gathered together—namely (the members) of Hyle or Darkness—and plotted against the Light regarding how they could mix themselves with it.¹⁷ Due to (their) frenzy, they were unaware that the mighty and powerful God dwelt in it (the region of Light).¹⁸ Nevertheless, they sought to ascend to the upper (region), despite their having no knowledge of the goodness of the divinity or ever having perceived who (indeed) was God. Rather, they frantically beheld, fueled by desire, the appearance of those blessed Aeons (ܘܠܘܢܐ), and thought that it (i.e., the region of Light) could become theirs. Therefore all the parts of the Tree of Darkness rose up—namely Hyle which produces corruption—and ascended with many powers whose total number cannot be reckoned. They were all clothed with the substance of fire. Moreover, these (powers) had different parts. Some had tough bodies and were of limitless size, while others were incorporeal and imperceptible to (the sense of) touch, possessing only a slight perceptibility in the manner of demons and apparitions. And having raised itself up, the whole of Hyle ascended together with its winds, storms, waters, fire, its demons and apparitions, and its princes and powers—all of those who had been in the depth—so that they could place themselves in the Light. Because of this disturbance which was brought to pass from the depth against the region of Light and against the holy fruits, it was unavoidable that some portion of the Light came to be mixed with those evil entities, whereby the enemies (of Light) by means of ‘mixture’ (ܘܠܘܢܐ) ensnared them¹⁹

This particular Mani-citation in Severus lays before us a graphic description of the initial encounter between the two realms of Light and Darkness, one which supplements but which does not reproduce the analogous mythopoeic accounts of the attack of the lower realm found in surviving Manichaean writings or the largely trustworthy reports contained in authors like Ephrem, Theodore bar Konai, Augustine, and Ibn al-Nadīm (but which nevertheless, as we shall see, might have echoes in authorities like these). The following narrative structure can be abstracted from this citation:

- a. An ontologically dualist cosmology featuring two cosmic realms bearing varying labels: Light/Darkness, God/Hyle, Tree of Life/Tree of Death, Good/Evil.
- b. The first member of the named pairs is situated topographically *above* the last.
- c. Knowledge characterizes the upper realm; ignorance marks the lower realm.
- d. The lower realm is also portrayed as turbulent, tumultuous, and self-destructive.
- e. A sequence of events is described whereby the inhabitants of the lower realm accidentally come across the upper realm.
- f. Pausing to muster its forces, the lower realm launches an assault against the upper realm. Some of the attributes of the aggressors are enumerated.
- g. The upper realm permits a portion of itself to be engulfed as a type of ‘snare’ or ‘bait’ for the lower realm.

As scholars have previously noted, the very same narrative trajectory is visible in the anti-Manichaean treatise authored by the fourth-century bishop Titus of Bostra (d. 378?), who like Severus claims to be excerpting from a Manichaean book, and the fifth-century bishop Theodoret, who only admits to relating the statements of a ‘confused, nonsensical, and silly myth’ (ὁ ἀσύστος καὶ φληνάφος καὶ ἀνόητος ... μῦθος).²⁰ Since these Greek accounts were previously published and analyzed alongside Jacob of Edessa’s Syriac rendering of Severus in the useful edition of the Mani-citations prepared by Kugener and Cumont, there is no need to devote detailed further discussion to them here: their close affinity with the Severus material is indisputable.²¹ Yet what has gone almost completely unnoticed by modern researchers is that this very same narrative trajectory continues to resurface in Christian Syriac and Arabic sources over the

¹⁷ Cf. Titus of Bostra, *Contra Manichaeos* 1.21, 12.22-29; Kugener and Cumont, *Recherches II*, 155; Lieu, *Greek and Latin Sources*, 56-59; Sfameni Gasparro, “Addas-Adimantus,” 551.

¹⁸ Cf. Titus of Bostra, *Contra Manichaeos* 1.22; Kugener and Cumont, *Recherches II*, 155; Lieu, *Greek and Latin Sources*, 58-59; Sfameni Gasparro, “Addas-Adimantus,” 551.

¹⁹ Brière, “Les Homiliae Cathedrales,” 164.10-166.6 (cf. Rahmani, *Studia Syriaca IV*, 72.22-74.7). See also Kugener and Cumont, *Recherches II*, 122-26; Reeves, *Jewish Lore*, 169-70; Gardner and Lieu, *Manichaean Texts*, 162; Lieu, *Greek and Latin Sources*, 30-33.

²⁰ Theodoret, *Haereticarum fabularum compendium* 1.26. The Greek text is cited from Kugener and Cumont, *Recherches II*, 152.

²¹ It is unclear why Lieu (*Greek and Latin Texts*, 159-60) casts doubt on their affinity.

course of the next half-millennium.²²

Note, for example, this passage which figures in a heavily damaged section pertaining to Manichaeism in the so-called *Chronicon Maroniticum*, a seventh-century Syriac chronicle:²³

Mani says in his teaching that there were two original beings (ܡܢܝܘܢ): God and Hyle This so-called Hyle was in a perpetual state of uproar. Its progeny arose, one against the other—demons, fire, water, and idols—chasing and putting each other to flight. When they arrived at heaven, the region of light, they sought to mix their darkness with the Good and the Light. But when God beheld them, he bound them there, and taking a small portion of light he threw it down to Hyle in the likeness of a hook, and when Hyle swallowed it, he was caught by it. For this reason God was compelled, so to speak, to create the world²⁴

Or one might compare the section on Mani and Manichaeism contained in the Christian Arabic chronicle attributed to the Melkite historian Agapius of Mabbug (d. ca. 950):

The principle of Evil was at times in a state of tumult and its progeny were recklessly rushing against each other. These (progeny) were satans, demons, fire, and water. Their combat with one another did not cease until they arrived at the region (controlled by the principle of) Good. They overshadowed its Light, and (then) went and said to one another, 'Let us pounce, and that (Light) will be food for our consumption and a beverage for our drinking!' They thereupon resolved to pounce upon it. But when God—who is the principle of Righteousness—beheld this (scheme), he forfeited a portion of it (Light) and threw it to them, and so the principle of Evil absorbed a portion of God.²⁵

Or compare finally the treatment of Manichaeism in the so-called *Chronicle of Seert*, an early eleventh-century Christian Arabic compilation:

The creator of Evil was at times in a state of tumult and its progeny were recklessly rushing against each other—these being satans, demons, fire, and water. Their contention with one another did not cease until they arrived at the region (controlled by the principle of) Righteousness. They beheld its Light and became envious of it. They said, '(Let us)²⁶ advance toward it, and that (Light) will be food for our consumption, or a beverage for our quaffing!' They thereupon resolved upon that (course of action). But when God—who is the Righteous One—beheld this (scheme), he detached a portion of it (Light) and threw it to them, and so the principle of Evil removed a portion of God.²⁷

The survival of this trajectory within these and other eastern Christian polemical sources (e.g., Michael Syrus, Bar Hebraeus) is hardly remarkable, given the incestuous character of the heresiographical enterprise. But what has heretofore largely escaped notice is the presence of this same narrative trajectory in a Muslim source emanating from the late ninth or early tenth century of the Common Era. This source is quoted at least twice in the valuable compendium treating dualist sects in the *Kitāb al-Mughnī* of 'Abd al-Jabbār,²⁸ an eminent jurist of Baghdad and Rayy who flourished during the late tenth and early eleventh centuries and whose writings preserve important information about the vitality of Manichaeism and kindred movements

²² The lone exception to this tendency which I discovered only after the completion of the present paper and its public presentation (in 2006) are the careful studies by Bennett, "*Iuxta unum latus erat terra tenebrarum*," 68-78; idem, "Conversation of John the Orthodox," 29-44. In his first article Bennett isolates another portion of the same Manichaean source that forms the subject of this paper, notes likely instances of its reappearance in some later Greek, Syriac, and Arabic language testimonia, and concludes that the base document may have been a Christian Greek text which summarized and occasionally quoted from one of Mani's works, perhaps his *Gospel*.

²³ The suggestion by Michael Breydy to identify the *Chronicon Maroniticum* with the lost eighth-century chronicle of the astrologer Theophilus of Edessa (seemingly endorsed by Bennett, "*Iuxta unum latus erat terra tenebrarum*," 70 n.8) has been effectively dismissed by Hoyland, *Theophilus of Edessa's Chronicle*, 6 n.17.

²⁴ Brooks, *Chronica Minora II*, 60.9-22; Reeves, *Prolegomena*, 145-46.

²⁵ Vasiliev, "*Kitāb al-Unvān*;" Taqīzādeh and Šīrāzī, *Mānī va dīn-e-ū*, 352-53 (§100); Reeves, *Prolegomena*, 155.

²⁶ See the suggested reading in Taqīzādeh and Šīrāzī, *Mānī va dīn-e-ū*, 382 n.2.

²⁷ Scher, "Histoire Nestorienne inédite;" Taqīzādeh and Šīrāzī, *Mānī va dīn-e-ū*, 382 (§118); Reeves, *Prolegomena*, 156.

²⁸ 'Abd al-Jabbār b. Aḥmad al-Hamadhānī, *Al-Mughnī fī abwāb al-tawḥīd wa'l-'adl*, 5:19.8-20.1; cf. 5:9.12-10.1; 5:20.2-21.9. For the latter two passages, see Reeves, *Prolegomena*, 253-54.

within the ‘Abbāsīd realm. It is attributed by ‘Abd al-Jabbār to a certain Aḥmad b. al-Ḥasan al-Misma‘ī,²⁹ a figure about whom very little is known other than that he apparently collected information about dualist groups and their doctrines for the purpose of refutation and that he either authored or at least transmitted a book authored by his uncle which was devoted to this purpose. Here without further ado is that Muslim source:

Now al-Misma‘ī has mentioned with regard to the Manichaeans that the Light always was aware of the existence of the Darkness, for it knows everything,³⁰ whereas the Darkness was always in a state of ignorance. Eternally present in each of those two Principles (الاصولين) was a powerful figure who was the ruler of that Principle and the one who governed it: al-Hummāma³¹ is the ‘queen’ of the Principle of Darkness and its world, and the Father of Greatness is the ‘king’ of the Principle of Light and its world. They maintain that there is eternally present in the middle of the World of Light a mountain which as it rises tapers from its lowest point to its highest and which has no limit for its elevation; moreover, eternally present in the World of Darkness is a deep pit which is named ‘Womb of Darkness’: as it descends through the World of Darkness it narrows and diminishes endlessly. Moreover, the ‘Hummāma of Death’ was in a state of commotion in the World of Darkness. (Its component parts?) were engaged in killing each other until it arrived at that pit. Then it entered it and came to the far border of Darkness which lay next to the Principle of Light. It gazed at its (i.e., Light’s) World and beheld a beautiful sight. It attempted to embrace it, but found itself rejected,³² and so it returned to its own World in order to collect itself (for further efforts).³³ It then entered the pit and brought into existence the (five?) trees and five (types of) animals—birds, reptiles, fish, those having legs, and vermin. Then, oblivious to the consequences, it approached to do battle with the Light, and it effected a mixture with itself.³⁴ But the Father of Greatness, cognizant of the consequences, effected the mixture with (only) a portion of His realm and a group of His spirits. Then he (i.e., al-Misma‘ī) goes on to recount the entirety of the struggle. Afterwards, he mentions how the purification occurs and how the (physical) world and the heavenly spheres came into existence.³⁵

While the specific details of al-Misma‘ī’s exposition vary markedly in several instances, it is nevertheless apparent that we are dealing with the same basic material and story line that is attested in Severus above. One observes the following correspondences in narrative structure: (a) the variety of appellations accorded the two realms; (b) an explicit contrast between the omniscience of Light and the ignorance of Darkness; (c) the representation of the turbulent state of the lower realm as being the effective cause of the realms’ initial encounter; (d) an enumeration of different nefarious forces—here five—which attack the upper realm; and (e) the notion that the upper realm voluntarily surrenders a portion of its substance. There is much of interest within the textual details of this passage that invites a more prolix treatment, but I want only to comment very briefly here on two curious aspects of this report.

My first observation pertains to the unusual cosmography sketched out for the realms of Light and Darkness respectively: ‘they maintain that there is there eternally present in the middle of the World of Light *a mountain* (جبل) which as it rises tapers from its lowest point to its highest and which has no limit for its elevation; moreover, eternally present in the World of Darkness is *a deep pit which is named ‘Womb of Darkness’* (غور عميق يسمى رحم الظلمة): as it descends through the World of Darkness it narrows and diminishes

²⁹ Also known as Ibn Akhi Zurqān; see Mas‘ūdī, *Kitāb at-Tanbīh wa’l-Ischrāf*, 396.3-4; Pines, *Studies in Islamic Atomism*, 41 n.2. Further discussion of this elusive tradent appears in Vajda, “Note annexe,” 114 n.6; Monnot, *Penseurs musulmans et religions iraniennes: ‘Abd al-Jabbār et ses devanciers*, 56-60; Thomas, “Abū ‘Isā al-Warrāq and the History of Religions,” 284.

³⁰ Reading with the emendation suggested by Monnot, *Penseurs*, 171 n.1.

³¹ This proper name (?) for the animating Spirit of Darkness is first attested in Arabic in the writings of the mid-ninth century Baṣran writer Jāḥiẓ (cf. Reeves, *Prolegomena*, 190-91), and then recurs sporadically in the Muslim testimonies about Manichaean cosmology. Note especially Māturīdī, *Kitāb al-tawḥīd*, 157.11-12: ‘the Spirit of Darkness is named Hummāma (الهماما): it is alive and made the world for the purpose of imprisoning Light within it.’ Discussions of this problematic term include Reeves, *Jewish Lore*, 124-26; Shaul Shaked, “Manichaean Incantation Bowls in Syriac,” 67-68 n.44; de Blois, “Glossary of Technical Terms,” 83-86.

³² Note Monnot, *Penseurs*, 171 n.8.

³³ See Vajda, “Note annexe,” 126 n.3.

³⁴ Or ‘by itself,’ in that it personally led the assault against the World of Light. The following sentence however suggests that an instrumental sense is intended.

³⁵ ‘Abd al-Jabbār, *Mughnī*, 5:19.8-20.1; Reeves, *Prolegomenon*, 199-201.

endlessly.³⁶ Situating a 'deep pit' in the realm of Darkness seems to be a reflex of the same source used by Severus, whose above cited passage arguably makes reference to this feature: 'the whole of Hyle ascended together with its winds, storms, waters, fire, its demons and apparitions, and its princes and powers—all of those who had been in the depth (ܐܘܡܐ ܕܥܡܝܩܐ ܕܥܘܠܡܐ ܕܠܘܐ)—so that they could place themselves in the Light. Because of this disturbance which was brought to pass from the depth against the region of Light, etc.'³⁷ The contextual placement of the 'depth' or 'abyss' of the Syriac citation in fact parallels that of the 'deep pit' in the Arabic language source. The unusual reference however to a 'mountain' in the realm of Light gives one pause. One might compare the otherwise unique report found in the relatively early world chronicle of al-Ya'qūbi (d. 897) which claims that Mani's *Shābuhragān* stated 'that the world is upon a sloping mountain around which the uppermost celestial sphere revolves':³⁸ this may be a relevant tradition even though the two Manichaean texts appear to be describing different realities. A perhaps closer conceptual parallel is the frequent eastern Christian localization of Paradise on a mountain, down whose slopes the primeval couple is driven after their transgression in the Garden, and one cannot fail to notice the many verbal echoes of the biblical Eden traditions in the larger corpus of Mani-citations quoted by Severus. But at the same time one wonders whether the 'mountain' in the realm of Light might stem from a linguistic confusion: both Titus of Bostra and Theodoret make mention of 'the boundaries' (τοὺς ὄρους/τῶν ὄρων) of the Light,³⁹ and a misreading of Greek ὄρος as ὄρος (i.e., a smooth for rough breathing) can provide us with 'mountains' in the realm of Light. This particular motif certainly warrants further investigation.⁴⁰

My second observation pertains to the enumeration of the denizens of the lower realm who comprise Hyle's attacking army in the report supplied by al-Misma'ī. Therein he relates: 'It (i.e., Hummāma or the ruler of Darkness) then entered the pit and brought into existence the (five?) trees and five (types of) animals—birds, reptiles, fish, those having legs, and vermin. Then, oblivious to the consequences, it approached to do battle with the Light, and it effected a mixture with itself.'⁴¹ The parallel section in the Greek, Syriac, and Christian Arabic sources surveyed above is rather different in both number and named attackers. Theodoret has 'with its demons, idols, fire, and water' (μετὰ τῶν δαιμόνων, καὶ τῶν εἰδώλων, καὶ τοῦ πυρός, καὶ τοῦ ὕδατος);⁴² the *Chronicon Maroniticum* gives the same roster as Theodoret but in a variant order ('[with] demons, fire, water, and idols');⁴³ and Agapius and the *Chronicle of Seert* both provide '[with] satans, demons, fire, and water' (الشياطين والعفاريت والنار والماء).⁴⁴ The Severus citation itself is more verbose, but its list is more congruent with those just rehearsed than with that of al-Misma'ī: 'with its winds, storms, waters, fire, its demons and apparitions, and its princes and powers' (ܥܘܡܐ ܕܥܡܝܩܐ ܕܥܘܠܡܐ ܕܠܘܐ ܕܥܘܠܡܐ ܕܠܘܐ ܕܥܘܠܡܐ ܕܠܘܐ ܕܥܘܠܡܐ ܕܠܘܐ ܕܥܘܠܡܐ ܕܠܘܐ).⁴⁵ How then can we correlate the very different roster of al-Misma'ī with these other cognate lists?

The key toward their reconciliation seems to be supplied by the various expositions—both indigenous and polemical—provided of the five 'parts,' 'members,' or 'elements' which collectively comprise the Manichaean 'Ruler of Darkness' and which subsequently generate or correlate with various harmful biological creatures like reptiles or carnivorous animals.⁴⁶ Close analogues to the list of entities enumerated

36 'Abd al-Jabbār, *Mughnī* (ed. Husayn), 5:19.11-13.

37 Brière, "Les Homiliae Cathedrales," 166.2-4.

38 M. Th. Houtsma, *Ibn Wadīh qui dicitur al-Ja'qūbi historiae*, 1:181.7-8: ان العلم على جبل مائل يدور عليه الفلك العلوي. See also Reeves, *Prolegomena*, 90.

39 Titus of Bostra, *Contra Manichaeos* 1.17; Theodoret, *Haereticarum fabularum compendium* 1.26, for the relevant Greek text see Kugener and Cumont, *Recherches II*, 152.19; Lieu, *Greek and Latin Sources*, 94.

40 The likelihood of the very same misreading has been suggested for the Ethiopic text of *1 En.* 60:16; see Gunkel, *Schöpfung und Chaos*, 52; Black, *The Book of Enoch*, 229.

41 'Abd al-Jabbār, *Mughnī*, 5:19.16-18: ودخلت الغور فحدث عند ذلك الاشجار والحيوان الخمسة الطيارة والزحافة والسباحة وذوات القوائم والحشرات ثم اقبلت لمحاربة النور لجهلها بالعواقب فباشرت المزاج بنفسها.

42 Theodoret, *Haereticarum fabularum compendium* 1.26; see Kugener and Cumont, *Recherches II*, 152.26-28; Lieu, *Greek and Latin Sources*, 94.

43 *Chronicon Maroniticum* (ed. Brooks), 60.14-15: ܥܘܡܐ ܕܥܡܝܩܐ ܕܥܘܠܡܐ ܕܠܘܐ ܕܥܘܠܡܐ ܕܠܘܐ ܕܥܘܠܡܐ ܕܠܘܐ ܕܥܘܠܡܐ ܕܠܘܐ ܕܥܘܠܡܐ ܕܠܘܐ.

44 Agapius, *K. al-Unvān* (ed. Vasiliev), 534.7; Scher, "Histoire Nestorienne inédite," 227.13.

45 Brière, "Les Homiliae Cathedrales," 166.1-2; Lieu, *Greek and Latin Sources*, 32.

46 Puech, "Le Prince des Ténèbres," 136-74.

by al-Misma'ī and their association with the Ruler of Darkness occur in two western Manichaean testimonia; namely, the Berlin Coptic *Kephalaia*,⁴⁷ and the Latin *de Haeresibus* of Augustine.⁴⁸ They are however also present in sources originating in the Mesopotamian homeland of Mani.⁴⁹ For example, the sixth-century Neoplatonist academician Simplicius, a teacher who spent some time in the East enjoying the protection of the Sasanian throne, is cognizant of this amalgam: 'They (i.e., Manichaeans) describe Evil as a combination of five forms: those of a lion, a fish, an eagle, and of other animals which I cannot describe, and they fear an impending attack from it.'⁵⁰ Also of relevance is the Baghdadi bookseller Ibn al-Nadīm's infamous portrait of the ruler of the realm of Darkness as a monstrous composite figure who took his shape from five 'elements' (عناصر) indigenous to the lower realm: 'his head was like the head of a lion, his torso was like the torso of a dragon, his wing was like the wing of a flying creature, his tail was like the tail of a large fish, and his feet were four like the feet of an animal.'⁵¹ His report is unique among the Arabic language testimonia, but is of course related to the analogous portrayals of the ruler of Darkness or Hyle found in the Coptic *Kephalaia*, Augustine, and Simplicius. But perhaps the most arresting testimony comes from the scriptural corpus of another Mesopotamian religious community whose mythopoeic discourse intersects and engages that of the Manichaeans in many ways.

In the *Right Ginza* of the Mandaeans,⁵² we are provided the following description of the World of Darkness and its inhabitants:

Beyond the Land of Light downwards and ... southwards is the Land of Darkness. It has a form which differs in kind and deviates from the aspect of the Land of Light, for they deviate from each other in every characteristic and form ... from the dark water the Ruler of Darkness fashioned himself through his own evil nature and came forth. He grew strong, mighty, and powerful; he created and propagated a thousand thousands evil broods without end, and a myriad myriads ugly creatures beyond counting. Darkness expanded and swarmed with demons, devils, shades, evil spirits, idols, etc. ... some of them crawl on their bellies, some move through water, some fly, some have many feet like vermin ...

That King of Darkness assumed all the forms of earthly creatures: the head of a lion, the body of a dragon, the wings of an eagle, the sides of a tortoise, the hands and feet of a fiend ...

He concealed himself and beheld the aeons of Light from afar at the boundary between Darkness and Light ... he conferred with himself, flew into a temper, raged mightily, and said: '... I will ascend to that shining Land and engage in battle with its ruler. I will take his crown from him, set it on my head, and I will be ruler of the heights and the depths!' And he said: 'I will clad myself in his garment, he will be food for my eating, drink for my quaffing, a house for my ravaging, a structure for my razing, a residence for my sojourning ...'⁵³

As a number of scholars have already remarked,⁵⁴ this Mandaean portrait of the World of Darkness and its ruler appears to be related in some fashion to the one that is visible in Ibn al-Nadīm, Simplicius, Augustine, and the *Kephalaia*. It also shares a number of affinities with the Manichaean mythologoumena related in the Mani-citations of Severus,⁵⁵ the seemingly related reports in Syriac and Christian Arabic writers surveyed above, and the report about Manichaeism that is attributed to al-Misma'ī, none of which admittedly preserve the chilling description of the composite lion-headed monster who rules the realm of Darkness and who supervises its assault against the Land of Light. Yet that assault, its setting, its perpetrators, and even some

⁴⁷ *Keph.* 77.22-79.12; also 30.12-34.12.

⁴⁸ Augustine, *de Haeresibus* 46.8: *In fumo nata animalia bipedia ...; in tenebris, serpentina; in igne, quadrupedia; in aquis, natatilia; in vento, volatilia* 'Two-footed animals were generated in smoke ...; serpents were generated in darkness; quadrupeds in fire; swimming creatures in the waters; flying creatures in the wind.' Text cited from Adam, *Texte2*, 66; translation from Gardner and Lieu, *Manichaean Texts*, 188; see also Lieu, *Greek and Latin Sources*, 86-87.

⁴⁹ Bennett, "*Iuxta unum latus erat terra tenebrarum*," 76-77.

⁵⁰ Translation cited from Lieu, *Manichaeism in Mesopotamia*, 127; note also Lieu, *Greek and Latin Sources*, 104-105.

⁵¹ Ibn al-Nadīm, *Fihrist* (apud Flügel, *Mani*, 53.10-12); Reeves, *Prolegomena*, 193.

⁵² *Right Ginza* 12.6. See Petermann, *Thesaurus*, 1:278-82; Lidzbarski, *Ginza: Der Schatz*, 277-79.

⁵³ Translation adapted from those of Nöldeke, "Ein mandäischer Traktat," 131-38, and Lupieri, *The Mandaeans*, 179-81. See also Puech, "Le Prince des Ténèbres," 142-44.

⁵⁴ The similarity of Ibn al-Nadīm's description to that in the *Ginza* was already noticed by Brandt, *Mandäische Schriften*, 226. See also Nöldeke, "Ein mandäischer Traktat," 135; Polotsky, "Manichäismus," 113-14; Rudolph, *Theogonie*, 34.

⁵⁵ Presciently remarked by Nöldeke, "Ein mandäischer Traktat," 138 n.2; also Bennett, "*Iuxta unum latus erat terra tenebrarum*," 77 n.30.

of the speech that is attributed to the Ruler of Darkness (e.g., “food for my eating, drink for my drinking”) are remarkably similar among these varied sources. The Mandaic text thus permits us to reconstruct an earlier textual site⁵⁶ wherein all of the features of these related traditions about the realm of Darkness and its ‘parts’ were apparently present. It was from such a source that works as culturally and temporally disparate as the *Kephalaia*, the *Ginzā*, and the *Fihrist* of Ibn al-Nadīm were able to cite their common theriomorphic portrait of the Ruler of Darkness. While it still remains frustratingly unclear precisely which Manichaean work Severus was citing, or just how lengthy the testimony of al-Misma‘ī excerpted by ‘Abd al-Jabbār may have been, it seems distinctly possible that the same Manichaean text, one which presents a distinctive cosmogonic trajectory, underlies both. Bennett’s proposal that these materials may ultimately stem from Mani’s *Living Gospel* may not be far off the mark.

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⁵⁶ As Puech observed, “[l]’auteur mandéen s’est visiblement inspiré des descriptions manichéennes. La gaucherie de sa compilation, les bévues de détail qu’il a çà et là commises suffisent à prouver sa dépendance vis-à-vis de telles source et à exclure l’hypothèse inverse d’un emprunt du manichéisme au mandéisme.” Quoted from his “Le Prince des Ténèbres,” 144.

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