

Tracing the Origin of Chinese Manichaean Pantheon in Middle Iranian Languages

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Abstract

Based on the research of Sundermann, Bryder, and Paul van Lindt, Manichaean pantheon in Dunhuang, Xiapu, Pingnan, and Fuqing Chinese manuscripts are analyzed. The Chinese names of Manichaean gods are transliterations or translations of Middle Iranian names. The early Xiapu, Pingnan, and Fuqing documents undoubtedly inherited the pantheon of Manichaeism from the Dunhuang documents. At the same time, the early Xiapu and Pingnan documents contain important content that is not found in known Dunhuang Chinese Manichaeism materials. However, such content can be corroborated with Manichaean materials in the Middle Iranian languages, leaving no room for doubt about their reliability. In the early Xiapu and Pingnan documents, the deities of the first and second Evocations were downplayed. Notably, the status of Vairocana Buddha, Jesus Buddha, and the Lightning Buddha, who were part of the third Evocation, significantly increased. The most conspicuous evolution within the pantheon in the Xiapu and Pingnan documents is that Nārāyaṇa, Zoroaster, Śākyamuni, Jesus, and Mani entered the pantheon.

Keywords: Manichaeism, deities, Parthian, Middle Persian, Sogdian, Chinese manuscripts.

1. Introduction

The study of the pantheon in Manichaeism in contemporary times should recognize the pioneering research conducted by the esteemed German Iranologist Werner Sundermann, who explored the pantheon within Middle Iranian language documents discovered in Turfan (Sundermann 1979, 95-133). Sundermann categorized the names of gods and demons into four distinct groups. He also meticulously organized these divine names into a system of twenty-three distinct classifications.

Building upon Sundermann's groundwork, Peter Bryder subsequently embarked on an analysis of the intricate connections between the names of gods found in Chinese manuscripts unearthed in Dunhuang, including the *Xiabu zan* 下部讚 (*Lower section hymns*, *Hymnscroll*, abbreviated as H.), the *Monijiao canjing* 摩尼教殘經 (*Incomplete*

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scripture of Manichaeism, *Traité*, abbreviated as T.), and *Moni guangfo jiaofa yi lü* 摩尼光佛教法儀略 (*The Compendium of the Doctrines and Styles of the Teaching of Mani, the Buddha of Light, Compendium*, abbreviated as C.) (Bryder 1985, vol. 3 pt. 4). The Chinese god names that Bryder has studied are generally no longer analyzed in this paper. Paul van Lindt extended the analysis to encompass the pantheon of Manichaeism in Coptic texts, introducing seven additional designations labeled A to G (see Van Lindt 1992).

Recent years have witnessed the discovery of a substantial number of names pertaining to Manichaean gods, prophets, martyrs, guardians, and demons in manuscripts originating from Xiapu 霞浦, Pingnan 屏南 and Fuqing 福清 in Fujian province. These findings surpass and expand upon the existing pantheon documented in the Dunhuang manuscripts. As such, this paper aims to undertake a comprehensive investigation into the linguistic origins of these names in the Iranian context, drawing upon Sundermann's established framework (Ma Xiaohe 2014, 43-64).

The most significant among the Xiapu manuscripts cited in this paper is undoubtedly the *Moni guangfo* 摩尼光佛 (*Mani the Buddha of Light*, abbreviated as M.), compiled during the late Tang Dynasty and Five Dynasties period (Bao Lang 包朗 and Yang Fuxue 2020). The Xiapu manuscript *Xingfu zu qingdan ke* 興興福祖慶誕科 (*Ritual Manual for the Celebration of the Birthday of the Ancestor of Promoting Well-being*, referred to as "Danke," abbreviated as X.) compiled during the Song and Yuan Dynasties, as well as the Pingnan manuscript *Zhengming kaizheng wenke* 貞明開正文科 (*Eternal Light New Year Celebration Manual*, referred to as "Wenke," abbreviated as W.), also contain a substantial amount of Manichaean elements. Furthermore, the Xiapu manuscripts compiled during the Ming and Qing Dynasties, such as *Zou shen die shu kece* 奏申牒疏科冊 (*Rules regarding memorials, notifications, mandates and statements*, referred to as "Kece," abbreviated as ZS.), *Dao yu shu* 禱雨疏 (*Manual of Prayers for Rain*, Abbreviated as D.), *Mingfu qingfo wen* 冥福請佛文 (*Essay on Postmortem Merit and Invoking Buddha*, referred to as "Qingfo Wen," abbreviated as MF.) (Yang Fuxue 2020, 409-646), *Yaoshan tang shen ji* 樂山堂神記 (*Divine Record of Loving Mountains Temple*, referred to as "Shenji," abbreviated as L.), *Mingmen chu chuan qing benshi* 明門初傳請本師 (*Denomination of Light's Initial Transmission Invoking the Master*, referred to as "Qing Benshi," abbreviated as Q.) (Lin Wushu 2014, 447-553), and the Pingnan manuscript *Zhengming kaizheng zhou* 貞明開正咒 (*Eternal Light New Year Celebration Incantation*, abbreviated as Z.), Fuqing manuscript *Xiangkong baochan* 香空寶懺 (*Precious Litany of Fragrant Air*, "Baochan" abbreviated as B.) also provide some names of divine figures in Manichaeism.

In this paper, the names of gods are indicated within square brackets [], mostly along with the line numbers in which they appear in the literature. Following the numbering system of Sundermann, Bryder, and Van Lindt, the Arabic numerals on the left side of the slash (/) consist of four categories: 1/ Transcription of Middle Iranian (with a few Aramaic) names; 2/ Translation of Middle Iranian names; 3/ Names borrowed from Buddhism or other religious traditions; 4/ Names derived from "definitions." The Arabic numerals 1-17,

20-23 on the right side of the slash (/) correspond to the numbering system established by Sundermann. The letter D is an addition made by Van Lindt. The deities, prophets, martyrs, and guardians found in the Xiapu, Pingnan and Fuqing manuscripts, which are not included in the above numbering system, are designated as (1)-(12). The transliteration of Chinese characters, indicating Middle Chinese pronunciation, follows Bernhard Karlgren in *Hanzi ziyin yanbian da zidian* 漢字字音演變大字典 (*Dictionary of Phonetic Evolution of Chinese Characters*) (Jiangxi Education Press 2012).

2. Unsurpassed Venerable of Light

1/1. Sahuan 薩緩

The Father of Greatness, also known as *Zurvān* in Middle Persian literature. In the *Mani the Buddha of Light*, it is stated, “Converting to the Buddha, the Divine Lord Sahuan Moluo 皈依佛，薩緩默羅聖主” [M.427]. The transcription of “薩緩 sat-yuan” corresponds to the pronunciation of *zrw'n* [zarwān] in Middle Persian (Ma Xiaohe and Wang Chuan 2018, 79-100. DMT, vol. 3, pt. 1, 384-85).

1/1. Biteluo 俾特囉

The Father of Greatness, known as *pydr* [pidar] in Iranian language, which means “father.” In the “Danke,” it is transliterated as “俾特囉 pjig:-d'ək-*lɑ” [X.88] (Ma Xiaohe 2016a, 201-34. DMT, vol. 3, pt. 1, 289).

2/1. The Buddha of Supreme Light 无上光明佛

The Father of Greatness is referred to as *pydr rwšn* in Parthian literature, meaning “Father of Light.” In the Dunhuang, Xiapu, and Pingnan manuscripts, it is translated as “The Father of Light 明父,” “Unsurpassed Venerable of Light 无上明尊,” and “Light Venerable Father 明尊父” [H.222, 223; T.133; M.125; W05030, 13078; Z.118], etc.

The *Mani the Buddha of Light* states that “the first One, the Buddha of Unsurpassable Light 一者无上光明佛” [M.380]. “Unsurpassable Light” may translate the Middle Persian term *b'ryst 'y rwšn*, meaning “Supreme Light” (DMT, vol. 3, pt. 1, 104, 94-95).

3/1. Great Upright and Brilliant Saint 貞明大聖

In the Xiapu manuscripts created in the Ming and Qing Dynasties, the Supreme God is also referred to as “Great Upright and Brilliant Emperor with Wheel-face in the Main Palace 輪面正宮貞明大帝,” etc. [ZS.543, 565; D.343, 385: B.; Q.3-4; MF.20] and “Great Upright and Brilliant Saint of the Nine Heavens 九天貞明大聖” [L.5], borrowing the name of the Taoist thunder god (Ma Xiaohe 2022, 75-96).

To resist the attacks of demons, the Father of Greatness carried out the first evocation and summoned the Good Mother.

3. The Gods of the First Evocation

2/2.2. The Good Mother (Buddha) 善母 (佛)

Mother of Life / Mother of the Living, written as *m'dr 'y zyndg'n* in Middle Persian, is also known as Mother of the Righteous, in Parthian, *'rd'w'n m'd*, and in Sogdian, *'rd'w'n*

m'ī (DMT, vol. 3, pt. 1, 223, 387, 51; pt. 2, 20, 129). The *Hymnscroll*, *Mani the Buddha of Light* and “Wenke” refer to her as the “the Good Mother (Buddha)” [H.169; M.380; W34203-34204]. The “Wenke” and “Baochan” refer to her as the “Tathagata of the Good Mother 善母如來” [W26154, B.].

The Good Mother summoned the First Man and, together with the Living Spirit, created the universe.

4/3. First Reasoning (Buddha) 先意(佛)

The First Man is referred to as *hndyšyšn nxyystyn* in Middle Persian. The *Hymnscroll*, *Mani the Buddha of Light*, “Wenke” and “Baochan” all called him “First Reasoning (Buddha) 先意(佛)” [H.169; M.381; W28168; B.]. The “Shenji” refers to him as the “Tathagata of First Reasoning 先意如來” [L.03].

2/4.1.1. The Five Lights (Buddhas) 五明(佛)

The Five Light Gods are the five sons of the First Reasoning. In Parthian, they are referred to *pnj rwsn* (DMT, vol. 3, pt. 1, 276). The Dunhuang and Xiapu manuscripts mention them as the Five Lights (Buddhas) 五明(佛), Five Light-Sons 五明子, and Five Light-Bodies 五明身 [H.169, 412, 247; M. 269, 381].

4/4.1.2 The Light-Nature 明性

In Middle Persian, it is written as *gryw zyndg*, and in Sogdian as *γryw jywndg* and *jwndy γryw*. It is translated as “Light-Nature 明性” [M.431-432, 496, 576; W40240] or “Pure Nature 清淨性” [H.95].

2/4.2.1-5. The Five Lights 五明

The Five Lights consists of ether (*pr'whr* in Middle Persian, *'rd'w frwrđyn* in Parthian, *'rt'w frwrđyy* in Sogdian) (DMT, vol. 3, pt. 2, 104-5, 110-11), wind (*w'd* in Middle Persian and Parthian, *w'ī* in Sogdian) (DMT, vol. 3, pt. 1, 334-35; pt. 2, 235), light (*rwsn* in Middle Persian and Parthian, *'rtxwšī* in Sogdian) (DMT, vol. 3, pt. 2, 21), water (*'b* in Middle Persian and Parthian, *'p* in Sogdian) (DMT, vol. 3, pt. 1, 7; pt. 2, 17), and fire (*'dwr* in Middle Persian and Parthian, *'tr* in Sogdian) (DMT, vol. 3, pt. 1, 25; pt. 2, 31).

“Danke” mentions them as The Wonderful Ether Buddhas 妙氣佛, Wonderful Wind Buddha 妙風佛, Wonderful Light Buddha 妙明佛, Wonderful Water Buddha 妙水佛, and Wonderful Fire Buddha 妙火佛 [X.163-182]. “Wenke” and “Baochan” present them as “The Pure Ether (Buddha) 淨氣(佛)..... Pure Wind (Buddha) 淨風(伏), the Pure Light (Buddha) 淨明(伏), the Pure Water (Buddha) 淨水(伏), the Pure Fire (Buddha) 淨火(伏)” [W27160-27162, B.].

In order to rescue the First Reasoning and the Five Lights defeated by the demons, the Supreme God conducted the second evocation.

4. Gods of the Second Evocation

3/5. Mahāsthāmaprāpta 勢至

The God of the Answer (*pdw'xtg* in Parthian) likely adopts the Buddhist name “勢至

Mahāsthāmaprāpta” [H.391; M.153, 421; ZS.5, 167; B.]

2/6. Enjoyer of the Light Buddha 樂明佛

The Friend of Lights, who are referred to as *rwšn 'n xw 'ryst* in Middle Persian, *fryhrwšn* in Parthian, and *fryy rwšn βγγy* in Sogdian (DMT, vol. 3, pt. 1, 365-66, 159; pt. 2, 98). It is translated as “Enjoyer of the Light (Buddha) 樂明(佛)” [H.170; M.382; W25150].

2/7. The Creator of Form (Buddha) 造相(佛)

The Great Architect, written as *r'z 'y wzrg* and *r'z 'yg rwšn* in Middle Persian, *b'myzd* in Parthian, *β'm βγγy* in Sogdian (DMT, vol. 3, pt. 1, 294. 360-62. 95-96. 104; pt. 2, 57), is referred to as the “The Creator of Form (Buddha) 造相(佛)” [H.170; M.382; W25150].

2/8. The Pure Wind (Buddha) 淨風(佛)

The Living Spirit is written as *w'd jywndg* in Parthian, *w'd jywndg* or *w'δ-jywndy* in Sogdian (DMT, vol. 3, pt. 1, 334-35; pt. 2, 233). It is translated as “the Pure Wind (Buddha) 淨風(佛)” [H.170; M.383; W34205; Q.004-005]. “Wenke” and “Baochan” also call it “the Pure Wind God 淨風夷薩” [W26154, B.]. “夷薩 i-sat” [H.157], “夷咤 i-*dz'âi” [X.90], “啜咤 i-*dz'âi” [M.249, 253] are all transliterations of *yzd* [yazad] (god) (DMT, vol. 3, pt. 1, 376-78) in Middle Persian. “Shenji” praises “The Tathagatas of the Pure Wind and the First Reasoning 淨風、先意如來” [L.03].

4/9. The Five Classes of Valiant Sons 五驍健子

The five sons of the Living Spirit are called “Five Valiant Sons Buddha 五曜(驍)健子伏” [W26151] or “Five Valiant Sons 五驍健子” [B.]. They are the Keeper of Splendor, King of Honor, Adamant of Light, King of Glory, and the Porter, also called Atlas.

4/9.1. Envoy of Light Who Upholds the World 持世明使

The Keeper of Splendor is written as *xšyšpt βγw* (?) in Sogdian (DMT, vol. 3, pt. 1, 137-38; pt. 2, 46). *Mani the Buddha of Light* calls him “Venerable Buddha that Holds the World 持世尊佛” [M.189], and “Wenke” and “Baochan” call him “Tathagata that Holds the World 持世如來(伏)” (W26152, B.).

1/9.2. Asamansha 阿薩漫沙

The King of Honor is written as *sm 'nxšyδ* in Sogdian (DMT, vol. 3, pt. 2, 208). *Mani the Buddha of light* reads: “As for the he King of Ten Heavens, his foreign name is Asamansha. This is why the Taoists call him the Jade Sovereign Great Emperor of the Vast Heavens” [M.99-100]. “阿薩漫沙 ?a-sat-muan-ša” is a transliteration of the Middle Persian/Parthian term **sm 'n š'h* [āsmān šāh], meaning “King of Heaven.”

3/9.2 Jade Emperor 玉皇大帝

This deity also borrows the Taoist divine names “Jade Emperor 玉皇大帝” [M.100] and “Jade Emperor Buddha 玉皇尊佛” [M.197].

4/9.2 The King of the Ten Heavens 十天大王

This god is also called as “The Great King of the Ten Heavens 十天大王” [T.110, B.], “The King of the Ten Heavens 十天王” [H.130; M.99], and “The King in the Ten Heavens 十天中王” [W26151].

4/9.3. Victorious Envoy Who Conquers the Demons 降魔勝使

Adamant of Light is written *wšyṃyy βγγy* in Sogdian (borrowed from the Zoroastrian deity Verethragna) (DMT, vol. 3, pt. 2, 243). “Wenke” and “Baochan” refer to it as the “Divine (Victorious) Envoy Who Conquers the Demons 降魔聖(勝)使” [W26152, B.].

3/9.4. Kṣitigarbha 地藏

The King of Glory, known as *z’y spnd’rmt* (Earth Spirit, borrowed from the Zoroastrian deity Spenta Armaiti) in Sogdian (DMT, vol. 3, pt. 2, 274, 209). “Wenke” and “Baochan” refer to it as “Kṣitigarbha God 地藏夷薩” [W26153, B.].

4/9.5. Envoy of Light Who Presses Light 催光明使

The Porter is written as *pδf’ry βγγy* in Sogdian (DMT, vol. 3, pt. 2, 162).² The “Wenke” and “Baochan” refer to it as the “the Great Sacred (Buddha) Who Presses the Light 崔(催)明大聖(伏)” [W26153, B.].

3/10. Avalokiteshvara 觀音

The God of the Call (*xrwštīg* in Parthian and *xrwštīg* in Sogdian) also borrows the name of the Buddhist deity “Avalokiteshvara 觀音” [H.391; M.153, 421; ZS.5, 167; B.].

In order to save the beings of light who were consumed by demons, the Father of Greatness conducted the third evocation.

5. Gods of the Third Evocation

1/11.1 Nalisuoyizai 那哩娑和夷咤

The Third Messenger is referred to as Nēryōsang, borrowing the name from the Zoroastrian deity. It is written as *nrysh yzd* in Middle Persian, *nrysfyzd* in Parthian, and *nr’ysβ yzd* in Sogdian (DMT, vol. 3, pt. 1, 244-45; pt. 2, 149). The term “那哩娑和夷咤 *na-lji-sa-yua i-*dz’āi*” [M.232-233] is a transliteration of the Middle Persian term *nrysh yzd* [narisah yazad].

2/11.2. The Sun-radiance Buddha 日光佛

The Third Messenger is also known by another name, “Sun.” It is written as *myhr (yzd)* in Parthian and *myšyy βγγy* in Sogdian (DMT, vol. 3, pt. 1, 235; pt. 2, 142). The Chinese manuscripts translate it as “The Sun-radiance Buddha 日光佛” [H.170; M.383] or “Radiance of the Sun 日光”, “Great Saint of Sun-radiance 日光大聖” [H.360; M.583, B.].

3/13. Vairocana (Buddha) 盧舍那(佛)

The Column of Glory (Parth. *b’mystwn*) borrows the name of the Buddha “Vairocana.” It is called as “Vairocana (Buddha) 盧舍那(佛)”, “Cana Buddha 舍那佛”, etc. [H.171, 364, 390, 397, 412; M.384, 184, 573, 268; W27159; Z.11; X.160; L.03-04; B.].

4/13. The Diamond-like Column 金剛相柱

This deity is translated in the *Hymnscroll* and *Mani the Buddha of Light* as “Diamond Column 金剛相柱” [H.365; M.184].

2. Some scholars think that *pδf’ry βγγy* should be identified with the King of Glory and *z’y spnd’rmt* with the Porter.

4/D. The Sun and the Moon 日月

The Sun and the Moon combined are called “The Two Luminous Vehicles,” spelled as *rwšn rhy dw* in Middle Persian; or “The Two Vehicles,” spelled as *rhy dw* in Middle Persian and *dw wrdywn* in Parthian (DMT, vol. 3, pt. 1, 369, 224, 295, 143, 344-45). In *Mani the Buddha of Light*, they are referred to as “Sun and Moon Buddhas of Light 日光佛,” “The Great Light-ships 大明船,” etc. [M.180, 179, 340].

1/14.1. Yishuyuhuan 夷數俞桓

Jesus the Splendor, written in Syriac as ܕܘܫܘܝܘܗܘܢ *yšw‘ zywn’*, is written in Parthian as *yyšw‘ zyw’*. “夷數精和 i-šju tsieŋ-γua” [M.233] and “夷數淨和 i-šju dz’ieŋ-γua” [X.43-44, 231] are possibly transliterations of *yyšw‘ zyw’* [yišō‘ zīwā]. “夷數俞桓 i-šju ju-yuan” [W27160] and “夷數伊桓 i-šju ?ji- yuan” [B.] also could be a transliteration of *yyšw‘ zyw’*, but it is closer to *yšw‘ zywn’*.

1/14.1 Jesus 夷數

The Chinese manuscripts name this deity as “Jesus 夷數” [T.204; H.6; M.433; Q.006; W10057; B.]. It is also called “Jesus Buddha 夷數佛” [H.171; M.384]; “Jesus Tathagata 夷數如來” [L.02-03], “Jesus the Buddha of Harmony 夷數和佛” [M.166; X.10; Q.003].

2/14.2. The God of the Moon

Jesus also appears as the God of the Moon, which is written as *m’ḥ* (*yzd*) in Middle Persian, *m’ḥ* (*yzd*) in Parthian, and *m’x* (*βγγγ*) in Sogdian (DMT, vol. 3, pt. 1, 224; pt. 2, 130). “Wenke” and “Baochan” call him as “Moon-light Jesus (Buddha) 月光夷數(伋)” [W28168, B.].

1/15. Jinniluxian 謹你盧訖

The Virgin of Light is written as *knygrwšn* in Middle Persian and Parthian, *qnygrwšn* in Sogdian, and *kāni-rošan tāŋri* in Uyghur (DMT, vol. 3, pt. 1, 206; pt. 2, 115). In *Mani the Buddha of Light*, the name “謹你盧訖 *kjən-ni luo-šjēn*” [M.169] is a transliteration of *knygrwšn* [kanīg rōšn]. Moreover, in that same text and in “Wenke,” the name “訖你 *kjət-ni*” [M.241] or “伋(訖)你” [W10057] is a transliteration of *knyg* [kanīg], which means “virgin.”

2/15. The Angelic Virgin Girl 仙童女

In the *Hymnscroll*, this deity is translated as “the Angelic Virgin Girl 仙童女” [H.369].

3/15. The Lightning Buddha 電光佛

This deity is the god of clouds and rain in Manichaeism. Iranian Manichaeans borrowed the name of the rain god *Satwēs* from Zoroastrianism, and in the Parthian language, this deity is referred to as *sāwys* (DMT, vol. 3, pt. 1, 306). In Chinese, the name is borrowed from Buddhism as “The Lightning Buddha 電光佛” [H.171; M.385; W25146, 28168].

4/15. The Lightning Royal Buddha 電光王佛

In Uyghur, the name is translated into *yašin tāŋri* (deity of lightning). Manuscripts from Xiapu, Pingnan, and Fuqing refer to this deity as “The Lightning Royal Buddha 電光王佛”, etc. [M.171, 209; X.8; L.02; Q.002-003; W.31183, 31185, 32189; Z.38; B.].

1/16.1. Menhumite 門呼弥特

The Light Nous, originated from the Greek term νοῦς. In Parthian and Sogdian, it is referred to as *mnwhmyd rwšn* (DMT, vol. 3, pt. 1, 229; pt. 2, 134). In Xiapu and Pingnan manuscripts, this deity is called “門呼弥特 *muən-yuo-mjiε-d’ək*” [M.241-242; W10057], which is a transliteration of *mnwhmyd* [manōhmēd].

1/16.1. Huominluxian 獲泯嘯詵

This deity also borrows the name of one of the six *Amesha Spentas* in Zoroastrianism, *Wahman*. In Middle Persian, it is written as *whmn* [wahman]. In Xiapu manuscripts, the name is transliterated as “獲泯 *γwak-mjēn*” [X.47, 235; M. 237] or “護泯 *γuo-mjēn*” [M. 233-234]. Another term in Middle Persian and Sogdian is *whmn rwšn* (DMT, vol. 3, pt. 1, 341; pt. 2, 238), which means “Light *Wahman*,” is transliterated in “Danke” as “獲泯嘯詵” [X.44, 231]. “烏盧詵: *uo-luo-šjēn*” [H.157-158], “嘯詵* *luo-*šjēn*” [X.90, 223; M.249, 253; W10056], “盧詵 *luo-*šjēn*” [M.240] are all transliterations of *rwšn* [rōwšn/rōwšan] “Light” in Middle Persian and Parthian (DMT, vol. 3, pt. 1, 300-302).

2/16.1. The Wise Light Buddha 惠明佛

Mani the Buddha of Light praises “The Twelfth, Adornment—Wise Light Buddha 十二者莊嚴惠明佛” [M.385].

1/16.2. He niyunte wa henite 和唎渾雲特喞和唎特

This deity is named *w’d jywndg w’d wjydg* [wād žiwandag ud wižidag] in Parthian (DMT, vol. 3, pt. 1, 65-66, 338). It is transliterated in “Danke” as “和唎渾雲特喞和唎特 *γua *ηzi-yuənliuən-t’ək ?ut γua-*ηzi-t’ək* [X.88].” The name means “the Living and Chosen Spirit.”

4/16.2. Wind of Pure Dharma 淨法風

“Living and Chosen Spirit” is translated as “Pure Law Wind 淨法風,” which appears in some of the Dunhuang manuscripts and *Mani the Buddha of Light* [H.146, 151; T.132; M.407].

2/17.1 The King of Impartiality 平等王

The Great Judge is written as *d’dbr r’stygr* (Righteous Judge) in Parthian and *rštyy xzrw* (Just Judge) in Sogdian (DMT, vol. 3, pt. 1, 133, 293; pt. 2, 198, 257). In Dunhuang manuscripts, it is translated as “The King of Impartiality 平等王” [H.99; T.307]. In Xiapu, Pingnan and Fuqing manuscripts, the deity is called “the Great Emperor of Impartiality 平等大帝” [ZS.179; D. 7, 115; MF.50] or “(the Buddha of) the Great King of Impartiality 平等大王(伏)” [W26151; B.]

3/17.1 Yama 閻羅

In *Mani the Buddha of Light*, this deity is referred to by borrowing the name “Yama,” the lord of the underworld in Buddhism [M.566-567].

6. Messengers

The Light Nous (Light Mind) is the father of all messengers of Light. The primary prophets already held important positions in early Manichaeism, but they were further deified in the Xiapu, Pingnan and Fuqing texts.

3/(3.) The Five Buddhas 五佛

The Xiapu, Pingnan and Fuqing texts borrow the name “Five Buddhas” from Buddhism. The Five Buddhas, in chronological order, are first *Nārāyaṇa* from Hinduism, followed by the four great prophets: Zoroaster, the founder of the Zoroastrianism; Śākyamuni, the founder of Buddhism; Jesus, the founder of Christianity; and Mani, the founder of Manichaeism.

1/(3.1.) Moluo moni 味囉摩尼

In Parthian, Mani is written as *mr m'ny* [mār mānī] (Lord Mani) (DMT, vol. 3, pt. 1, 231-32, 226). In the Xiapu and Pingnan manuscripts, it is transliterated as “味囉摩尼*muat-la mua-ni” [M.242, 244-245; W10056].

2/ (3.1.) Mani the Buddha of Light 摩尼光佛

In *The Compendium*, Mani the Buddha of Light is the respectful name of Mani, who is not a deity; however, in the Xiapu manuscripts, Mani the Buddha of Light along with Jesus and the Lightning Royal King form the Trinity of Manichaeism [M.174-177; X.9; L.01; Q.002]. He is also called “Mani Buddha 摩尼佛” (B.)

3/ (3.1.) King of Immortality 甘露王

“King of Immortality 甘露王” is the name of Amitābha in Buddhism. In *Mani the Buddha of Light*, this title is borrowed to refer to Mani as the “King of Eternal Nectar 长生甘露王” [M.221].

4/(3.2.) Four Great Venerable Buddhas 四大尊佛

The Four Great Venerable Buddhas are *Nārāyaṇa*, Zoroaster, Śākyamuni, and Jesus. They are recognized as Mani’s predecessors.

3/(3.2.1.) *Nārāyaṇa* 那羅延/那羅

The term *nrg'n* in a Sogdian Manichaean text is possibly an inverse spelling of *Nārāyaṇa* (Henning 1947, 50-51, 55) In the *Hymnscroll*, it is claimed that “First One, the Venerable Lord of Light 一者明尊” is authored by *Nārāyaṇa* [H.164]. It is possible that as Manichaeism spread to Central Asia, the Indian *Nārāyaṇa* was absorbed into the religion as one of Mani’s predecessors and subsequently placed at the forefront of the Four Great Venerable Buddhas [M.8, 368, 455, 484, 495, 514, 517, 557, 606, 607, 612] (Ma Xiaohe and Wang Chuan 2021, 169-80).

1/(3.2.2.) Zoroaster 蘇路支/數路

Zoroaster is written as *Zaraθuštra-* in Old Avestan, *zrhwšt* [zarhušt] in Parthian, and *'zr'wšc* in Sogdian (DMT, vol. 3, pt. 1, 384; pt. 2, 276). In Chinese it is transliterated as “蘇路支 suo-luo-teiç” [M.9, 369, 456, 485, 498, 514, 523, 613, 618].

1/ (3.2.3.) Śākyamuni Buddha 釋迦文佛/釋迦

Śākyamuni Buddha is written as *š'qmn bwt* [šāqman but] in Parthian and *š'kymwn pwt* in Sogdian (DMT, vol. 3, pt. 1, 314, 118; pt. 2, 215, 56). In Chinese Manichean text, his name is transliterated as “釋迦文佛 çjek-kjç-mjūøn b'juæt” [M.11, 371, 458, 487, 501, 514, 529, 619, 624] or “Śākyamuni 釋迦牟尼” [B.].

1/ (3.2.4.) Jesus 夷數

Jesus, written as *yšw* in Parthian, is transliterated as “Yishu 夷數” in Chinese. Xiapu, Pingnan and Fuqing manuscripts also refer to him as “Jesus the Buddha of Harmony 夷數和佛” [M.12, 372, 459, 488, 504, 535, 625, 630]

1/ (3.2.4.) Moshihe 末尸訶

In Sogdian, Jesus is also called *mšyh* ‘(Messiah) (DMT, vol. 3, pt. 1, 233; pt. 2, 138), which is transliterated as “末尸訶 *muat-ei-xa*” in *Mani the Buddha of Light* [M.219, 515, 539].

7. Martyrs

1/(4.) George 移活吉思

St. Georgis was originally a Christian martyr. In Sogdian, his name is written as *šyrqty gywrgys* or *yw' rks*. In Xiapu and Pingnan manuscripts, it is transliterated as “移/夷活吉思/師 *ię-yuat-kjēt-si-ši*” (L.13; Q.026-027; W30175). “The Incantation of George 吉思咒” of *Mani the Buddha of Light* [M.312-331] can be regarded as a Chinese summary of the Syriac and Sogdian versions of *The Martyrdom of St. George* (Ma Xiaohe 2016b, 45-75).

8. Guardians

1/ (5.) Jacob 耶俱孚

Jacob is the son of Isaac and the ancestor of the twelve tribes of Israel. In Middle Persian, his name is *y'qwb* [yākōb], and in Sogdian it is *y'kwβ* (DMT, vol. 3, pt. 1, 372; pt. 2, 268). In Dunhuang, Xiapu, and Pingnan manuscripts, it is transliterated as “Yejuifu 耶俱孚 *ja-kju-p'ju*” [H.215; M.398; W11064, 18107, 21123-21124, 28166; X.64].

3/ (6.) Four Heavenly Kings 四天王

Xiapu and Pingnan texts borrow the name of “the Four Heavenly Kings 四天王” from Buddhism to denote the four archangels of Manichaeism [M.104].

1/ (6.1.) Raphael 嚙嚙逸囉

Raphael, written as *rwf'yl* and *rwp'yl* [rufaēl] in Middle Persian and Parthian (DMT, vol. 3, pt. 1, 299), is transliterated as “嚙嚙逸囉 *luo-b'iwak-ĵēt-la*” [X.60] or “Lupoyi 嚙嚙逸” [X.64; M.104-105; 332; W14082, 18105, 19112-19113, B.].

1/ (6.2.) Michael 彌訶逸囉

Michael, written as *myh'yl* [mīhaēl] and *myx'yl* [mīxaēl] in Middle Persian and Parthian, is transliterated as “彌訶逸囉 *mjię-xa-ĵēt-la*” [X.60] or “Miheyi 彌訶逸” [X.65; M.105-106; W14083, 18105, 20115; B.].

1/(6.3.) Gabriel 喋嚙囉逸囉

Gabriel, written as *gbr'yl* [gabraēl] in Middle Persian and Parthian (DMT, vol. 3, pt. 1, 162), is transliterated as “喋嚙囉逸囉 **ŋjēp-b'iwak-la-ĵēt-la*” [X.60] or “Ye[po]luoyi 喋[嚙]囉逸” [X.67; M.333; W14083, 18118; B.].

1/ (6.4.) Səra'el 娑囉逸囉

Səra'el, written as *sr'yl* [saraēl] in Middle Persian and Parthian (DMT, vol. 3, pt. 1, 308), is transliterated as “娑啰逸啰 sa-la-ĵēt-la” [X.60-61] or “Suoluoyi 娑啰逸” [X.68; M.106, 333; W18105, 21121; B.].

In the surviving Middle Persian texts, along with the Four Heavenly Kings, there are also six “messengers of light” whose transliterated names are found in Xiapu and Pingnan texts:

1/ (7.) Esusi 遏素思

'rsws [arsus] (DMT, vol. 3, pt. 1, 53), transliterated as “遏素思? at-suo-si” [M.396; W18106].

1/ (8.) Mosusi 味素思

mrsws [marsus] (DMT, vol. 3, pt. 1, 231), transliterated as “味素思 *muat-suo-si” [M.397].

1/ (9.) Nengesusi 能遏押素思

nrsws [narsus] (DMT, vol. 3, pt. 1, 244), transliterated as “能遏押素思 næg-ʔatʔap-suo-si” and variants [X.148-149, M.89, 139, 397; W18106],

1/ (10.) Nengxitigusi 嚙悉啼响思

nstyqws [nastikūs] (DMT, vol. 3, pt. 1, 245), transliterated as “嚙悉啼响思 *næg-sĵēt-d'iei-kəw-si” and variants [X.149, M.89-90, 139, 397-398; W18106-18107].

1/ (11.) Suolingdusi 波(娑)陵都思

s'ryndws [särendus] (DMT, vol. 3, pt. 1, 306) is transliterated as “波(娑)陵都思 (sa-lĵəŋ-tuo-si” and variants [M.90, 140; X.149; W08048].

1/ (12.) Ahelindusi 阿訶(弗)鄰都思

'hryndws [ahrendus] (DMT, vol. 3, pt. 1, 35) is transliterated as “阿訶(弗)鄰都思 ʔa-xa-lĵən-tuo-si” and variants [W08048-08049, M.90, 140; X.149].

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