

MANI IN CAMBRIDGE 3 / CHRISTIANITY IN CENTRAL ASIA

(Seventh circular to participants)

Venue: Ancient India and Iran Trust (23 Brooklands Avenue, Cambridge, CB2 8BG, United Kingdom. Tel. 01223-356841) **15th-18th May, 2024.**

Program

(subject to last minute changes due to no-shows etc.):

TUESDAY 14TH MAY

7-8.30 pm Light supper of wine, fruit juice, quiche and cheese at *chez* Judy and Sam Lieu (13 Clarendon Street, Cambridge CB1 1JU, Tel. 44-1223-313413) for early arriving participants.

WEDNESDAY 15TH MAY

Christianity on the Silk Road

2pm Welcome

2.15-2.45 pm **Elizabeth Anderson** “Examining the connection between Manichaeism and the Syriac *Book of Steps* through the lens of Scripture”

2.45-3.15 pm **Sarah Knight** “The Pahlavi inscription on the ‘Persian Cross’ of Mylapore in South India, and its implications on the religious identity of the Syrian Christians of Kerala”

3.15-3.45 pm **Tang Li** “The formation of religious terminology in Christian and Manichean texts from Tang-China”

3.45 – 4.15 Tea/Coffee and ‘research socialisation’

4.15-4.45 pm **Sam Lieu** “Manichaean texts in a Chinese Christian catalogue (*Zunjing*)?”

5 pm Drinks and ‘research socialisation’

7 pm Pay-your-own own **dinner** at a local pub

THURSDAY 16TH MAY

9-1 pm Chance to use the Library of the Ancient India and Iran Trust which has an outstanding collection on Christianity and Manichaeism on the Silk Road. Morning tea usually at 11 am. Chance also for project meetings.

1-2.15 pm light lunch for everyone

2.15-2.45 pm **Chiara Barbati** “Marginalia in Manichaean and Christian Manuscript Cultures”

2.45-3.15 pm **Mark Dickens** “Christianity around the Tarim Basin prior to 1500”

3.15-4 pm **Erica Hunter** “Manichaean Syriac incantation bowls: further discussion”

4.-4.30 **Tea/Coffee** and ‘research socialisation’

Manichaeism

4.30-5 pm **Betül Özbay** “The Story of the Praised Manichaean Merchant Arazan”

5-5.30 pm **Tim Pettipiece** “Mani’s journey to India (revisited)”

5.30-6 pm {PAPER CANCELLED – *speaker unable to attend*}

6 pm **Welcome drinks** (reception sponsored by **Brill**)

7 pm Pay-your-own **Dinner** at a local Chinese restaurant (Yim Wah Express 2-4 Lensfield Road, Cambridge CB2 1EG)

FRIDAY 17TH MAY

- 10am-10.45 **Nicholas Sims-Williams** Welcome to the AIT and “A Manichaean list of ingredients for making inks and colours”
- 10.45-11.15 **Tea/Coffee** and ‘research socialisation’
- 11.15-11.45 pm **Mike Browder** “Sufis and Manichaeans: Al-Biruni Explains India”
- 11.45-12.15 pm **Guillermo Menéndez** “Manichaean mythology in the 6th Century – Cosmogony, Anthropogony and Myth of the Giants in the *Capita VII Contra Manichaeos*”
- 12.15-1.30 pm **Lunch** (not provided) and ‘research socialisation’
{12.15-1.30 pm light lunch (provided) for meeting of IAMS Board members}
- 1.30-2 pm **Filippo Gerace** ‘Mani’s Psychology in the Cologne Mani Codex’
- 2-2.45 pm **Jae Han** “A Manichaean *Stam*? Between Manichaean and Rabbinic Editorial Practices”
- 2.45-3.30 pm **Gábor Kósa** “Chinese Version of the *Xuāstvánīft* from Fujian Province”
- 3.30-4.15 pm **Tea/Coffee** and ‘research socialisation’
- 4.15-5 **Zsuzsanna Gulacsi** “The “Christian saint” painting from Dunhuang and its reinterpretation as a Manichaean image of Jesus, the guide for the afterlife”
- 5.00-5.30 pm **Reception** sponsored by AIT / gratis Sir Nicholas Barrington
- 5.30-7.30 pm **Public lecture** by **Lilla Russell-Smith** “Exhibiting and researching the art of the Manichaeans and the Church of the East in Berlin, past, present and future”
- 8 pm Buffet **dinner** at the Trust provided by the Symposium (gratis Sir Nicholas Barrington)

SATURDAY 18TH MAY

- 10-10.30 am **Rea Matsangou** “Manichaean religious terminology in Greek. A comparison between the Greek Manichaean texts of Kellis and the texts of the Greek anti-Manichaean literature”
- 10.30-11 am **Jorinde Ebert** “Is the Embroidery of a White Rooster (MIK III 6255) Manichaean?”
- 11-11.30 **Tea/Coffee** and ‘research socialisation’
- 11.30-12 pm **So Miyagawa** “Shenoute’s understanding of Manichaeism”
- 12-12.30 pm **Paul Dilley** “Early Manichaean Texts as World Literature”
- 12.30-2 pm **Lunch** (not provided) and ‘research socialisation’
{12.30-2 pm light lunch (provided) for meeting of CFM Directors and Series Directors}
- 2-2.30 pm **Håkon Teigen** “Rulers of Summer and Winter: Elemental Demons and Eclipse Dragons in the Manichaean Soul Cycle”
- 2.30-3 pm **Jason BeDuhn** “Rethinking Manichaean Asceticism”
- 3-3.45 pm **Vlad Manciu** “Theosophical vessels: a prolegomenon to the study of Manichean religious dissimulation”
- 3.45-4.30 pm **Sonia Mirzaie** “Enveloped in Glory and Dignity: The Realm of Light
A Textual-Pictorial Exploration with a Focus on Middle Iranian and Chinese Sources”
- 4.30-5 **Tea/Coffee** and ‘research socialisation’
- 5-5.30 pm **Alireza Arabani** “The Four Walls and Three Moats in Manichaean Cosmology”
(Paper read *in absentia*)
- 5.30-6.30 Research Reports: **Sam Lieu** “Database of Manichaean texts – past, present and future” + other reports CFM, NHMS (?), Brill Handbook (?) + **Closing Discussions**
- 6.30- 7.15 pm **Reception** sponsored by **Brepols**
- 7.30-9 pm Pay-your-own Symposium **Dinner** at a local Italian restaurant:
Al Pomodoro <https://www.alpomodoro.co.uk/menu>

AUDITORES / AUDITRICES

Sir Nicholas Barrington (Friday)
François de Blois (Thursday)
Sally Church (Friday)
Iman Davoodian (Saturday)
Camilla Ferard
Iain Gardner
Ted Good (Friday)
Geoffrey Greatrex (Thursday)
Tjalling Halbertsma (Thursday and Friday)
Jay Johnson
Gunner Mikkelsen
Ursula Sims Williams (Friday and Saturday)
Johan Van der Beke (Saturday)
Mark Vermes
Helen Wang (Saturday)
Susan Whitfield (Friday and Saturday)
Philip Wood (Wednesday & Thursday)
Klaus-Günter Zwick

ABSTRACTS

(1) Christianity on the Silk Road

ELIZABETH ANDERSON

“Examining the connection between Manichaeism and the Syriac *Book of Steps* through the lens of Scripture” – The unclear origins and intentional anonymity of the Syriac *Book of Steps* (c. 4th century) have long been a puzzle to scholars. Recently, a connection between this work and Manichaeism has been proposed because of the bipartite community it describes and because of literary parallels. This paper explores the possible connection by pointing out similarities between the interpretation of the Matthean parable of the two trees in *mēmṛā* 21 and *The Kephalaia of the Teacher*. It is unknown whether these similarities are a result of the common cultural background of the texts or whether direct influence or competition between the authors was at play, but both are entertained as possibilities.

CHIARA BARBATI

“Marginalia in Manichaean and Christian Manuscript Cultures” – Manuscript Studies have amply demonstrated how annotations in the margins made by users of manuscripts are a very useful tool for reconstructing aspects of their intellectual history such as educational and training processes. The paper will discuss how, in the (quasi) absence of external evidence, marginalia in the Manichaean and Christian manuscript traditions may be used for a history of monastic education.

MARK DICKENS

“Christianity around the Tarim Basin prior to 1500” – This presentation examines the presence of Christianity around the Tarim Basin up to 1500, by which time the Turkic population of the region seems to have largely converted to Islam and Christianity had all but died out. Thanks to the commerce that travelled along the Silk Road trade network, a number of important city-states emerged in the region, including Khotan, Kashgar, Kucha, Qarashahr and Qocho. Not surprisingly, Buddhism became the dominant religion in settlements around the Tarim Basin. However, the region was also home to the beliefs and practices of the Old (i.e. pre-Zoroastrian) Irano-Aryan religion, Daoism, Zoroastrianism and Manichaeism. At some point, perhaps in the ninth or tenth century, the Church of the East began a presence in various locations around and adjacent to the Tarim Basin. The initial Christian communities in the region may very well have been religious refugees (probably mostly Sogdians), fleeing from the nearby Tang Empire after the 845 edict of Emperor Wuzong. In all likelihood, the first place such communities would have sprung up would have been in the Turfan Oasis, where the Western Uyghur Kingdom was established in the mid to late ninth century. In addition to Qocho in the Turfan Oasis (where manuscript fragments have provided abundant evidence of a Christian presence), historical texts in Christian Arabic, Persian, Turkish, Chinese, Latin and Italian point to the existence of Christian communities in Qumul, Jan-baliq, Luntai, Qarashahar, Aqsu, Kashgar, Yarkand and Khotan. In some places, the sources are clear about the presence of Christianity during the medieval era, while in other places, references to Christianity are submerged in legendary source material full of unhistorical details. Along the way, we hear of at least two metropolitan provinces of the Church of the East in the area, both of them dual metropolitanates.

ERICA HUNTER

“Manichaean Syriac incantation bowls: further discussion” – Essentially I will query whether so-called Christian incantation bowls written in Manichaean Syriac script are in fact Christian or may be Manichaean. It does not really fit into 'Christianity in Central Asia' but it does overlap with Manichaean magical material from Central Asia - aka the amulets which Henning published.

SARAH KNIGHT

“The Pahlavi inscription on the ‘Persian Cross’ of Mylapore in South India, and its implications on the religious identity of the Syrian Christians of Kerala” – In 1545 the Portuguese discovered that the bas-relief cross with Pahlavi inscription around it they unearthed in Mylapore on the east coast of India, was near-identical to crosses found in Kerala’s Syrian Christian churches. This discovery gained publicity in Europe with scholars variously naming it ‘Manichaean’ or ‘Nestorian’ cross, and by extension, assigning the indigenous Christians’ religious identity along either of those lines. Attempts to interpret the inscription remained inconclusive for long. This paper brings together three notable 20th- 21st century scholarly interpretations of the Pahlavi text, and places them alongside some key Syrian Christian literary and monumental texts including the Pahlavi and Syriac signatures on the 9th century ‘Kollam Copperplates’ which relate to the arrival of a large body of Persian Christian settlers in Kollam in 825 CE. It argues that the concordances appear to align the Syrian Christians’ religious identity neither with ‘Manichaeism’ nor ‘Nestorianism,’ but more with that of the (Jacobite) Syrian Orthodox Christianity of Antioch.

SAM LIEU

“Manichaean texts in a Chinese Christian catalogue (*Zunjing*)?”: The Chinese Christian text the *Zunjing* 尊經 from Dunhuang contains a list of titles of Christian texts translated into Chinese. However, there are three titles in the list that suggest Manichaean origins. So far only Paul Pelliot and Walter Henning have argued for their being Manichaean while most scholars of Christianity on the Silk Road have defended their Christian provenance. If they were indeed Manichaean, what do we know about their contents? Moreover, if Christians had wanted to read and / or translate Manichaean texts along the Silk Road could they have done so? The lecture will also take a glimpse at areas of overlap between Christianity and Manichaeism on the Silk Road and later in China.

TANG LI

“The Formation of Religions Terminology in Christian and Manichean Texts from Tang-China” – Christian and Manichean texts from the Tang period of China contain many similar religious terms and Buddhist loanwords. Meanwhile, the diverse languages and scripts used in these religious texts testify to a multi-cultural milieu on the eastern part of the Silk Road where Buddhists, Christians and Manicheans encountered one another. The shared religious terminology and Buddhist loanwords in Manichean and Christian texts suggest a dynamic interaction among these religions, especially during the process of translation. Drawing upon the repertoire of medieval Christian, Buddhist and Manichean theological texts from Tang-China, the paper will investigate particularly the formation of religious terminology as well as interreligious encounters and conflicts expressed in the texts. It explores how Manicheans and Christians in medieval China learned to explicate their own religious core messages and principles despite being influenced by Buddhist vocabulary and style of writing.

(2) Manichaism

ALIREZA ARABANI

“The Four Walls and Three Moats in Manichaean Cosmology” (Paper read *in absentia*) – In Manichaean cosmology, eight earths and ten firmaments are mentioned, each consisting of different components. The 6th Earth is repeatedly described in the texts as huge, and the set of Four Walls and Three Moats is a part of it. The best geometric form to justify the Four Walls and Three Moats is four walls surrounding each other (preferably four concentric circles as Jackson illustrated) with three moats one by one between each two walls. The hugeness of the 6th Earth and the configuration of the Four Walls and Three Moats remained unclear until the Sogdian fragment M5701+ was published by Morano. The objective of this research is to examine the structure of the Four Walls and the Three Moats, as well as their contents, dimensions, locations, and connections. The primary questions are as follows: In the Apocalypse, how the contents of the Three Moats, particularly the Great Fire, will be unleashed not only upon the eight Earths but also upon the ten firmaments, which are so high? Additionally, how the lower firmament is established on the 2nd Moat? (M99/I/R/13-18/) or whether it reaches the Zodiac (M128/R/5-6/). The author believes that the uppermost reaches of each Moat are higher than those of all the eight earths. Furthermore, they are either of an equal or greater height than the firmaments. The 3rd Moat, which contains the Great Fire, is higher than all the firmaments; therefore it is capable of falling upon them. Furthermore, the 2nd Moat is high enough to reach the lower firmament which is established upon it. This paper reviews the texts in light of the newly available data and reexamines the meanings of certain Middle Iranian sentences and phrases. This allows the locations of the 2nd Moat and the 3rd Moat to be determined. Furthermore, by comparing the widths of the Four Walls and the Three Moats (according to M5701+), and the height of each firmament and the air between them (according to M178/II/), and some mathematical calculations, the heights of the Walls and the Moats and the width of each firmament are estimated. Furthermore, by knowing the ranges of the Walls and the Moats and their contents based on the texts, the exact locations of the Three Moats (and the Four Walls) and their contents are shown on the Chinese Manichaean Diagram of the Universe. **Keywords:** Four Walls, Three Moats, The 6th Earth, The Great Fire, Chinese Manichaean Diagram of the Universe, Manichaeism, Cosmology, Manichaean Cosmology.

JASON BEDUHN

“Rethinking Manichaean Asceticism” – Manichaeans and Christians share many ascetic practices and common ideals of the disciplined, perfected body. Yet the respective motivations and purposes of these ascetic regimes appear to differ significantly between the two traditions, calling into question whether they belong to a common “asceticism” of late ancient religious culture. Manichaeans situate ascetic disciplines in relation to ritual preparation and efficacy, placing the ascetic specialist in continuity with the rule-bound lives of ancient priests as mediators of the sacred. Have we underestimated such ritual connections in Christian and other ascetic traditions?

MICHAEL BROWDER

“Sufis and Manichaeans: Al-Biruni Explains India” – The purpose of this paper is to show how al-Biruni uses Sufism and especially Manichaeism to explain Hindu religion and culture to the Muslim world at the turn of the Second Millennium. We see how he acquired his information on Manichaeism, how he evaluates his various sources, and how he attempts to present the Hindus’ own words objectively. Each individual reference to Manichaeans and

Sufis in the *Athar* and the *India* is considered, with particular emphasis on the tension between soul and matter.

PAUL DILLEY

“Early Manichaean Texts as World Literature” – In this talk, I discuss the dynamics of early Manichaean literary production and circulation within and between Rome and Iran, drawing on contemporary discussions of world literature, especially the work of Damrosch, Doyle, and Beecroft. Because Manichaeism was primarily a movement of the Syro-Mesopotamian borderlands, early Manichaean texts developed within three primary contexts: the Aramaic/Syriac heritage of Mani, as expressed in the language of his own writings, most of which are lost; the greater Sasanian empire in which Mani was active, bringing him into contact with Zoroastrian, Buddhist, and other South Asian sages, teachings, and writings; and the Graeco-Roman world, in which Manichaeans encountered robust and diverse Christian (and non-Christian) communities, both before and after Constantine. For any given surviving Manichaean text from the Mediterranean region, all three of these contexts are potentially relevant.

JORINDE EBERT

“Is the Embroidery of a White Rooster (MIK III 6255) Manichaean?” – The canon of Mani’s scriptures and its illustrations contain the essence of Manichaean teachings. My paper will discuss 8 fragments from the Berlin State Museum which together may originally have formed a hitherto overlooked cosmogonic Manichaean silk embroidery (MIK III 6251 a-f and MIK III 6189 a, b). With the keyword “cosmogonic” I wish to imply the Manichaean creation myth of our existing world, its “mixed” status according to Manichaean understanding, and above all, the possibility of its future ultimate purification with the help of Manichaean redeemers. All fragments discussed here, very probably stem from the so called “library” or vaulted corridor of the Manichaean Ruin K, right in the center of Kocho¹ in the Turfan Oasis from around the 10th century CE (fig. 1). Only very few so called “Manichaean embroideries” from Ruin K in Kocho have been brought back by the German excavations in the Oasis of Turfan. Of the 8 fragments in question, originally under the inventory number MIK III 6251 a-f and MIK III 6189 a, b only the *Virgin of Light* (e) was identified with certainty as Manichaean by Klimkeit (1982a) and further discussed by Gulacsi (2001 and 2009) (fig. 2). The other fragments assembled under the same number have until now defied a securely Manichaean identification² and have thus found little attention. Most prominent among them are a white rooster (fig. 3) and a thicket of blue lotus flowers (fig. 4) with two dragons (fig. 5). While the White Rooster is here for the first time identified in a Manichaean Triad as a depiction of the Nous, the two dragons can, after the research by Pirtea (2022) and Teiser (2024), now safely be considered as a depiction of *Two* of the *Seven Chief Archons*, i. e. the *Manichaean Rulers (Archons) of Summer and Winter*, and as such of the *Dry* and *Moist*, as described in Chapter 69 of the *Berlin Kephalaia*. Neither the *Two Dragons* nor the *Thicket of Blue Lotuses* are thus only decoration. They function here as *Demons of the Elements* and *Eclipse Dragons* in the *Manichaean Soul Cycle*. They are linked, according to Teiser, to “...a comprehensive conception of the cosmic principle of sexual generation” For an interpretation of the 8 fragments as Manichaean, I have partly turned to the concept of *Dense Description* (“*dichte Beschreibung*”) by cultural anthropologist C. Geertz (1983): an approach of cultural semiotic nature which centers around the interaction of elements in historical traditions. History is in this context seen as a process of transformation and reinvention in which meaningful old strata of the topic are transmuted into new ones without fully disappearing themselves. It is well researched that as a missionary religion, Manichaeism had exchanges with numerous other creeds and cultures while spreading from Mesopotamia, first to other

¹ Le Coq 1913, Tafel 6a-c. MIK III 6189 is considered as being from an unknown site of Kocho.

² Gulacsi 2001, nos. 98 and 90, 260-261.

parts of the Late Antique World (Colditz 2022), and later to the East (Liu 1992 and 2006). A need to adapt Mani's teachings to the new areas of mission thus emerged successively. Using this approach, I hope to demonstrate how Manichaean iconography was viewed under novel perspectives as new insights became dominant.

FILIPPO GERACE

“Mani’s Psychology in the Cologne Mani-Codex” – The *CMC* reports some passages that seem to show Mani's psychological dimension: in one in particular it is he who directly expresses his feeling for the mission, in others it is his actions and words towards the Baptists that show it indirectly, in still others the encouragement of the twin angel underlies the insecurity and turmoil of the young Mani. The very presence of Syzygos complicates the issue: at the beginning of the narrative it seems to have a personality distinct from that of its double terrain, progressively the personalities of the two characters seem to identify themselves more and more, almost canceling out the insecurities of the young Mani and therefore the need of a spiritual double. It is possible that this doubling served not only to present Mani's doctrine of the spiritual double, but also to give dialogic voice to his initial disturbances and uncertainties, whether they were historical or merely a literary topos; furthermore, the fact that at least at the beginning it is Syzygos who gives Mani security regarding the mission could also be perceived as a legitimation of Mani's prophetic claim. In a text like the *CMC*, however, it is very difficult to distinguish what actually belonged to the historical Mani from what was the perception that his disciples had and what instead was the literary construction of the editor/compiler of the extracts. It is certainly easier for philological research to recognize the literary models underlying the description of Mani as a reluctant prophet, first and foremost biblical, which certainly could have been shared and kept in mind by the composition environment of the *CMC*, if not assumed by Mani himself. Furthermore, it is also possible to compare these passages with other passages from Manichaean literary texts in order to discover whether the attention relating to his personality was a peculiarity of the *CMC* or if it was part of a memory shared by the Manichaean literary tradition. The aim of this intervention will therefore be the analysis of the passages in question, both with regard to the lexicon used and the underlying literary models, and for what their historical and historical religious meaning could have been for the first Manichaean communities.

ZSUZSANNA GULACSI

“The “Christian saint” painting from Dunhuang and its reinterpretation as a Manichaean image of Jesus, the guide for the afterlife” – One of the most tantalizing silk paintings discovered from Cave 17 of the Mogao Grottoes near Dunhuang (Gansu Province, PRC) is a nearly life-size depiction of a “Christian Saint” from the 9th century in the Stein Collection of the British Museum (https://www.britishmuseum.org/collection/object/A_1919-0101-0-48). This fragmentary painting preserves the upper half of a standing male figure, much of whose iconography is analogous to guiding bodhisattvas familiar from contemporaneous Buddhist art, featuring a flaming layered halo, gold jewelry, slight beard and mustache, a version of the *vitarkamudra*, and floating flower buds. The rest of the iconography, however, is different and includes curly hair, multiple layers of garments under a prominent red cloak, and three even-armed cross ornaments centrally placed in the diadem, necklace, and, likely suspended from the latter, directly at the center of the chest. These crosses, plus the well-attested historical presence of the Church of the East along the Silk Routes and in the Tang capital cities, led to the current consensus that this image most likely depicts “a Christian, perhaps a Nestorian, saint” or “Jesus.” Stemming from recent scholarship about red-cloaked figures of Jesus as a guide for the afterlife and Jesus’s association with even-armed cross motifs symbolizing Mani’s teachings about the Cross of Light in text and pictorial art, an argument can be made for a possible Manichaean identification of this painting. Accordingly, this study aims to bring forward evidence from visual sources, soteriological literature, and

other historical accounts in order to explore the reasons not only for (1) why the Manichaeans would portray a Jesus figure analogously to contemporaneous Pure Land iconography of guiding bodhisattvas during the Tang era of their history (762-843 CE), but also (2) under what circumstances this painting could end up being preserved along with Chinese and Uyghur Manichaean manuscripts known today from the Buddhist “library cave” of Dunhuang.”

JAE HAN

“A Manichaean *Stam*? Between Manichaean and Rabbinic Editorial Practices” –The introduction to the Manichaean Kephalaia frames the work as a record of the oral revelation of Mani, the Apostle of Jesus Christ. This goes some way in explaining the peculiar literary structure of the Kephalaia, including what seems to be moments of its textual instability. While scholars of Manichaeism have typically thought about the Kephalaia through the genre of *eratopokriseis* as a way to situate it more broadly within the diverse currents of late antique literary production, this presentation will argue that a tighter context can be found when we approach the Kephalaia through the example of rabbinic textual production. The critical study of the rabbinic corpus has led to the conclusion that many of its “classical” texts – especially the Babylonian Talmud – are the products of anonymous redactors, which scholars identify as the *stammaim*, who worked with a number of preexisting (oral) textual units and put them within larger dialectical structures. From the side of rabbinic studies, this sort of anonymous intensive editorial activity is largely unprecedented, which has in turn fed into the idea that rabbinic literature is unique. This presentation will argue that the Kephalaia presents a close comparandum to rabbinic literature (especially the Palestinian Talmud, the *Yerushalmi*); it is similar to rabbinic literature not only as another example of “oral revelation,” but in terms of its literary production – which, very much like rabbinic literature, is driven by the intensive anonymous redaction of discrete textual units.

GÁBOR KÓSA

“Chinese Version of the *Xuāstvánīft* from Fujian Province” – This paper introduces a new corpus of Chinese Manichaean texts from Fujian province. The corpus from Fuqing 福清 was first mentioned by Li Linzhou 李林洲 in a short notice in a local evening newspaper (Fuzhou *wanbao* 福州晚報, 19 June 2017), which was then followed by Yu Lunlun’s 俞伦伦 conference talk and paper in 2020. Two further papers by Zhang Fan 张帆 (2024) and Yu Lunlun and Yang Fuxue 杨富学 (2024) have recently been published. Of the 35 surviving manuscripts, one, entitled *Xiāngkōng bǎochàn* 香空寶懺, is worthy of special attention, as it displays striking similarities to the *Xuāstvánīft*. This paper examines the similarities and differences between the newly identified Chinese text and the well-known Old Uyghur confessional text.

SAM LIEU

“Database of Manichaean texts – past, present and future” – The Database of Manichaean Texts began in 1994 and has continued without a break since then. It aims to produce an electronic corpus of all Manichaean texts (and some key articles) to serve at least four purposes: (1) as a register of texts and text fragments, (2) to allow texts to be consulted on line and to be downloaded to reduce the need of re-typing, (3) to provide literal translations of the texts included in the Database, (4) to allow for word-searches in both the original languages and in English. The project has concentrated so far on text and text fragments from Turfan and Dunhuang but some ‘Western’ texts have also been data-entered at the early stage of the project. The report will focus on the technical issues involved in data-entering texts in almost a dozen languages, the need to preserve copyright re BTT and CFM and the balance

between restricted and unrestricted access as well as reporting on what parts of the Database are already available online.

VLAD MANCIU

‘Theosophical vessels: a prolegomenon to the study of Manichean religious dissimulation’: As an ecumenical religion, Manichaeism spread across time in many lands and in many tongues, expressing self-identification as well as a conscious overlapping towards other religious traditions. By syncretising and carefully adapting Manichean ideas to the contexts of their transmission, Manichean missionaries and scribes sought to simultaneously reach and appropriate the otherness of their encountered religions, with Mani’s revealed knowledge acting as the true form of ‘Religion’, capable of channeling all divine wisdom spread across this world for the salvation of Light. Not all Manicheans embraced martyrdom in keeping their religious identity, and as persecutions increased, accusations of religious dissimulation and pseudo-conversions began to rise. From the early Christian monasteries of Egypt to the *bagdadi zanādiqa* and eastward in Buddhist communities, the concealment of Manichean identity or creeds is invoked time and time again as an ominous, almost subversive force. Moving around the issues of ‘crypto-Manichaeism’ and the usage of the term ‘Manichean’ as an artifact of heresiological labelling, this paper is an attempt to grasp the problem of Manichean religious dissimulation both from the reactive and from a deliberate point of view, analyzing through various historical contexts the feedback between dissimulation as a sociological reaction to external factors, and dissimulation as a framework for religious osmosis with theosophical underpinnings.

REA MATSANGOU

“Manichaean religious terminology in Greek. A comparison between the Greek Manichaean texts of Kellis and the texts of the Greek anti-Manichaean literature” – This paper focuses on the religious terminology used in Kellis’ Greek Manichaean texts, such as epistles and liturgical texts (prayers, psalms, hymns). Research themes/questions of the article are the following: 1) Issues of translation, interpretation, and reconstruction of the framework of writing and use of these texts, 2) The daily prayers of Manichaean catechumens in Greek anti-*Manichaica* as a complementary material for the reconstruction of the prayers. 3) The use of terms and expressions characterized as indicators of Manichaeism by sources of mainstream Christianity. For the investigation of the above, additionally, are used the recently characterized Manichaean texts from Oxyrhynchus, as well as texts of the Greek anti-Manichaean (and not only) Christian literature.

GUILLERMO MENÉNDEZ SÁNCHEZ

“Manichaean mythology in the time of Justinian Cosmogony, Anthropogony and Myth of the Giants in the *Capita VII Contra Manichaeos*” – This paper proposes a reassessment of the mythological information collected in the third anathema of the abjuration formula known as *Capita VII contra Manichaeos*. This formula is the first anti-Manichaean work written in Greek that mentions some Manichaean mythological entities. However, in Manichaean texts, these figures appear together in a mythological exposition that describes the creation of the world, the creation of man and the myth known as “myth of the giants.” The present study argues that the *Capita* had access to a Manichaean mythological narrative that does not appear to have been known by earlier anti-Manichaean texts. **Keywords** Manichaean mythology – *Capita VII contra Manichaeos* – Book of Giants – cosmology – creation of man

SONIA MIRZAI

“Enveloped in Glory and Dignity: The Realm of Light – A Textual-Pictorial Exploration with a Focus on Middle Iranian and Chinese Sources” – The Realm of Light is the blessed land

where God, the Lord of the Aeons of Light and the father of all exquisite creations, dwells. Within the intricate mythological and cosmic framework crafted by Mani, the Realm of Light stands as the epitome of beauty and everlasting existence. It symbolizes the divine sphere of benevolence and immaculacy, brimming with splendor and reverence. The destiny of the pious ones is intertwined with it, juxtaposed against the dark realm, replete with decadence and materialism. In Manichaean cosmology, a cosmic conflict unfolds between the forces of good and evil. The king of darkness yearns for the enchanting and aromatic expanse of the Realm of Light, eagerly advancing towards its brilliance to seize it for himself. But what features of the Realm of Light give rise to this struggle, and how did the Manichaeans describe heaven and connect it to the fate of humanity? This research endeavors to address the aforementioned question by delving into texts from Middle Iranian and Chinese sources. Additionally, it examines the Chinese Manichaean cosmology painting to glean insights into this matter. Consequently, the study seeks to identify indicators of the Realm of Light within the written records and explain how these indicators are visually portrayed in the cosmic image.

SO MIYAGAWA

“Shenoute the Archimandrite on Manichaeism: Egyptian Christian Perspectives in Late Antiquity” – This paper examines the understanding of Manichaeism among 4th–5th century Egyptian Christians through the writings of Shenoute the Archimandrite, a prominent leader in the Coptic Orthodox Church. By analyzing Shenoute’s references to Manichaeism and his use of the *Acta Archelai* in his refutations, this study sheds light on his knowledge and attitudes towards this dualistic religion in late antique Egypt. Shenoute’s critique of key Manichaean doctrines, such as the dualistic worldview and the rejection of the Old Testament, reflects the broader concerns of Egyptian Christian intellectuals in defending orthodox beliefs. This paper situates Shenoute’s understanding of Manichaeism within the context of theological debates and religious diversity in 4th–5th century Egypt, comparing his treatment of Manichaeism to his engagement with other religions, sects, or schools such as ancient Egyptian polytheism, Gnosticism, and Origenists. Furthermore, this study considers the social and political dimensions of the encounter between Egyptian Christianity and Manichaeism, exploring how religious differences intersected with issues of power, authority, and identity. By focusing on Shenoute’s writings, this paper contributes to a more nuanced understanding of the religious landscape of late antique Egypt and highlights the importance of local Christian perspectives in the study of religious movements in late antique Egypt.

BETÜL ÖZBAY

The period spanning from the 3rd to the 6th centuries, particularly Eurasia, marked a significant era of doctrinal disagreements. During this time, adherents of rival religions were subjected to persecution, exile, and even executions, as believers of any side branded their opponents as infidels upon demonstrating their power. Followers of Manichaeism, which emerged in Babylon, faced a similar fate when they lost the support of the palace following the death of the Sasanian ruler Shapur I. Initially declared as heretics, they were subsequently compelled to migrate from Babylonian territories. Through migration, the community managed to survive for at least seven hundred years. In the medieval period, tracing trade routes constituted a formidable task, and migrating in groups from one region to another safely could be considered the most viable option. Therefore, it can be observed not only Manichaeans but also many other exiled communities and religious groups traveled to various regions alongside trade caravans. Hence, these caravans served as significant avenues for missionary activities aimed at spreading religious doctrines. Indeed, praise for trade in some religious texts must be associated with these missionary endeavors. In our presentation, we will discuss the close relationship between Manichaean missionaries' routes and commercial activities on the Ancient Silk Road and evaluate notes from a story of a praised merchant named Arazan in an Old Uyghur Manichaean text.

TIM PETTIPIECE

“Mani’s Journey to India (Revisited)”: This paper revisits a topic I first explored in a contribution to the 2017 festschrift in honor of Werner Sunderman. That brief article (“Mani’s Journey to India: Mission or Exile?”) sought to reconstruct a plausible historical context for Mani’s travels to the East, situating them within the political upheavals of the Sasanian overthrow of the Arsacid dynasty. However, in light of recent work by Iain Gardner (The Founder of Manichaeism [2020]), which persuasively argues that many widely accepted “facts” about Mani’s life and religious activities are highly uncertain, this paper seeks to reassess Mani’s “journey to India” in terms of its literary, rhetorical, and theological importance, and as a key to the formative discourse found in early Manichaean tradition.

LILLA RUSSELL-SMITH

“Exhibiting and researching the art of the Manichaeans and the Church of the East in Berlin, past, present and future” – Although the Church of the East will be mentioned, the focus of the lecture will be on Manichaean art. The first original Manichaean manuscript and painting fragments were found during the First “Turfan Expedition” (1902-1903) causing a sensation. Research and publication started straight away, and some of the most famous Manichaean artefacts were exhibited from the 1920s, but work on the collection was repeatedly disrupted or slowed down by historical events. The occasion of opening the new permanent exhibition of the Museum für Asiatische Kunst in the Humboldt Forum, in the centre of Berlin, in two stages in September 2021 and September 2022, offers a good opportunity to consider how practical museum work and political events have played a part in exhibiting and researching Manichaean art. Results of recent research projects have shaped the new permanent exhibition. Without attempting to be comprehensive, past and present examples will illustrate aspects of conservation and exhibition practice. Due to the light sensitivity of paper and of textiles the artefacts are now rotated. Their extreme fragmentedness poses a challenge. The often very small size of the artefacts also limits the size and number of exhibition labels, making contextualisation difficult. One solution has been the use of a media table showing short videos of reconstructions by Zsuzsanna Gulácsi. Current focus is on the conservation of the two “banner” paintings for exhibition in June 2024. This work and the on-going digitisation of the archive materials have thrown up some new questions for future research.

NICHOLAS SIMS-WILLIAMS

“A Manichaean list of ingredients for making inks and colours” – The Sogdian fragment SI 6630, published by Olga Chunakova in 2020, belongs to a well-known class of Manichaean Sogdian manuscripts: a list of semantically related nouns written in cursive Sogdian script on the back of a discarded sheet from a Chinese scroll. As usual in such manuscripts, which were presumably used in the training of scribes, the text is laid out in columns divided by roughly drawn lines. As Chunakova noted, the text lists some of the ingredients used for making ink, for which it uses the word *mk*, a loanword from Chinese *mo* 墨 (Early Middle Chinese *mək*). Certain words, in particular *r’z-βwrt* ‘lapis lazuli’, show that the list is concerned with the coloured inks or dyes as well as ordinary black ink. Further study of the fragment makes it possible to identify some words which were not recognized by Chunakova and thus to obtain additional data on the ingredients used by the Central Asian Manichaeans for making the inks and colours used in their beautifully illuminated manuscripts. It also leads to a better understanding of a passage in the famous Manichaean ‘Prayer and confession book’ (‘BBB’) which refers to sins of which a scribe may be guilty as a result of the careless use of the valuable materials used for creating such manuscripts. Some scientific analysis of the colours used in the Manichaean manuscripts in Berlin has already been carried out by the BAM (Bundesanstalt für Materialforschung und -prüfung). It would be valuable to take this work further, in particular to compare the linguistic data provided by the fragment SI 6630 with the physical evidence of the manuscripts.

“Rulers of Summer and Winter: Elemental Demons and Eclipse Dragons in the ManTichaeen Soul Cycle” – The present study examines the role of the two Ascendants or ‘Rulers (*archons*) of Dry and Moist’ described in Chapter (*keph.*) 69 of the Berlin *Kephaliaia*. Here they are part of the seven chief archons that wreak havoc on earth, but while the other five are explicitly identified with the visible planets, the final two have caused some perplexity. The term ‘ascendant’ (Gr. ἀναβιβάζων) has suggested that they were identified with the lunar nodes, the points at which eclipses occur. Modern scholarship has therefore often related them to the widespread notion of ‘eclipse dragons’. In addition, they have been thought to fulfil a perceived astrological need by replacing the benevolent Sun and Moon in the system of seven evil heavenly bodies. However, by considering a wider array of Coptic Manichaean sources, the present contribution aims to show that their primary function pertained to eschatological, rather than astrological, concerns. Furthermore, it argues that the two Ascendants played a key role in the transmigration cycle, linked to a comprehensive conception of the cosmic role of the principle of sexual generation.