

Religious Inquiries
Volume 10, Issue 19, 2021, pp. 105-133
DOI: 10.22034/ri.2021.295786.1516
Copyright © the authors

TWO MANICHAEAN ‘HYMNS OF GOSPEL’: A CODICOLOGICAL AND TEXTOLOGICAL APPROACH TO SOME PARTHIAN MANUSCRIPT FRAGMENTS

Mohammad Shokri-Foumeshi¹

(Received: 2021/07/18; Accepted: 2021/10/11)

Abstract

The editing, reconstruction, translation and commentary upon all the extant fragments of two Parthian *Ewangelyōnīg bāšāhān* (the ‘Hymns of the Gospel’) from the Manichaean Middle Iranian collection found in Turfan, Xinjiang, China, i.e. M88/II/, 91/I(?)/, M92, and M898, under one umbrella, is the most important goal of this article. We have tried to answer the substantive question of why the *Ewangelyōnīg* hymns had nothing to do at all with Mani’s Living Gospel itself, namely the actual prose text of the Living Gospel; in fact, *Ewangelyōnīg* hymns present a poetic description of the New Testament, as Mani saw it. We have argued that the Manichaean hymnology and tradition of writing ‘hymns’ and ‘psalms’ is not an Iranian tradition, although there was poetry in the Iranian tradition, like the poetry in Avestan and Pahlavi texts. This contribution is an attempt to shed light on the contents of the *Ewangelyōnīg* hymns, both thematically and structurally.

Keywords: Hymns of the *Gospel*, Manichaean hymnology, Manichaean Parthian, Turfan collection

1. Assistant Professor, Department of Oriental Religions, Faculty of World Religions, University of Religions and Denominations, Iran (mshokrif@urd.ac.ir)

1. Introduction

Some of the Manichaean Turfan fragments, such as M88/II/, 91/I(?)/, M92, M441, M888a, M898, M5510, M5511, M8821, M8828, M8829 and M8830, belong to the so-called *Ewangelyōnīg bāšāhān*, “*Ewangelyōnīg Hymns*” or the “Hymns of the *Gospel*.” Some of these are adequately sized and in fairly good condition (like M88/II/), and some are so tiny that their contents are hardly recognizable (like M888a). Most of the fragments such as M92 and M88/II/ are either (relatively) long or, like M8821, M8828, M8829 and M8830 too fragmentary. The existence of these fragments in the Manichaean manuscripts collection, however, raises a few important questions: What are the *Ewangelyōnīg bāšāh* and where did they come from? Indeed, *why* did the Manichaeans compose certain hymns entitled *Ewangelyōnīg bāšāh*? What differences as well as similarities do these hymns have with Mani’s *Living Gospel*? Were the Manichaean hymns composed during the lifetime of Mani himself or were they innovations of his disciples? On the assumption that the existing corpus of Manichaean manuscripts is an imperfect collection of *varia* of most of the Manichaean works (*cum grano salis*) and regarding the point that Mani wrote several works, why were only some of the composed hymns entitled *Ewangelyōn*? Considering the paucity of sources and documents, it may be impossible for us to generally answer all these questions. The first point to be addressed here is that the hymns have nothing to do with Mani’s *Living Gospel* itself, namely the actual text of the *Living Gospel*; in fact, these texts present a poetic description of the New Testament, as Mani saw it. Second, although there was poetry in the Iranian tradition (like the poetry that can be seen in Avestan and Pahlavi texts), the tradition of writing “hymns” and “psalms” is not an Iranian tradition.²

2. I. COLDITZ (2000, 14, no. 51) tries to find an Iranian background, namely in the Avestan and the Pahlavi parallels to the Manichaean hymns.

2. Background of the Manichaean Abecedarian Hymns

The root and origin of the tradition, in fact, should be sought in the lands beyond the Iranian milieu, that is, in the Semitic world. We know that there were hymns and psalms in Jewish literature and we can find the best examples in the Psalms of David. Some of the Psalms of David are *abecedarian*. Regarding the structure, the Syriac psalms and hymns originally show traces of a connection to the *Old Testament* (Psalms 9-10, 25, 34, 37, 111, 112, 119 and 145. → DURKIN-MEISTERERNST 2007, 68). In other words, in both writing traditions verses which started with consecutive letters of the alphabet were composed. We are aware of the influence of David’s Psalms on Christian literature. In imitation of the Psalms of David, particularly of the 119th psalm, it was in fact customary during the times of the early Christian churches to compose Psalms of this kind, each part having its proper letter at the beginning. Interestingly, they occasionally chanted the verses alternately, antiphonal recitation (cf. JEFFERY 2003, 185 ff.). What is important here, however, is that the apostle Paul, whom Mani held in high regard, quotes psalms, specifically Psalms 14 and 53, from the *Book of Psalms* written by David, as the basis for his theory of “Original Sin” and includes the scripture in the *Epistle to the Romans* 3: 10-18.

It is easily imaginable that in selecting the manner of expression of the complex concepts of his system, Mani was certainly affected by the *Psalms of David* or by the *Epistulae* of Paul. I think it is interesting that in the *Revelation (Apocalypse of John)*, for instance, Rev. 14.3) with which Mani was doubtless also quite familiar, the theme is “the new” hymns and psalms.

We must also not be oblivious to the close similarities scholars have found between the Manichaean psalms and hymns on the one

hand and the hymns of Mandaëism, the religion which appears to have developed in the same area as Manichaeism, on the other hand. I cannot make any argument now as to whether Manichaeism was influenced by Mandaëism, or *vice versa*; nor can I answer the question of whether there was any influence at all or whether they were both simultaneously inspired by a common source. However, it should be regarded as a very important point that Manichaeism and Mandaëism {in *Ginza*} (DURKIN-MEISTERERNST 2015, 110) shared having an additional *n*-strophe after the *t*-verse in the abecedarian series, after *qršt*-verses (*idem* 2007, 68; *idem* 2011, 32).

All in all, considering the time of formation of the Manichaean literature, there were relatively common literary forms in the Semitic world. It seems to me that Bardesanes (154-222), as Ephrem says, “Mani’s *teacher*” (*apud* KESSLER 1889, 277, line 7), definitely played a more important role in giving shape to the necessity of psalm and of hymn in the main frame of Mani’s canonical works. Unfortunately, only one of Bardesanes’ works has reached us. However, we know a few parts of it from Ephrem’s works, entitled the *Book of Psalms*. The work, which has perhaps been written in imitation of David’s *Psalter* and under the influence of Marcion’s Psalms, according to Ephrem, *Hymns* 53.6, consisted of 150 psalms. Undoubtedly, using this kind of literature, in Bardesanes’ opinion, was very important for proselytism and particularly for attracting young people (as Ephrem says, *Hymns* 1.17, 53-56; → *apud* SKJÆRVØ 1988, 780). This was something that Mani also took into consideration. In fact, it seems that in the selection of this form of religious literature, Mani followed Bardesanes, who died only six years after Mani was born. Regardless of the fact that a book of Mani, i.e. *d-râzē* (Mysteria) has exactly the same title as Bardesanes’, *sfar râzē* “the Book of Mysteries” (Ephrem, *Hymnen contra haereses*, 1.14, *apud* BECK 1978, 6; Ephrem, *apud ibid.*: 56.9, *apud* SKJÆRVØ 1988: 780), for one of the other books of Bardesanes,

entitled the *Book of Psalms* or *Psalm-Book*, this is also true. There is no need to say how important psalms and hymns were for Mani’s religious proselytizing; especially in the eastern lands where disciples of Bardesanes and of his son Harmonios were very active, using a collection of 150 psalms, and had gained many followers. This Book of Psalms impelled Ephrem to prevent its development with his 36 hymns in the form of *madrâšē* (SCHMIDT/POLOTSKY 1933, 30 [31]).

Teaching religious and philosophical concepts was the main aim of several gospels. Nevertheless, we cannot actually say anything about the level of expansion and development of this literary style. We have the hymns in the Manichaean collection which have been called the “hymns of the *Gospel*.” These titles were fully appropriate for these group of texts, because they could show the same “concepts and motifs’ that a certain gospel needed, and, additionally, they had the power to captivate and influence the addressees in the same way a hymn or psalm could. As has been discussed, however, these hymns have nothing at all to do with the text of Mani’s *Gospel*, although it is possible that there were many common concepts and themes among them (we cannot say anything about this for certain). Were the Manichaean “hymns of the *Gospel*” the metrical reflection of the “good tidings” (M17/v/13/ *myzdg̃t’cyh̃*) of Christ? Mani and his disciples were influenced by Bardesanes’ style of hymnology, namely that which Bardesanes used for the composition of his *madrâšē* (even with a refrain which is attested both in the Coptic and the Turfan texts). However, it is quite natural to assume that the style was also modified during the time of adoption. While working on the Turfan fragments, a small unpublished Parthian fragment enthralled me; the point that I saw in it excited me due to its major importance for this project. Fragment M558 (second sheet, *recto* side, lines 5-6) clearly

says that at least in eastern Manichaean communities there was also unquestionably a “melody” accompanying the *Living Gospel*. In the Sogdian caption of the fragment (with Parthian loanwords), ll. 5-6, we read as follows: *II pr 'wnglywn jywndg nw'k /əðwā par ewangelyōn žīwandag niwāk/* “2 [times?] according to the Melody of the *Living Gospel*”. Unfortunately, the manuscript page is too fragmentary and accordingly no specific information can be gained from it. This very brief account, however, clearly shows that (at least, the Parthian) Manichaeans composed some cantillated texts of the *Living Gospel* with an accompanying melody to sing in their church. Therefore, it is not surprising that some hymns were also called the *Ewangelyōnīg bāšāhān*. But the question is whether there were also melodies for other canonical works such as the *Treasure of Life*, for instance. Perhaps this was indeed the case. However, as far as my study shows, there is no such proof, and pointing out the lack of melodic instructions for other works by Mani is a proper approach to find a reasonable answer as to why we only have the *Ewangelyōnīg* hymns in his canonical body of works.

3. Text of Two “Hymns of Gospel” Based upon M92, M88II, M91I(?), and M898

3-1. Description

The longest text among the abecedarian Hymns of Gospel is a Parthian text which is formed of the four fragments.

The first scholars who identified the fragments M92, M898 and M88II and read them as a coherent text were HENNING and BOYCE (→ also BOYCE 1952, 435); the fragments remain, however, unpublished to this day. According to BOYCE, the text “consists of two hymns composed in couplets, in a difficult and allusive style. The surviving verses contain a condemnation of the flesh and false

religions, followed by an account of the redeeming gods” (*ibid.*). Here, there are ten verses to a page; the verses are separated from one another by a blank space; and a marginal p^3 stands by alternate verses (→ SUNDERMANN 2009, 242). Each abecedarian section follows the same system, namely it begins with an initial <’> and ends with <t> including an introductory verse before <’> and a final one beginning with <n>, in addition a verse with <j> after the z-verse.

3-2. Measurements

Fragments	M92	M88/II/	M91/I(?)/	M898
<i>Length of the sheet</i>	16 cm	17.6 cm	ca. 3.5 cm	8 cm
<i>Width of the sheet</i>	9.2 cm	10.1 cm	ca. 3.1 cm	6 cm
<i>Length of the line</i>	5.6 cm	5.6 cm		3.6 cm
<i>Space between half-verses</i>	0.4-0.5 cm	0.4 cm	0.4 cm	0.3 cm
<i>space between two verses</i>	ca. 1 cm	ca. 1 cm	ca. 1 cm	ca. 0.7 cm
<i>Length of the letters</i>	0.2 cm	0.2 cm	0.2 cm	0.1 cm

3. F. W. C. MÜLLER’s explanation that the character p marks the antiphon, i.e. shows the word *padwāg* ‘answer’, has been generally accepted. Apud *ibid.*, 24 and 435.

112 / Religious Inquiries

<i>Outer margin</i>	at least 1.7 cm	3 cm		2 cm
<i>Inner margin</i>	ca. 1.7 cm	1.8 cm	at least 1.5 cm	
<i>Upper margin</i>	at least 1.2 cm	at least 3 cm		at least 2.2 cm
<i>Lower margin</i>	at least 1.5 cm	at least 1.4 cm		
<i>Text-block</i>	13.5 x 5.6 cm	13 x 5.6 cm		ca. 5.6 x 3.7 cm
	1 line blank between the strophes (0.7-0.8 cm blank space)	1 line blank between the strophes (0.7-0.8 cm blank space); 1 strophe blank space between the hymns (2.2 cm)	Layer glued to the following sheet	1 line blank between the strophes (0.5-0.6 cm blank space)

3-3. Bibliography

The published sections of the fragments are shown in the following table:

<i>Fragment</i>	<i>Lines</i>	<i>References</i>
M92 + M898 (A few lines published)		
Cat.		BOYCE 1960, 8, 61.
Ed.	r1 ^a -1 ^b	COLDITZ 1997, 34; <i>idem</i> 2000, 378.
Trnsli. & trnsla.	r1 ^a -1 ^b	<i>Ibid.</i> , 202. Moreover, a reading and a reconstruction for all the lines as a draft by DURKIN-MEISTERERNST was available to me.
M88II + M91/I(?) ⁴ (A few lines published)		
Cat.		BOYCE 1960: 8.
Ed.	r2 ^a -4 ^b ; r8 ^a -8 ^b ; v9 ^a -9 ^b	COLDITZ 1997, 34; <i>idem</i> 2000, 378. SUNDERMANN 1994, 317; COLDITZ 1997, 34; 8 ^a -8 ^b ; <i>idem</i> 2000, 378.
Trnsli. & trnsla.	r4 ^a -4 ^b	COLDITZ 2000, 201.
Repr.	v9 ^a -9 ^b	SUNDERMANN 1994, 317.

4. What of M91 has been already published by BOYCE 1954, A.R. VI-VII and SUNDERMANN 1990, §6.2 belonging to *Hūyadagmān* and *Angad rōšnān* we call here M91/II(?)/.

3-4. Identification of M91/I(?)

In her work, COLDITZ pointed out that M88/II/ and M91/I(?)⁵ must be fragments of the same manuscript page.⁶ Below I try to show my reading and reconstruction of the page. In M91/I(?) there are just four words and a few characters for the first two verses:

<i>RECTO</i>	<i>VERSO</i>
M91/I(?) / r/1 ^a / š'd [M91/I(?) / v/1 ^a /](•)
M91/I(?) / r/1 ^b / (pd 'ym ••)	M91/I(?) / v/1 ^b /](••)'d
M91/I(?) / r/2 ^a / tnb'r [M91/I(?) / v/2 ^a /](•r)
M91/I(?) / r/2 ^b / h(')[M91/I(?) / v/2 ^b /](bg'n)
M91/I(?) / r/3 ^a / (n)[.....

3-5. Order of Codices

In the table below, I arrange the lines of the four fragments in the order I propose:

M898	(here as text <i>a</i>)	
M88/II/	(here as text <i>b</i>)	
M92	(here as text <i>c</i>)	
M91/I(?)	(here as text <i>d</i>)	
Hymns	Order	Nr. of the lines in this text
Hymn A	<i>a/v-r/hdl./ ~ b/v-r/hdl./</i>	I. [01]
Hymn A	<i>c/r/1^a-6^b/ ~ a/r/1^a-6^b/</i>	II. [02-13]
Hymn A	<i>c/r/7^a-10^b/</i>	II. [14-21]

5. In a footnote (COLDITZ 2000, 378, no. 9), she referred to it as M91/I/, but in the text as “M91 I(?)”.

6. Ibid.

Hymn A	$c/v/1^a-6^b/ \sim a/v/1^a-6^b/$	ll. [22-33]
Hymn A	$c/v/7^a-10^b/$	ll. [34-41]
Hymn A	$d/r/1^a-3^a/ + b/r/1^a-3^b/$	ll. [42-47]
Hymn B	$b/r/4^a-9^b/$	ll. [48-59]
Hymn B	$b/v/1^a/$	l. [60]
Hymn B	$b/v/1^b-2^b/ + d/v/1^b-2^b/$	ll. [61-63]
Hymn B	$b/v/3^a-10^b/$	ll. [64-79]

3-6. Diplomatic Edition, Transliteration, and Translation

As we have seen, first the fragments M92 (here as text *c*) and M898 (here as text *a*) comprise the Hymn A, i.e. the first part of the reconstruction, immediately follow by the fragments M88/II/ (here as text *b*) + M91/I(?)/ (here as text *d*) which form the Hymn B, the second part of the reconstruction. Alternating with similar numbers in curly brackets { }.

HYMN A

$a \sim b/v/-$ [1] ☉ 'wngl[ywnyg ☉] | [☉] b(')š'(h) ☉
/r/hdl./ Hymn of the *Gospel*
<Introductory, aleph-verse on the previous page, lost>

RECTO

$c/r/1^a/$ [2] (bz)[qr ••](. bn)dy(s)[t'n] ☉☉ dw(jbw)[y]
 w̄ g(ndg) z[h](g)
 { $a/r/1^a/$ } [2] [bzqr ••](• b)n(dyst'n ☉☉ dwjb(w)[y] w̄
 gndg: zhg

- the sinner [is] the prison [of] the bad smelling and stinking offspring,*
- c/r/1^b/ [3] mwrđ(g'n) 'skwhyf(t) ☉☉ w̄ (g)['] (h) t'ryg
(cy x)[w](f)[tg]('n)
- {a/r/1^b/} [3] [mwrđg'n] (')skwhyft ☉☉ w̄ (g'h) t('ryg)
cy xwftgn
the poverty of the dead, and the dark place of sleepers,
- c/r/2^a/ [4] gzn)g (w̄) h'm'byr ☉☉ cy pd [w]dys k(yrd (P)
w̄) [wy](r)['] (št)
- {a/r/2^a/} [4] [gnzg w̄] (h)'m'byr ☉☉ cy pd wdys kyrđ
('w̄t wyr'st)
the treasure-house and store-house which he made in/ through deception and arranged
- c/r/2^b/ [5] hwyn 'šmg'n t'ryg ☉☉ hynw'r (bzig cy
prdx)[t]
- {a/r/2^b/} [5] [hwyn '](š)mg'n t('ryg ☉☉ hynw'r bzig cy
(frd)xt
each dark (demon) Wrath, (he) exhausted the flood of the sin,
- c/r/3^a/ [6] dyšt pd h'm'byr wxybyy ☉☉ hyštyg kl(w)g
w̄ 'sng
- {a/r/3^a/} [6] [d]yšt p̄t h'm'byr wxybyy ☉☉ hyštyg klwg
w̄ 'sng
formed in his store-house brick, clod and stone
- c/r/3^b/ [7] wxđ kyc wxybyh psxt ☉☉ kw pd (h)wyn
snyđ w̄ 'ngwyđ
- {a/r/3^b/} [7] [w](x)đ kyc p̄t wxyby psxt ☉☉ kw pd
hwyn snyđ w̄ 'ngwyđ

*whoever made himself for himself, so that
he ascends to them and finds rest*

c/r/4^a/ [8] [h]m'byr cy 'c 'br nm'yd ☉☉ kw hsyng'n **p**
pd nwx zhg

{a/r/4^a/} [8] (h)m'(b)[y]r cy 'c 'br nm'yd ☉☉ kw
hsyng'n pd nwx

*the store-house which he shows (from)
above: the offspring (were) primeval in the
beginning*

c/r/4^b/ [9] (š)[h]ryg'n w hrw šhr'n ☉☉ pd hw twxš'd
kw kyrd krynd

{a/r/4^b/} [9] zhg ☉ šhryg'n w (h)[rw] (š)hr'n ☉ pd hw
twx(š')d kw kyrd krynd

*the citizens and every town should strive for
this that they can do it.*

c/r/5^a/ [10] ws(n'd 'ym pdyn nycnyšn ☉☉ h'm'byr cy
hs wyr('št)

{a/r/5^a/} [10] (w)s(n)'d 'ym pdyn [n](y)cny(šn) ☉
h'm'byr (cy) hs wr('š)t

*about this fleshly layer, the store-house
which (he) made at first*

c/r/5^b/ [11] hsyng'n w'xt '(f)[s]'ng ☉☉ w ny z'nynd
'ymyn 'stw(m)[yn]

{a/r/5^b/} [11] hsyng'n w'x(t 'fs'ng ☉) w ny z'nynd
'ym(yn) 'stwmyn

*the primeval ones told a fable and do not
know these last ones.*

c/r/6^a/ [12] z'wr tcy(n)d hrwyn dyn'n ☉☉ w bwd [p]
'byr'h 'c r'štyf(t)

- {a/r/6^a/} [12] [z'wr tcynd hrwyn dy](n')n ☉☉ w̄ (b)wd
 'byr'ḥ 'c r'št:f(t)
*all the religions run (in) deceit and they go
 astray from the righteousness*
- c/r/6^b/ [13] 'w wyš'dg'n w̄ bstg ☉☉ ny 'zw'rynd pd
 r'štyf(t)
- {a/r/6^b/} [13] ['w wyš'dg'n w̄ bstg] (☉) ny 'zw'r[rynd pd
 r'štyft]
*they do not distinguish the freed ones and
 the bound in truth*
- c/r/7^a/ [14] jngyn bwd w̄ t'ryg ☉☉ mgwng 'bdyn pd
 šhr tcynd
- {*a/r/7^a/} *it was rusty and dark, they run in a brutish
 manna in the land.*
- c/r/7^b/ [15] pd 'wrjwg wdyft 'hynd ☉☉ w̄ krwgyft cy
 'šmg'n
- {*a/r/7^b/} *with Lust they were deceived as well with
 trickery of the Wrath*
- c/r/8^a/ [16] hynw'r n'm wyfr'synd ☉☉ kw šhr 'pyd pd **p**
 hynw'r
- {*a/r/8^a/} *they proclaim the name/world “flood,”
 meaning the world is lost in the flood.*
- c/r/8^b/ [17] frd'g 'c 'br 'gd ☉☉ x'n(yg')c 'dr 'zdm'd
 {*a/r/8^b/} *waterfall came (from) above, spring gushes
 out (from) below*
- c/r/9^a/ [18] t̄ry(ft 'hyn)d (h)r(wy)n d(yn')n ☉☉
 pr'(•)[•••• •• ••]
- {*a/r/9^a/} *all religions are oppressed...*
- c/r/9^b/ [19] pd zmyg(')n 'wrjwg ☉☉ 'w(d •••)[•• ••• •••
 •••]
- {*a/r/9^b/} *in the lands of Desire and...*

c/r/10^a/ [20] ywd ywd bxt bwd 'hynd ☉☉ (p)[••••• •• [P]
•••]

{*a/r/10^a/} *they are separately divided...*

c/r/10^b/ [21] cy 'šmg'n bxt 'hynd ☉☉ (w̄) [••••• •• •••]

{*a/r/10^b/} *because the Wraths are distributed and...*

VERSO

c/v/1^a/ [22] [kw sr] (ny) pd(r'z)ynd [☉☉] '(c jf)[r 'b
z•••••](•••••)

{a/v/1^a/} [22] kw sr ny pdr'zynd ☉☉ 'c jfr 'b
(z)[••••••••••]

*so that they did not lift up (their) heads from
the deep water (?) ...*

c/v/1^b/ [23] (n)['w] ny pry'(b)[ynd ☉]☉ [ky 'b]d'cy(d)
'w [š](y)rg'm(g'n)

{a/v/1^b/} [23] n'w ny fry'bynd ☉☉ ky 'bd('cy)d 'w
(š)[yrg'mg'n]

*they do not reach the ship, which rescues
the friends.*

c/v/2^a/ [24] (l)['yn](d w̄ 'b)xrw(sy)nd ☉☉ (cw)'gwn (p)
'spg'n .. 'yw b(yd g)zynd

{a/v/2^a/} [24] l'ynd w̄ 'bxrwsynd .☉ cw(')gwn 'spg'n ☉
'y(w) [byd] gzynd

*they howl and call out/shriek, they bite one
another like dogs.*

c/v/2^b/ [25] ['y](w) byd['](n) 's(p')wynd ☉☉ w̄ mst
bwd 'hynd pd (wd)yftgy(f)[t]

{a/v/2^b/} [25] 'yw byd'n 's(p')wnd ☉ w̄ mst bwd 'hy(n)[d
pd wdyftgyft]

*they terrify one another and they got drunk
with deception*

c/v/3^a/ [26] **mrn** fryh bwd 'hynd ☉☉ 'nd's'd 'w jywhr
pw'g

{a/v/3^a/} [26] mrn fryh bwt 'hynd .☉ '(n)[d'](s)'d 'w
(jywhr pw'g) ☉ (p)[d]

*they made a friend of death; they left the
holy (pure) life.*

c/v/3^b/ [27] pd 'ym 'r'm t'ryg ☉☉ hw'rmyn s'ynd pd
wys(p) jm(')n

{a/v/3^b/} [27] ('y)m 'r:m t'(r)yг ☉☉ hw'(rm)yn synd p(d)
wy(sp) j(m)['n]

*in this dark abode, they seem to be very
peaceful at all times.*

c/v/4^a/ [28] **ngwhynd** w̃ 'zwrtynd ☉☉ snynd 'wsnynd **p**
'wd ('jyn)[d]

{a/v/4^a/} [28] ngwhynd w̃ 'zwrtynd ☉☉ snynd
('ws)[ny](nd) ['w](d) '(j)y[nd]

*they sink and turn back, they ascend, they
descend and are reborn.*

c/v/4^b/ [29] pdmwynd ws'n cyhrg ☉☉ 'c zhg 'w zhg
'byr'h (š)wynd

{a/v/4^b/} [29] pdmwynd ws'n (c)yhrg ☉ 'c (z)[hg] (')w
zhg '(b)yr'h šwynd

*they put on many forms; they go astray from
offspring to offspring*

c/v/5^a/ [30] (s)y'ryft pdmwxt 'hynd ☉☉ tnb'r gnd'g
'wd mgwng

{a/v/5^a/} [30] sy'ryft pdmwxt (')h(ynd ☉ t)[nb'r]
(g)n(d)'g (w̃) m(g)w(n)g

they put on decay, the stinking and brutish body;

c/v/5^b/ [31] [p]dmwcn pdngyn ☉☉ cy b'd b'd pdmwxt
'hynd

{a/v/5^b/} [31] (pdmwcn) pdngyn ☉☉ cy b'd b(')d
pd[mw](xt) (')hy(nd)

the dirty garment, which they put on again and again.

c/v/6^a/ [32] 'šmg'n frm'n d'rynd ☉☉ pd hwyn 's(psg) (p)
kyrdg'n

{a/v/6^a/} [32] 'šmg('n fr)m'n d'ryn(d) ☉ pt (hw)[yn
'spsg kyrdg'n]

the Wraths have command against the good deed of the bishops.

c/v/6^b/ [33] (z)yšt 'hynd 'w qyrbg ☉☉ w̄ bwd
dw(šm)nyn 'w r'štyft

{a/v/6^b/} [33] [zyšt 'hynd 'w] (k)[y](rbg) ☉ w̄ (bw)[d
dwšmnyn 'w r'štyft]

they hate goodness and they have become enemies of the truth.

c/v/7^a/ [34] (p)w'g frm'n hyrzynd ☉☉ 'w bg'n ny
bwynd 'bdysg'(r)

{*a/v/7^a/} *they abandon the pure command and they
are not obedient of the gods.*

c/v/7^b/ [35] (tws)y(g) t(c)ynd w̄ pwynd ☉☉ brhng 'c
{*a/v/7^b/} šhr byh šwy(nd)

they flow and run empty; they go naked out of the land.

- c/v/8^a/ [36] cyhrg 'c 'b(r) 'zwšt ☉☉ 'c 'njmn cy **p**
 bwxtg'n
 { *a/v/8^a/ } *they turn back (their) nature from upon,
 from the gathering of the saved.*
- c/v/8^b/ [37] 'w jfr 'dryn hxsynd ☉☉ t'ryg kw dy(w)'n
 šwynd
 { *a/v/8^b/ } *they attain to the lower dark abyss, where
 the demons are going.*
- c/v/9^a/ [38] [qwr'n bwynd] (w) hnd'n ☉☉ (ny)
 'š(nwy)nd (bg'nyg fr)[m'n]
 { *a/v/9^a/ } *[they become blind] and sightless; they do
 not hear the divine commandment.*
- c/v/9^b/ [39] [••• ••••• ••• wy](fr's)yd ☉☉ wygr'(nyd
 xwftg)['n]
 { *a/v/9^b/ } *... (he) teaches and wakes the sleepers.*
- c/v/10^a/ [40] [r•• •••• •••• t]('ry)g ☉☉ jng(yn) 'wd [p]
 w(s••g•••)
 { *a/v/10^a/ } *... dark, rusty and...*
- c/v/10^b/ [41] [•••• •••• •• •••• ☉](☉) w ny (s)cyd '(d)
 rw(š)n (š)hr
 { *a/v/10^b/ } *... and it is not fitting the Light Land*
- d/r/01^a/ [42] š'd (bw)y'd '(n)[wš](g'n w)j(ydg'n) ☉☉ w
 + b/r/01^a/ ngwš'g'n '(br) ('wmyd?)
*you, O the immortal Electi and the Hearer,
 are happy about the hope(?)*
- d/r/1^b/ [43] (pd 'ym •••) ' wrd ny[•••](• p)ydr '' wrd
 ('w) z'dg('n)
 + b/r/1^b/ *with the... brought... the Father brought (it)
 for the children*
- d/r/2^a/ [44] tnb'r bg'nyg wyndyd ☉☉ pdmwcn 'wd **p**
 dydym wzrg

- + b/r/2^a/ *you obtain the divine body, garment and
great diadem*
- d/r/2^b/ [45] h(ʼ)mcyhrg bwyd ʼd yzdʼn ☉☉ cwʼgwn
hrwyn w(hy)gʼrʼn
- + b/r/2^b/ *you will be having the same nature as the
gods like all the beneficients*
- d/r/3^a/ [46] (n)[wys]tg hyd (ʼ)[w r](w)šn ☉☉ ʼw
bzmɡʼnʼn w̄ ʼw w(xr)n wzrg
- + b/r/3^a/ *you have been invited *to the *Light, to the
banquets and for the great meal*
- b/r/3^b/ [47] [ʼwd] ʼw hw w(z)rg šhrdʼryft ☉☉ kw hrw
pydrʼn wyšmnynd
*(and) in the great kingdom, where all the
Fathers are glad.*

HYMN B

A space of one verse is left blank to indicate the end of the first hymn and the beginning of the second one. Before the next strophe beginning with <ʼ >, a verse with <†> as an introductory.

RECTO

- b/r/4^a/ [48] †ʼwgʼn ʼwd frwxʼn ☉☉ pd pydr rwšn [•••••]
*the strong and the blessed to the Father of
the Light...*
- b/r/4^b/ [49] †ʼwgy(ft ʼc hw) wyndyd ☉☉ hyryzd
ʼskwh(yft pd) [h](w)
*you find wealth from him, you leave poverty
by him.*
- b/r/5^a/ [50] ʼc nw(x) pd zhg (n)xwyn ☉☉ kd ʼym
bn(dyst)ʼn wyrʼšt

- from the beginning, with the first child when
this prison is arranged*
- b/r/5^b/ [51] (•• s)ryšt hwyn dw pdkr ☉☉ hwyn
'(š)mg'n wsn'd wdys
*(he) mixed the two images, on account of
the sway of the Wraths*
- b/r/6^a/ [52] (br)m'd hrwyn gy'n'n ☉☉ 's(t)wn'n **p**
('w/h••r) b'(rwr)
all the souls wept, pillars... load-bearer
- b/r/6^b/ [53] wsn'd hwyn (dw) gy'n'n ☉☉ cy (pd) hw
n(x)šy(b) (p)dyt
*for the two souls, who... (?) with the
confusion (?)*
- b/r/7^a/ [54] gr'y'd gr'mg ['](c) byh ☉☉ 'br hwyn
hnd'mn rwšn'n
*possessions fell on the outside on the light
limbs.*
- b/r/7^b/ [55] (1-2 'd/r cy?) d(rg)/dwg? w̄ bzgyft ☉☉ cy
nlsyst w̄ txt z(m)bwdyg
. . . of (?)... and sin of... (?) and... (?) the
world
- b/r/8^a/ [56] (db 'c) by(h) (ps)'c'(d) (☉☉) w̄ bst (h)'n **p**
k'(d/ry/•)
*on the outside, deceit fashioned it, and
closed that ...*
- b/r/8^b/ [57] (••••) wšt(••••☉☉) kw snynd h(nd)'m(n)
(r)wšn'(n)
... so that the light limbs ascend.
- b/r/9^a/ [58] [h••] b(wy)n[d] (d)ys (•)r'y'(d) ☉☉ 'c 'ndr
d'(mg zyngyn)
... are the shape... within the weaponed trap

- b/r/9^b/* [59] [••••] (k.rdr) 'h(ynd) ☉☉ kw bwynd 'w hw
'b(d)[y]sg'r
... are..., that they are obedient to him
- VERSO**
- b/v/1^a/* [60] wnwh (drws)? ywb'd ☉☉ (gr)[4-6] (w̄) **P**
z(ry)[g (?) 4-6]
behold! ... you have suffered ... and pity⁷ ...
- + d/v/1^a/*
- b/v/1^b/* [61] 'wd qwbgyn (bwd ')hynd ☉☉ [3-
5](•)'••••)[2-4](••)'d
and there were vexations ...
- + d/v/1^b/*
- b/v/2^a/* [62] z'ryh wynd'd 'hynd ☉☉ 'w(šd/nw/yk
x••r)hd/c('•)[•••](•r)
they were found pitiful ...
- + d/v/2^a/*
- b/v/2^b/* [63] 'wd p(y)dr 'd bg'n rwsn('n ☉☉ 'w 'nyz
w)zrgyft (cy) (bg'n)
*and the Father with the light gods to the
greatness of the other gods*
- + d/v/2^b/*
- b/v/3^a/* [64] jywndg hw bdyg wzrgyft ☉☉ (q/py•)[4- **(p)**
6]ry(•••)[1-3]
The living ... the other/second greatness ...
- b/v/3^b/* [65] (')g'dg d'd 'w z'dg ☉☉ 'w (tryxtg')[n]
w)[•]'d[••••]
*(*he) granted wish to the child(ren) (and) to
the... oppressed*

7. Or: "pitiful"?

- b/v/4^a/ [66] **h**'mywxt (pt b)g (rwš)n ☉☉
 (y)yšw'zyw'(h) [•••••]
they are joined to the light god, Jesus the Splendor
- b/v/4^b/ [67] [p](d) xw'r [1-3] [']d qny(g)rw(š)n ☉☉ hw
 fry('ng •••'w'n)
with ease... with the Maiden of Light, the beloved...
- b/v/5^a/ [68] [t̥ ••••• yy]š(w')zyw'h ☉☉ 'w pdyšt šwd [p]
 c(y) [w](x)[ybyh]
... Jesus Splendor went to his own home
- b/v/5^b/ [69] ('w)y(s)t'd wxybyy šhr'n ☉☉ mdy'n
 (•)[••••••]
he put his own Aeons between...
- b/v/6^a/ [70] y'dg rwšn (•)[••• •••](c) [••• ••• •](x)[•••••]
the portion of light...
- b/v/6^b/ [71] 'wyst'd pd šhr rwšn ☉☉ kw bw'h [•••••]
 wz(rg)
he put (it) in the land of the light, so that it became... great
- b/v/7^a/ [72] **k**(d) my(•)gd[1-2](d) šhr'n 'sm'n'n ☉☉ (p)
 zwnws 'wd kryšn
when... (he)... the skies of the lands, the zone and the creation
- b/v/7^b/ [73] (')[c c](yh)r(g c)[y](hrg) 'zwšt ☉☉ wxybyy
 (bwj)'d 'c hwyn
he changed (himself) from one form to another to save himself from these
- b/v/8^a/ [74] **l**wgyg wzrg (p)dmwcn ☉☉ b'rg pd(m)wxt
 'wd 'wsxt

- the worldly great garment, the apparel he put on and descended;*
- b/v/8^b/ [75] pd br'dr'n hrw'gwc t'b'd ☉☉ (wy)n'r'd
hrwyn b'r(w)r
he shone on the brothers; he put in order each load-bearer
- b/v/9^a/ [76] mr(nyn cy)hrg 'hw'(y) ☉☉ nx'f(d) 'c p
hw(yn) dwšmnyn
*Eve's nature of death *submerged from each enemy*
- b/v/9^b/ [77] 'šmg'n pd hw (')ndyš(t ☉☉ w̄) '(šwft 'w)
šklwn zhg
the Wrath (demons) tied up her and disturbed Šaklūn's offspring
- b/v/10^a/ [78] ng'd myg (š)hr'n 'n'w'd ☉☉ (p)sxt hrwyn
q(h)ryc
obesance moved the cloud of the lands (and) made all water-channels
- b/v/10^b/ [79] br'dr(')n 'c tryxt bwj'd ☉☉ (w̄) sd 'w
z(m)yǵ š(••••••)
brothers redeemed from distress and ascended the land...
<at least eight verses (s, ' , p, c, q, r, š, t) missing>

4. Commentary: Some Observations

From the textological and contextual point of view, the text looks like the text of M741 which was published by BOYCE, “Sadwēs and Pēsūs”, 1951, pp. 911-914. In ABC 435, she points

out that “[The fragment M888a, which is called text] *F* (and possibly also [M8828, i.e. text] *G a*) appear to be concerned with *Šaklūn* and his mate. A similar subject matter is found in M741, which has no title. There is no notable difference in meter between the two hymns in this fragment and those preserved in M92 + M898 + M88II. There is a possibility, therefore, that they also are *Ewangelyōnīg* hymns.” Furthermore, because of the close resemblances in orthography between the leaves of the Parthian *Ewangelyōnīg* hymns (M88, M91, M92) and of the Parthian *Angad rōšnān* and *Huyadagmān* (such as the former fragments as well M918, for instance), it is quite certain that both texts were written by a scribe in a book. As far as we know from the surviving text, the Father of Greatness, Jesus the Splendor and the Maiden of Light (who usually plays a role alongside Jesus, exactly as she is seen in some Turfan texts alongside the Nous of Light) are mentioned in these texts, for a clear reason: the context was influenced by the Christian milieu. No doubt M88IIv17-18 tells the story of the sinful nature of Eve in the most emphatic way (→ SUNDERMANN 1996, 317).

5. Conclusion and Closing Remarks

All our information about the content of the hymns of Gospel (*Ewangelyōnīg bāšāhān*) that were composed by Parthian-speaker writers is limited to the Turfan fragments, for these are the hymns that the eastern Manichaean communities conceived in the eastern Iran. The remaining fragments are not numerous enough for us to be able to present an explicit image of what the complete collection would have looked like. Since, however, in this work the discussion is about the *Ewangelyōnīg* hymns, we must consider only the extant fragments and accordingly cannot extrapolate our views to the whole collection, which has unfortunately not reached us. The most important topic of

these hymns, which is at first glance perceptible in all of the fragments, is that these talk about the myth of the Creation, the context recognizable even in the fragmentary manuscript pages. The hymns of the *Gospel* (i.e. the *Ewangelyōnīg* hymns) are about the following concepts: the destruction and wickedness of the demons of wrath (*išmagān*), the most famous of which are Pēsūs (*pysws*) and Šaklūn (*šklwn*); the five dark limbs which are the bad smelling and stinking prison (*bandestān dūžbōy ud gandag*) of the body (of mankind and of the whole world), etc. These concepts are not narrated in the form of the mythical event, but they are used only symbolically: The dark demons of wrath leave the pure command (*pawāg framān*) and they are not obedient (*aβδēsgār*) to the gods, *tusīg tazēnd ud pōdēnd brahenag až šahr bēh šawēnd*: they flow and run empty, they go naked out of the land, they did not rise up from the deep and they do not reach the ship, which departs to the friends; they made a “friend of death” (*maran frih*) and left the pure life (*žīwahr pawāg*); they sink (*niyōhēnd*), turn back (*izwartēnd*), ascend (*sanēnd*), descend (*ōsanēnd*) and are reborn (*āžayēnd*). Therefore, as can be seen in the above-mentioned short phrases of the *Ewangelyōnīg* Hymns, in these hymns one does not find a report of the Manichaean eschatological events. The text here rather deals with a type of “religious reminder” which is *only inspired* by the primordial creation myth. It seems to me, therefore, that these might be the same concepts about which Mani wrote in the first fourteen chapters of his *Gospel* in prose.

Index Siglorum

- [abc] Lost characters or words in a fragmentary place of a sheet
 and reconstructed by author
- (abc) Damaged but recognizable letters in a fragment

[•], [••], etc.	Illigible letters, but their numbers determinable
(•), (••), etc.	Badly damaged letter(s), but to a large extent its/their number(s) determinable
1 ^a , 1 ^b , etc.	Appears in edition of the hymns, numbers indicate the verses and superscripts show the half-verses
[1], [2], etc.	Continous numbers of the lines of a certain fragment edited here
⊙	Elaborated punctuation mark
⊗	Decorative marks in titles/ headlines of manuscript fragments

Abbreviations

<i>ABC</i>	BOYCE 1952
apud	(cited) by, in (the work of)
<i>BSO(A)S</i>	<i>Bulletin of the School of Oriental (and African) Studies</i>
ca.	<i>circa</i> = around a given date
Cat.	Catalogue
ed.	edition
<i>Enc.Ir.</i>	<i>Encyclopaedia Iranica</i>
hdl.	headline
I, II	pages of a <i>bifolio</i> /double-page, e.g. M88/II/
<i>ibid.</i>	<i>ibidem</i> = in the same place
<i>idem</i>	the same (author)
l., ll.	line, lines
M	Signature of Manichaean fragments in Parthian and Middle Persian stored in the Turfan Collection, Berlin, e.g. M88
nr.	number
r	<i>recto</i> , front side of a sheet

repr.	reprinted
trnsla.	translation
trnsli.	transliteration
SPAW	<i>Sitzungsberichte der Preussischen Akademie der Wissenschaften</i>
s.v.	<i>sub voce</i> , under the term; <i>sub verbo</i> , under the word
v	<i>verso</i> , back side of a sheet

Bibliography

- ALLBERRY, C. R. C. 1938. *Manichaean Manuscripts in the Chester Beatty Collection, Volume II: A Manichaean Psalm-Book, Part II.* with a contribution by H. Ibschler. Stuttgart.
- BECK, E. 1978. *Ephräms Polemik gegen Mani und die Manichäer.* Louvain (Corpus Scriptorum Christianorum Orientalium, vol. 391, Subsidia, tomus 55).
- BOYCE, M. 1951. “Sadwēs and Pēsūs.” *BSOAS* VIII/4: 908-15.
- . 1952. “Some Parthian abecedarian hymns.” *BSOAS* 14: 435-50.
- . 1954. *The Manichaean Hymn-Cycles in Parthian.* London-New York-Toronto.
- . 1960. *A Catalogue of the Iranian Manuscripts in Manichean Script in the German Turfan Collection.* Berlin.
- COLDITZ, I. 1997. “Aspects of Social Terminology in the Middle Persian and Parthian Manichaean Texts from Turfan.” In *Manichaean Studies III. Atti del Terzo Congresso Internazionale di Studi ‘Manichaeismo e Oriente Cristiano Antico’, Arcavacata di Rente-Amantea 31 agosto-5 settembre 1993*, edited by L. Cirillo and A. v. Tongerloo, 11-40. Lovanii-Neapoli.

- . 2000. *Zur Sozialterminologie der iranischen Manichäer. Eine semantische Analyse im Vergleich zu den nichtmanichäischen iranischen Quellen*, Wiesbaden (Iranica 5).
- DURKIN-MEISTERERNST, D. 2007. "Aramaic in the Manichaean Turfan texts." In *Iranian Languages and Texts from Iran and Turan. Ronald E. Emmerick Memorial Volume*, edited by M. Macuch, M. Maggi and W. Sundermann. 59-74. Wiesbaden.
- . 2011. "Literarische Termini in mitteliranischen manichäischen Texten." In *Der östliche Manichäismus. Gattungs- und Werksgeschichte, Vorträge des Göttinger Symposiums von 4.-5. März 2010*, edited by Z. Özertural and J. Wilkens, 27-44. *Abhandlungen der Akademie der Wissenschaften zu Göttingen, neue Folge* 17.
- . 2015. "Abecedarian Hymns, a Survey of Published Middle Persian and Parthian Manichaean Hymns." In *Mani in Dublin. Selected Papers from the Seventh International Conference of the International Association of Manichaean Studies in the Chester Beatty Library, Dublin, 8–12 September 2009*, edited by S. G. Richter, C. Horton and K. Ohlhafer, 110-52. Leiden-Boston.
- JEFFERY, P. 2003. "Philo's Impact on Christian Psalmody." In *Psalms in Community, Jewish and Christian Textual, Liturgical and Artistic Traditions*, edited by H. W. Attridge and M. E. Fassler, 147-87. Society of Biblical Literature. Leiden.
- KESSLER, K. 1889. *Mani. Forschungen über die manichäische Religion*. Berlin.
- SCHMIDT, C. and H. J. POLOTSKY. 1933. *Ein Mani-Fund in Ägypten*, SPAW. Berlin.
- SKJÆRVØ, P. O. 1988. "Bardesanes." In *Enc.Ir.*, Vol. III, Fasc. 7-8, 780-785.

- SUNDERMANN, W. 2009. “Manichaean Literature in Iranian Languages.” In *The Literature of Pre-Islamic Iran*, edited by R. E. Emmerick and M. Macuch, 197-265. Companion Volume I, New York.
- . 1990. *The Manichaean Hymn cycles Huyadagmān and Angad rōšnān in Parthian and Sogdian*. Photo Edition. Transcription and translation of hitherto unpublished texts, with critical remarks (Corpus Inscriptionum Iranicarum. Suppl. Series II). London.
- . 1994. “Eva illuminatrix.” In *Gnosisforschung und Religionsgeschichte. Festschrift für Kurt Rudolph zum 65. Geburtstag*, edited by H. Preissler, H. Seiwert and H. Mürmel, 317-27. Marburg.
- . 1996. *Iranian Manichaean Turfan Texts in Early Publications (1904-1934)*. London (Corpus Inscriptionum Iranicarum, Supplementary Series, Vol. III).