

# Eastern Roman Manichaeism

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Entry tags: Roman Manichaeism, Manichaeism, Persian Religions, Early Christianity, Dualist Tradition, Heresy, Religious Group

Mani, the founder of Manichaeism, was born in third-century Mesopotamia (April 14, 216 AD), which, since 226 AD, was a part of the Sassanian Empire. Living in the pluralistic environment of Mesopotamia, the religion he instituted contains elements of many religious traditions with which he was familiar, such as Zoroastrianism, Buddhism, and Christianity. Actually, Mani regarded himself as the last prophet in a long chain of prophets, which included Zoroaster, Buddha, and Christ. The most notable feature of Manichaeism is its dualism. At the foundation of the Manichaean religion lies the doctrine of the two principles (also called roots or natures), which correspond to light and darkness, good and evil, spirit and matter. The Manichaean community itself consisted of two classes: the hearers or catechumens (the lay believers), and the highest echelons of the Manichaean Church, the Elect. Mani envisioned that his religion would surpass preceding ones by creating an ecumenical religion that would spread and unite the world. Indeed, Manichaeism spread very rapidly through land and sea transportation networks, first in the Greco-Roman world (within a century) and later to the east, as far as China. In China, Manichaean communities continued to exist until the seventeenth century. In contrast, to the Roman West, it is argued that (at least as a distinct religious community) Manichaeism did not survive after the 6th century. The current entry focuses on aspects of the religious and social identity and daily life of East-Roman Manichaeans.



Date Range: 300 CE - 600 CE

Region: Eastern Roman Empire (300-600)

Region tags: Middle East, Levant, Egypt, Thrace, Asia Minor, Greece, Syria, Eastern Mediterranean, Southeastern Europe

Late Roman - Early Byzantine Empire (300-600)

## Status of Participants:

✓ Elite    ✓ Religious Specialists    ✓ Non-elite (common people, general populace)

## Sources

Print sources for understanding this subject:

- Source 1: Lieu, S.N.C. 1994. *Manichaeism in Mesopotamia and the Roman East*. RGRW 118. Leiden: Brill.
- Source 2: Gardner, I., and S.N.C. Lieu, eds. 2004. *Manichaean Texts from the Roman Empire*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Source 3: BeDuhn, J.D. 2000. *The Manichaean Body: In Discipline and Ritual*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press.

Online sources for understanding this subject:

- Source 1 URL: <https://www.manichaeism.de/manichaeism/>
- Source 1 Description: The International Association of Manichaean Studies (IAMS)

- Source 2 URL: <https://iranicaonline.org/articles/manicheism-1-general-survey>
- Source 2 Description: Sundermann, W. 2009. "Manicheism (I-IV)." Encyclopaedia Iranica Online
- Source 3 URL: <http://dakhlehoasisproject.com/works/maneecheians/>
- Source 3 Description: Dakhleh Oasis Project

Relevant online primary textual corpora (original languages and/or translations):

- Source 1 URL: <http://stephanus.tlg.uci.edu/>
- Source 1 Description: Thesaurus Linguae Graecae. A Digital Library of Greek Literature. University of California, Irvine
- Source 2 URL: [https://sites.fas.harvard.edu/~iranian/Manicheism/Manicheism\\_II\\_Texts.pdf](https://sites.fas.harvard.edu/~iranian/Manicheism/Manicheism_II_Texts.pdf)
- Source 2 Description: Skjaervø, P.O. 2006. Manichaeism texts II. [Electronic source]
- Source 3 Description: [Hegemonius], Acta Archelai. Edited by C.H. Beeson. 1906. GCS 16. Leipzig: Hinrichs. Translated by M. Vermes with introduction and commentary by S.N.C. Lieu. 2001. Hegemonius: Acta Archelai (The Acts of Archelaus). MS 4. Turnhout: Brepols.

## General Variables

### Membership/Group Interactions

Are other religious groups in cultural contact with target religion:

– Yes



Is the cultural contact competitive:

– Yes

**Notes:** The period we are discussing was a transitional era, during which the passage from the ancient Roman cults to Christianity took place. The final Christian dogma that distinguished 'orthodoxy' from 'heresy' had not yet been formulated. There were several groups claiming to represent the truth of the Christian teaching. Among these, Manichaeism—which presented itself as a higher, more perfect, form of Christianity—was an attractive religious option for Christian neophytes, as well as for pagans. It is testified by both Manichaean and Christian sources that from the end of the third century to the end of the fourth century, public debates between Christians and Manichaeans, or other religious 'deviant' groups, were held (Regarding public debates, see Lim 1995).

**Reference:** R. Lim undefined. Public Disputation, Power, and Social Order in Late Antiquity. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Does the religious group have a general process/system for assigning religious affiliation:

– Yes



Assigned at birth (membership is default for this society):

– I don't know

↳ Assigned by personal choice:

– Yes

↳ Assigned by class:

– No

↳ Assigned at a specific age:

– I don't know

Notes: Although the references are few, there are some anti-Manichaean testimonies that support the argument that one group to which Manichaeism seems to have had a special appeal, were young people. That the young people were one of the target groups of the Manichaean missionary strategy is also testified by the Manichaean testimonies about the recruitment of young Elect. According to the Manichaean sources (from Kellis and Medinet Madi), one of the duties of Manichaean catechumens was to give a child to the community of the Elect (Keph. 80, 192.3–193.22 in Gardner 1995, 201–02. Cf. Gardner and Lieu 2004, 74 & 167).

Reference: Iain Gardner. *The Kephalaia of the Teacher*. BRILL. isbn: 9789004328914.

Reference: Iain Gardner, Samuel N. C. Lieu. *Manichaean Texts from the Roman Empire*. Cambridge University Press. isbn: 9780521568227.

↳ Assigned by gender:

– No

Notes: It is well known that there were women in the movement and that they were able to climb to the rank of the Elect. There are also testimonies supporting the view that Elect Manichaean women participated actively in missionary endeavors (PRylands 3, Gr. 469; Mark the Deacon, *Life of Porphyry of Gaza* 85–91). Yet, although Manichaean women assumed missionary and teaching tasks, it seems that they could not assume any of the grades of the higher Manichaean hierarchy (see Kristionat 2013 and Van Oort 2020, 498–502).

Reference: Johannes van Oort. *The Role of Women in Manichaeism*. (Johannes van Oort, Johannes van Oort, Ed.), *Mani and Augustine: Collected Essays on Mani, Manichaeism and Augustine*. Leiden: Brill. Nag Hammadi and Manichaean Studies 97. isbn: 9789004416956.

Reference: J. Kristionat undefined. *Zwischen Selbstverständlichkeit und Schweigen: Die Rolle der Frau im frühen Manichäismus*. Heidelberg: Verlag Antike. isbn: 9789004416956.

Reference: C. H. Roberts. *Catalogue of the Greek and Latin Papyri in the John Rylands Library*. Manchester: Manchester University Press.

Reference: M.-A Grégoire , H. Kugener. *Marc le Diacre: Vie de Porphyre, évêque de Gaza*. Paris: Les Belles Lettres.

↳ Assigned by participation in a particular ritual:

– Field doesn't know

Notes: Two classes comprised the Manichaean community: the Elect (the highest echelons of the Manichaean Church) and the catechumens or hearers (the lay believers). Both groups had to observe specific (and different in each case) sets of commandments to participate in the religious community. It is very likely that for the former group (Elect) there was also a kind of an initiation ceremony. Yet, up to the present, we don't have any testimonies regarding this ritual.



Assigned by some other factor:

– I don't know

Does the religious group actively proselytize and recruit new members:

– Yes

Notes: Manichaeism was an intensely missionary religion. According to Greek anti-Manichaean sources (pagan & Christian), Manichaean missionaries were very successful in attracting Roman citizens to their movement. Especially the Manichaean influence and propaganda on the ascetic milieu were considered very critical. For the authorities (civil and ecclesiastical), the independent and amorphous groups of ascetics, such as Encratites and Messalians, were likely to be attracted, influenced, and even swallowed up by the highly organized sect of the Manichaeans. Their common practices and outlook were a serious reason for their appeal and possible recruitment by Manichaeans into their movement.

Reference: Rea Matsangou undefined. The 'Children' of the Manichaeans: Wandering Extreme Ascetics in The Roman East Compared. (Johannes van Oort, Ed.), Manichaeism and Early Christianity. Selected Papers from the 2019 Pretoria Congress and Consultation. Leiden: BRILL. Nag Hammadi and Manichaean Studies 99. isbn: 9789004445468.

Does the religion have official political support

– No

Notes: Manichaeans were persecuted by both pagan (Diocletian's rescript in 302) and Christian emperors in the Roman Empire. Indeed, from the available data of both legislative codes (Codex Theodosianus and Codex Justinianus) of the period, it became apparent that Manichaeans were the most harshly persecuted religious group. The only Roman emperor, who is said (by anti-Manichaean authors), that himself was a supporter of the Manichaeans was Anastasius (491-518). It was also said that his mother was "a zealous devotee of theirs" (Theodorus Anagnostes, Historia Ecclesiastica 4.448, 454a; Theophanes, Chronographia 136. See also Evagrius the Scholastic, Historia Ecclesiastica 130.32). However, it is probable that the term 'Manichaean' here is an epithet of opprobrium/abuse since Anastasius was a Monophysite, and Monophysites were labeled as Manichaeans because Monophysite Christology was often associated with Manichaean Docetism. See Diocletian's rescript in Mosaicarum et Romanorum Legum Collatio 15.3 (De maleficis et Manichaeis) (Hyamson 1913, 130-33).

Reference: H. Hyamson undefined. Mosaicarum et Romanorum Legum Collatio. With Introduction, Facsimile and Transcription of the Berlin Codex. London: Oxford University Press.

Reference: Medieval Sourcebook: The Codex Theodosianus: On Religion, 4th Century CE

Is there a conception of apostasy in the religious group:

– Yes

|

- ↳ Are apostates prosecuted or punished:  
– Field doesn't know

## Size and Structure

Number of adherents of religious group within sample region (estimated population, numerical):

- Field doesn't know

Notes: From the sources we have at our disposal it is presumed that the Manichaean ascetic model in the Roman Empire should have been the wandering small conventicula: small groups of Elect surrounded by catechumens. According to Libanius (Epist. 1253), Manichaeans were "found in many places of the world [=Roman Empire] but everywhere they are only few in number".

Reference: Libanius undefined undefined. Libanii opera. Vols. 10-11. Leipzig: Teubner.

Number of adherents of religious group within sample region (% of sample region population, numerical):

- I don't know

Nature of religious group [please select one]:

- Small religious group (actively discouraged-suppressed by larger religious group(s))

Are there recognized leaders in the religious group:

- Yes

Notes: At the top of the pyramid of the Manichaean hierarchy is found the Manichaean archegos/leader. Mani himself was the first archegos of the Manichaean Church. The first two of Mani's successors in the office of the Manichaean leadership were Sisinnius and Innaios. The only Greek anti-Manichaean source that records the whole hierarchical structure of the Manichaean church in detail is the "Seven Chapters contra Manichaeos" of Zacharias of Mytilene. (Seven Chapters 2.51-55 in Richard 1977; English translation and commentary in Lieu 1994 & 2010).

Reference: M. Richard. Iohannis Caesariensis opera quae supersunt. Turnhout: Brepols.

Reference: S.N.C. Lieu. Greek and Latin Sources on Manichaean Cosmogony and Ethics. Turnhout: Brepols.

## Scripture

Does the religious group have scriptures:

Scripture is a generic term used to designate revered texts that are considered particularly authoritative and sacred relative to other texts. Strictly speaking, it refers to written texts, but there are also "oral scriptures" (e.g. the Vedas of India).

- Yes

Notes: According to the Manichaean Kephalaia, one of the ten advantages that made the Manichaean

religion superior to others was that its holy Scriptures were written down and delivered to the Manichaean community by its founder, Mani himself (1Keph. 151, 371.20-30; the ten advantages: 370.16-375.15. Cf. Gardner and Lieu 2004, 265-68, 266). The titles of the books of the Manichaean canon (which varies in number between five and eight books) are (1) The Great Gospel, (2) The Treasury of the Life, (3) The Treatise (Gr: Pragmateia), (4) The Book of the Mysteries, (5) The Book of the Giants, (6) The Epistles (Mani's letters), (7) The Psalms and The Prayers and (8) The Picture-Book (1Keph. 1.5.21-25; Manichaean Homilies 25.1-6 in Gardner and Lieu 2004, 152). After emphasizing the importance of his own writings and listing his books, Mani urged his disciples to record (and preserve) his oral teachings, sermons, lessons. So they did, and a new group of books (such as Kephalaia and Homilies), the sub-canonical Manichaean literature, was formed (1Keph. Introduction 1.1-9.1, Gardner 1995, 10-14). The irony is that from the Manichaean canonical books (attributed to Mani), only a few fragments have survived. So, we know very little about their content. On the contrary, we possess large amounts of sub-canonical writings (written by Mani's followers). Due to the importance that books and the art of book writing had in Manichaean tradition, Manichaeism is characterized as a religion of the book par excellence (Gardner and Lieu 2004, 111; Stroumsa 2004, 648; Tardieu 2008/1981, 33). About the Manichaean scriptures in general see, Tardieu 2009, 31-56; Gardner and Lieu 2004, 151-174. About the use of Manichaean Scriptures and book production in Kellis see Brand 2019, 293-325.

Reference: N.A. Pedersen. Manichaean Homilies: With a Number of Hitherto Unpublished Fragments. (The Manichaean Coptic Papyri in the Chester Beatty Library). Turnhout: Brepols.

Reference: Iain Gardner, Samuel N. C. Lieu. Manichaean Texts from the Roman Empire. Cambridge University Press. isbn: 9780521568227.

Reference: Iain Gardner. The Kephalaia of the Teacher. BRILL. isbn: 9789004328914.

Reference: Michel Tardieu. Manichaeism. University of Illinois Press. isbn: 9780252032783.

Reference: M. Brand. The Manichaeans of Kellis: Religion, Community, and Everyday Life. Leiden: Leiden University.

Reference: G.G. Stroumsa. Esotericism and Mysticism. (S.I. Johnston, Ed.), Religions of the Ancient World. Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press.

↳ Are they written:  
– Yes

↳ Are they oral:  
– I don't know

↳ Is there a story (or a set of stories) associated with the origin of scripture:  
– Yes

↳ Revealed by a high god:  
– No

↳ Revealed by other supernatural being:

– Yes

Notes: Revealed by Mani's Twin, whom Mani identified with the Christian Paraclete, the "Spirit of Truth".

↳ Inspired by high god:

– No

↳ Inspired by other supernatural being:

– Yes

Notes: Inspired by Mani's Twin, whom Mani identified with the Christian Paraclete, the "Spirit of Truth".

↳ Originated from divine or semi-divine human beings:

– No

↳ Originated from non-divine human being:

– Yes

Notes: The Manichaeans claimed that one of the ten advantages that made their religion superior to others was that its holy Scriptures were written down and delivered to the Manichaean community by its founder, Mani himself. (the ten advantages: 1Keph. 151, 370.16–375.15 in Gardner and Lieu 2004, 265–68).

## Architecture, Geography

Is monumental religious architecture present:

– No

Notes: So far, archaeological findings relating to Manichaean churches/monuments in the Roman Empire do not exist. Neither do any Manichaean sources known presently have specific information about this subject.

Are there different types of religious monumental architecture:

– Field doesn't know

Is iconography present:

– Yes

Notes: The Manichaeans decorated their books with miniature-paintings and with the use of calligraphy and illustrations by specialized scribes. One of the books of the Manichaean canon was the Picture-Book.

↳ Where is iconography present [select all that apply]:

—Only religious public space

Notes: In Eastern Manichaeism (see Gulácsi 2005 & 2015)

Reference: Zsuzsanna Gulácsi. *Mani's Pictures*. Brill. isbn: 9789004308947.

Reference: Zsuzsanna Gulácsi. *Mediaeval Manichaean Book Art*. BRILL. isbn: 9789004139947.



Are there distinct features in the religious group's iconography:

— I don't know

## Beliefs

### Burial and Afterlife

Is a spirit-body distinction present:

Answer “no” only if personhood (or consciousness) is extinguished with death of the physical body.

Answering yes does not necessarily imply the existence of Cartesian mind/body dualism, merely that some element of personhood (or consciousness) survives the death of the body.

— Yes

Notes: The Manichaean cosmological dualism also characterizes human beings: both matter (evil) and light (divine) are mixed in humans. According to the Manichaean anthropology, the man was created by the princes/archons of Darkness; yet, since his creation, he has imprisoned in his body light particles. The consequence of the above assumptions is the dichotomy of man, with two conflicting identities. God is the originator of souls, whereas matter is the originator of bodies. Souls are of divine nature and provenance, while the origin of bodies is evil. This, according to anti-Manichaean authors, entailed a polarity between body and soul and disdain of the former. On the polarity between body and soul of the Manichaean anthropology, see Augustine's *Fundamental Epistle* and *Letter to Menoch* in Lieu 2010. For another dimension of the division of man, see Jason D. BeDuhn. 2000. *The Manichaean Body: In Discipline and Ritual*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press.



Spirit-mind is conceived of as having qualitatively different powers or properties than other body parts:

— Yes

Notes: The human soul was conceived as a part of the Living Self/Soul, a deity of the Manichaean pantheon, which is something like the universal soul. The concept of the Living Self is crucial to interpret Manichaean behaviors and attitudes (religious and social). According to the Manichaean sources, the Living Self is spread, divided, and bound in the whole cosmos. Sometimes, it is identified with the Soul of the cosmos, sometimes with Jesus, and it is consubstantial with God. For an overview of the Manichaean pantheon, see M. Tardieu. 2008. *Manichaeism*. Translated by M. B. DeBevoise (Introduction by P. A. Mirecki). Chicago: University of Illinois Press, pp. 75-90. (Original work published 1981).

Belief in afterlife:

— Yes

Notes: The prospects for the afterlife were not the same for all people. The sources discern three classes



of people: The Elect, the catechumens, and the unbelievers (outsiders). The souls of the Elect ascended to heaven (light=primal principle) upon their death, while the souls of the catechumens had to undergo successive reincarnations in catechumens' bodies, to be educated. As the eschatological aim of each individual was the liberation from the "birth-and-death" cycle and the return to the primitive light, reincarnations counted as a punishment. In the worst fate, of course, were the non-Manichaeans (outsiders) who had to "die for all age, bound up within a heap of earth" (Acta Archelai 11.3, Vermes 2001: 55-56; Epiphanius, Panarion 66.30.2).

Reincarnation in this world:

– Yes

Notes: The Manichaean catechumens will undergo further reincarnations

Are there special treatments for adherents' corpses:

– Field doesn't know

Notes: Most likely not. The Manichaean texts describe the body as a corpse, a prison for the soul.

Are co-sacrifices present in tomb/burial:

– I don't know

Are grave goods present:

– I don't know

Are formal burials present:

– I don't know

## Supernatural Beings

Are supernatural beings present:

– Yes

Notes: The Manichaean cosmogonic narrative is a gnostic-type system, known as the system of the "Two Principles and the Three Times". A fundamental/cardinal tenet of the Manichaean theogony is that there are two distinct co-eternal first principles (or natures, or roots): (1) the good (identified with the light, namely the Father of Greatness) and the evil (identified with the darkness and matter, namely the King of Darkness). All started when in 'pre-cosmic' time (First/Early Time) a part of the light principle was captured/swallowed by the evil principle. This led these two separate principles to be mingled, and it inaugurated the beginning of the Second/Middle Time. During the Middle Time, protagonists of the cosmic drama that unfolds in the universe become the great Manichaean divinities whom the Father of Greatness evokes/calls out from himself in three sets/series of calls/emanations, to liberate the captured light. Indicatively, some of the names of these light-gods and goddesses are the following: the Mother of Life, the Primal/First Man, and his five sons (first call). The Living Spirit and his five sons (second call). The Messenger and the Maiden of the Light/Twelve Virgins (third call). During this phase the two principles conducted a series of stratagems on a macrocosmic and microcosmic scale, to gain control of the situation and of the universe; the good trying to free itself from the

mixture, and the evil trying to maintain its sovereignty through the mixture. At the macrocosmic level, the stratagem of the powers/divinities of light was to create the cosmos (from the mixed material, i.e. matter containing divine particles). On the other hand, the stratagem of evil was for the powers/archons of Darkness, to 'engineer' the creation of man. To this end, the son of the King of Darkness (Ashaqlun) and his companion (Nebroel) came together and gave birth to Adam and Eve. Man, like the cosmos, is a product of a mixture of matter with the encapsulated divine element. Finally, the Father of Greatness dispatched Jesus the Splendor to rouse Adam from his Lethe (oblivion). The latter is the last act of the war among the gods, which, hereinafter and until the end of this phase will be continued among men. The Final/Third Time will start when even the last particle of the captured light will return to the Kingdom of Light. Notes: About the Manichaeon pantheon, see Tardieu 2008, 75-90. About the Manichaeon system, see Gardner and Lieu 2004, 8-21. See also the Manichaeon pantheon in the Seven Chapters (Capita vii contra Manichaeos), attributed to Zacharias of Mytilene, ch. 3, and in Acta Archelai 7-13 (=Epiphanius, Panarion 25-31).

Reference: Michel Tardieu. Manichaeism. University of Illinois Press. isbn: 9780252032783.

Reference: Iain Gardner, Samuel N. C. Lieu. Manichaeon Texts from the Roman Empire. Cambridge University Press. isbn: 9780521568227.

Reference: Paul Van Lindt. The Names of Manichaeon Mythological Figures. Otto Harrassowitz Verlag. isbn: 9783447033121.

Reference: Charles Henry Beeson. Hegemonius Acta Archelai. BoD – Books on Demand. isbn: 9783846046913.

Reference: Epiphanius of Salamis. The Panarion of Epiphanius of Salamis, Book II and III. BRILL. isbn: 9789004439665.

↳ A supreme high god is present:

– Yes

Notes: About the Manichaeon pantheon see Tardieu 2008, 75-90. For a collection of primary sources (Greek and Latin) on Manichaeon Cosmogony, see Lieu 2010.

↳ The supreme high god is anthropomorphic:

– No

↳ The supreme high god is a sky deity:

– Yes

↳ The supreme high god is chthonic (of the underworld):

– No

↳ The supreme high god is fused with the monarch (king=high god):

– No

↳ The monarch is seen as a manifestation or emanation of the high god:

– No

↳ The supreme high god is a kin relation to elites:

– No

↳ The supreme high god has another type of loyalty-connection to elites:

– No

↳ The supreme high god is unquestionably good:

– Yes

↳ Other feature(s) of supreme high god:

– Yes [specify]: The supreme high god is identified with both the light and the good, and is eternal.

Notes: The Manichaeans believed that there are two distinct co-eternal principles: the good (identified with the light) and the evil (identified with darkness and matter). In 'pre-cosmic' time they combated each other and as a consequence of this was their mixture at both cosmological and anthropological levels.

↳ The supreme high god has knowledge of this world:

– I don't know

↳ The supreme high god has deliberate causal efficacy in the world:

– I don't know

↳ The supreme high god has indirect causal efficacy in the world:

– Yes

↳ The supreme high god exhibits positive emotion:

– Yes

↳ The supreme high god exhibits negative emotion:

– No

↳ The supreme high god possesses hunger:

– No

↳ Is it permissible to worship supernatural beings other than the high god:  
– Yes

↳ The supreme high god possesses/exhibits some other feature:  
– I don't know

↳ The supreme high god communicates with the living:  
– No

↳ Previously human spirits are present:  
– I don't know

↳ Non-human supernatural beings are present:  
– Yes

↳ These supernatural beings can be seen:  
– I don't know

↳ These supernatural beings can be physically felt:  
– I don't know

↳ Non-human supernatural beings have knowledge of this world:  
– I don't know

↳ Non-human supernatural beings have deliberate causal efficacy in the world:  
– I don't know

↳ These supernatural beings have indirect causal efficacy in the world:  
– I don't know

↳ These supernatural beings exhibit positive emotion:  
– Yes

Notes: One of them, the Soul or Living Self is identified with one dimension of the Manichaeian Jesus (The Kephalaia of the Teacher 63.156.29-30). The psalms that the Manichaeian believers chanted in their congregations often speak in the voice of the Living Self, encouraging them to imitate their divine archetypes in the battle against the archons of Darkness. For more sources on the Living Self, cf. BeDuhn 2000, esp. 72-88.

Reference: Jason David BeDuhn. The Manichaeian Body: In Discipline and Ritual. Baltimore: JHU Press.

Reference: Iain Gardner. The Kephalaia of the Teacher. BRILL. isbn: 9789004328914.

↳ These supernatural beings exhibit negative emotion:

– I don't know

↳ These supernatural beings possess hunger:

– I don't know

↳ These supernatural beings possess/exhibit some other feature:

– I don't know

↳ Does the religious group possess a variety of supernatural beings:

– Yes

↳ Organized by kinship based on a family model:

– No

↳ Organized hierarchically:

– Yes

Notes: The divine beings of the Manichaeian pantheon were classified into ten groups. The classification followed “a kind of descent in the divine hierarchy from the eternal realm to the present and immediate” (Gardner 2011, 247).

Reference: I. Gardner undefined. Manichaeian Ritual Practice at Ancient Kellis: A New Understanding of the Meaning and Function of the So-Called Prayer of the Emanations. 'In Search of Truth': Augustine, Manichaeism and Other Gnosticism. Studies for Johannes Van Oort at Sixty. Leiden: Brill. isbn: 978-90-04-19579-0.

↳ Power of beings is domain specific:

– I don't know

↳ Other organization for pantheon:

– I don't know

## Supernatural Monitoring

Is supernatural monitoring present:

This refers to surveillance by supernatural beings of humans' behaviour and/or thought particularly as it relates to social norms or potential norm violations.

– I don't know

Do supernatural beings mete out punishment:

– I don't know

– I don't know

Do supernatural beings bestow rewards:

– Yes

↳ Is the cause/purpose of supernatural rewards known:

– I don't know

↳ Supernatural rewards are bestowed out in the afterlife:

– Yes

↳ Supernatural rewards in the afterlife are highly emphasized by the religious group:

– Yes

↳ Reward in the afterlife consists of mild sensory pleasure:

– No

↳ Reward in the afterlife consists of extreme sensory pleasure:

– No

↳ Reward in the afterlife consists of eternal happiness:

– Field doesn't know

↳ Reward in the afterlife consists of reincarnation as a superior life form:

– Yes

Notes: This applies to the class of the Manichaean catechumens. Yet, reincarnation in the Manichaean system counted as a form of punishment.

↳ Reward in the afterlife consists of reincarnation in a superior realm:

– No

Notes: The Elect Manichaeans after their death were rewarded with their ascent to the Kingdom of Glory (Light). However, this does not count as reincarnation.

↳ Other [specify]

— Yes

Notes: The souls of the Elect returned back into the peaceful kingdom of Light.

↳ Supernatural rewards are bestowed out in this lifetime:

— No

### Messianism/Eschatology

Are messianic beliefs present:

— Yes

### Norms and Moral Realism

Are general social norms prescribed by the religious group:

— Yes

Notes: There were very specific and strict codes of behavior and rules for everyday life. The most discussed commands in both Manichaean and anti-Manichaean literature are the so-called “three seals” (particularly applicable to the Elect), which are: “the seal of the mouth”, which means fasting; “the seal of the breast”, which bans marriage and procreation; “the seal of the hands”, the command to avoid injury to the Living Self. The catechumens had to observe two other sets of commandments. The first set comprised fasting (only on lord’s day), prayer (to the sun and the moon), and alms-giving to the Elect; the second set obliged them (1) to ‘offer’ someone to the service of the church (e.g. a child, a relative) and (2) to construct or donate church edifices (Kephalaia 79, 80).

Reference: Iain Gardner. The Kephalaia of the Teacher. BRILL. isbn: 9789004328914.

Is there a conventional vs. moral distinction in the religious group:

— I don’t know

## Practices

### Membership Costs and Practices

Does membership in this religious group require celibacy (full sexual abstinence):

— Yes

Notes: One of the main commands that the Manichaean Elect had to observe was “the seal of the breast”, which banned marriage and procreation (see Gardner 1995, 201-202).

Reference: Iain Gardner. The Kephalaia of the Teacher. BRILL. isbn: 9789004328914.

Does membership in this religious group require constraints on sexual activity (partial sexual abstinence):

– Yes

Notes: Sexual activity was allowed for the catechumens, but the Manichaean Elect discouraged them from having sex during the fertile days. (Augustine, De moribus Manichaeorum/The Morals of the Manichaeans 18.65)



Monogamy (males):

– I don't know



Monogamy (females):

– I don't know



Other sexual constraints (males):

– Yes



Other sexual constraints (females):

– Yes

Does membership in this religious group require castration:

– No

Does membership in this religious group require fasting:

– Yes

Notes: The Manichaean fasting also called “the seal of the mouth” was obligatory for the Elect. The catechumens had to fast only on lord’s day. For Manichaean sources on fasting cf. 1Keph. 79: Concerning the Fasting of the Saints (Gardner 1995, 200); 1Keph. 80: The Commandments of Righteousness (Gardner 1995, 201-02); 1Keph. 81: The chapter of fasting, for it engenders a Host of Angels (Gardner 1995, 202-05).

Reference: Iain Gardner. The Kephalaia of the Teacher. BRILL. isbn: 9789004328914.

Does membership in this religious group require forgone food opportunities (taboos on desired foods):

– I don't know

Does membership in this religious group require permanent scarring or painful bodily alterations:



– No

Does membership in this religious group require painful physical positions or transitory painful wounds:

– No

Does membership in this religious group require sacrifice of adults:

"Adults" here referring to an emic or indigenous category; if that category is different from the popular Western definition of a human who is 18-years-old or older and who is legally responsible for his/her actions, then please specify that difference in the Comments/Sources: box below.

– No

Does membership in this religious group require sacrifice of children:

"Children" here referring to an emic or indigenous category; if that category is different from the popular Western definition, please specify that different in the Comments/Sources: box below.

– No

Does membership in this religious group require self-sacrifice (suicide):

– No

Notes: On the contrary, Manichaeans rejected blood-martyrdom as well as suicide as a means for the purification of the Living Self from Matter. According to Alexander of Lycopolis, one of the main Manichaean tenets dictated, "One should not, by committing suicide, bring about an artificial purification of the stains inflicted upon the power by the admixture of matter" (Alexander of Lycopolis, *Tractatus de placitis Manichaeorum* 4).

Reference: A. Brinkmann. *Tractatus de placitis Manichaeorum*. Leipzig: Teubner.

Reference: J. Mansfeld undefined, P.W. van der Horst. *An Alexandrian Platonist Against Dualism: Alexander of Lycopolis' Treatise 'Critique of the Doctrines of Manichaeus'*. Leiden: Brill.

Does membership in this religious group require sacrifice of property/valuable items:

– Yes

Notes: This applies to Elect Manichaeans

Does membership in this religious group require sacrifice of time (e.g., attendance at meetings or services, regular prayer, etc.):

– Yes

Does membership in this religious group require physical risk taking:

– No

Does membership in this religious group require accepting ethical precepts:

– Yes

Does membership in this religious group require marginalization by out-group members:

– I don't know

Does membership in this religious group require participation in small-scale rituals (private, household):

– Yes

Notes: The Manichaeans (within the Roman Empire) used to gather in private houses for their religious purposes. The domestic setting of Manichaean churches is supported by the sources we have at our disposal so far. So, in their congregation participated small groups of Elect surrounded by catechumens.

Reference: J.D. BeDuhn. The Domestic Setting of Manichaean Cultic Associations in Roman Late Antiquity. *Archiv für Religionsgeschichte*, 10(1)



What is the average interval of time between performances (in hours):

Performances here refers to small-scale rituals.

– I don't know

Does membership in this religious group require participation in large-scale rituals:

i.e. involving two or more households; includes large-scale “ceremonies” and “festivals.”

– Yes

Notes: The most important grand annual festival of the Manichaean calendar was the Bema, which was celebrated during the Christian period of Easter and commemorated Mani's martyrdom. (About the Bema festival and the great confession see BeDuhn 2010, 332)

Reference: Jason BeDuhn. *Augustine's Manichaean Dilemma*, Volume 1. University of Pennsylvania Press. isbn: 9780812242102.



On average, for large-scale rituals how many participants gather in one location:

– I don't know



What is the average interval of time between performances (in hours):

Performances here refers to large-scale rituals.

– I don't know



Are there orthodoxy checks:

Orthodoxy checks are mechanisms used to ensure that rituals are interpreted in a standardized way, e.g. through the supervisory prominence of a professionalized priesthood or other system of

governance, appeal to texts detailing the proper interpretation, etc.

– I don't know



Are there orthopraxy checks:

Orthopraxy checks are mechanisms used to ensure that rituals are performed in a standardized way, e.g. through the supervisory prominence of a professionalized priesthood or other system of governance, appeal to texts detailing the proper procedure, etc.

– Field doesn't know



Does participation entail synchronic practices:

– I don't know



Is there use of intoxicants:

– I don't know

Are extra-ritual in-group markers present:

E.g. special changes to appearance such as circumcision, tattoos, scarification, etc.

– I don't know

Does the group employ fictive kinship terminology:

– Yes



Fictive kinship terminology universal:

– Yes



Fictive kinship terminology widespread:

– Yes



Fictive kinship terminology employed but uncommon:

– No

## Society and Institutions

### Levels of Social Complexity

The society to which the religious group belongs is best characterized as (please choose one):

– An empire

## Welfare

Does the religious group in question provide institutionalized famine relief:

– Yes

Notes: The catechumen Manichaeans were obliged by the religion's commandments to feed the Elect Manichaeans. One of the three primary duties of the catechumens was daily almsgiving to the Elect (1Keph. 80, in Gardner 1995, 202).

Reference: Iain Gardner. *The Kephalaia of the Teacher*. BRILL. isbn: 9789004328914.

Is famine relief available to the group's adherents through an institution(s) other than the religious group in question:

– No

Does the religious group in question provide institutionalized poverty relief:

– Field doesn't know

Is poverty relief available to the group's adherents through an institution(s) other than the religious group in question:

– No

Does the religious group in question provide institutionalized care for the elderly and infirm:

– Field doesn't know

Is institutionalized care for the elderly and infirm available to the group's adherents through an institution(s) other than the religious group in question:

– No

## Education

Does the religious group provide formal education to its adherents:

– No

Notes: From the sources available so far, it does not seem that the religious group provided an institutionalized or formal kind of education. Nevertheless, from the letters found at Ismant el-Kharab (ancient Kelis) of Egypt (written probably in the 350s), we learn that the children of the catechumen Manichaeans, who were intended to become Elect, had to study daily Manichaean books such as the Psalms, and practice writing, reading and singing psalms. (P. Kell. v Copt. 19: A father instructs his young son, no 93 in Gardner and Lieu 2004, 272-275, 273-274).

Reference: I. Gardner. *A Letter from the Teacher: Some Comments on Letter Writing and the Manichaean Community of IVth Century Egypt*. (L. Painchaud, P.H. Poirier, Ed.), *Coptica, Gnostica, Manichaica: Mélanges offerts à Wolf-Peter Funk*. Leuven: Peeters.

Reference: M. Brand undefined. The Manichaeans of Kellis: Religion, Community, and Everyday Life. Leiden: Leiden University.

Reference: Iain Gardner, Samuel N. C. Lieu. Manichaean Texts from the Roman Empire. Cambridge University Press. isbn: 9780521568227.

Is formal education available to the group's adherents through an institution(s) other than the religious group:

— Field doesn't know

### **Bureaucracy**

Do the group's adherents interact with a formal bureaucracy within their group:

— Field doesn't know

Do the group's adherents interact with other institutional bureaucracies:

— Yes

Notes: As citizens of the Roman empire, they had to interact with Roman institutional bureaucracies.

### **Public Works**

Does the religious group in question provide public food storage:

— Yes

Notes: The catechumens were obliged to feed the Elect on a daily basis. (1Keph. 80, Gardner 1995, 202)

Reference: Iain Gardner. The Kephalaia of the Teacher. BRILL. isbn: 9789004328914.

Is public food storage provided to the group's adherents by an institution(s) other than the religious group in question:

— No

Does the religious group in question provide water management (irrigation, flood control):

— Field doesn't know

Is water management provided to the group's adherents by an institution(s) other than the religious group in question:

— Yes

Does the religious group in question provide transportation infrastructure:

— No

Is transportation infrastructure provided for the group's adherents by an institution(s) other than the religious group in question:

— Yes

## **Taxation**

Does the religious group in question levy taxes or tithes:

— Yes

Are taxes levied on the group's adherents by an institution(s) other than the religious group in question:

— Yes

## **Enforcement**

Does the religious group in question provide an institutionalized police force:

— No

Do the group's adherents interact with an institutionalized police force provided by an institution(s) other than the religious group in question:

— Yes

**Notes:** Since the Manichaeans were a persecuted religious group, they had to confront civil and religious authorities of the Roman empire. In repressing the Manichaeans, the Roman state proved to be surprisingly innovative by constituting for the first time in Roman law a specific body of inquisitors (CTh 16.5.9 in 382) for tracking down Manichaeans (382). According to a later law (CTh 16.5.43 in 407; Sirm. 12 in 408), the body of prosecution was comprised of the local bishops and three agentes in rebus (agents of the secret services).

**Reference:** P. R. Coleman-Norton. Roman State & Christian Church Volume 2. Wipf and Stock Publishers. isbn: 9781725255654.

Does the religious group in question provide institutionalized judges:

— Field doesn't know

Do the group's adherents interact with an institutionalized judicial system provided by an institution(s) other than the religious group in question:

— Yes

**Notes:** The inquisitors or agentes in rebus had to report the detected Manichaeans to the governors who acted as judges of the provinces. The detected Manichaeans were brought to trial before the courts (see, for instance, CTh 16.5.9 in 382).

**Reference:** P. R. Coleman-Norton. Roman State & Christian Church Volume 2. Wipf and Stock Publishers. isbn: 9781725255654.

Does the religious group in question enforce institutionalized punishment:

– Field doesn't know

Are the group's adherents subject to institutionalized punishment enforced by an institution(s) other than the religious group in question:

– Yes

Notes: From the available data of both legislative codes (CTh and CJ), it became apparent that Manichaeans were the most harshly persecuted religious group.



Do the institutionalized punishments include execution:

– Yes

Notes: Diocletian was the first that decreed the death penalty for the Manichaeans. According to his rescript (302), the Manichaean leaders, with their books, had to be burnt; their adherents who would not recant were also put to death (cf. Gardner and Lieu 2004, 116-118). Under the Christian emperors, a law attributed to Anastasius or Zeno (510 or 487 respectively), is considered to be the first law that imposed the death penalty on Manichaeans. For the laws of Justinian that follow in the CJ, the death penalty for the Manichaean “wherever on earth appearing” (CJ 1.5.12.3) was the only option. Manichaeism is the first and perhaps the only ‘heresy’ for which the death penalty was prescribed.

Reference: Iain Gardner, Samuel N. C. Lieu. *Manichaean Texts from the Roman Empire*. Cambridge University Press. isbn: 9780521568227.

Reference: Moses Hyamson. *Mosaicarum Et Romanarum Legum Collatio*. with Introduction, Facsimile and Transcription of the Berlin Codex, Translation, Notes Ad Appendices. / By Rev. H. Hyamsom. Franklin Classics Trade Press. isbn: 9780344594649.

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Reference: T. Mommsen , P. M. Meyer. *Codex Theodosianus*. Berlin: Weidmann.

Reference: P. Kruger. *Corpus Iuris Civilis II: Codex Justinianus*. Berlin: Weidmann.



Do the institutionalized punishments include exile:

– Yes

Notes: Laws of exile appeared already from the first anti-Manichaean laws (under the reign of Theodosius I and II) and followed an escalated trajectory. Manichaeans were firstly exiled from the metropolises (CTh 16.10.24; CTh 16.5.62), then from all the cities either big or small (CTh 16.5.64; CTh 16.5.65.2), and finally “from the whole world” (NVal. 18).

Reference: P.R Coleman-Norton R. *Roman State and Christian Church. A Collection of Legal Documents to A.D. 535*. 3 vols.. London: SPCK.



Do the institutionalized punishments include corporal punishments:

– Field doesn't know

Notes: Yet, forced labor in the mines, which was one of the institutionalized punishments against Manichaeans, can be considered corporal punishment.

Reference: Moses Hyamson. *Mosaicarum Et Romanarum Legum Collatio*. with Introduction, Facsimile and Transcription of the Berlin Codex, Translation, Notes Ad Appendices. / By Rev. H. Hyamsom. Franklin Classics Trade Press. isbn: 9780344594649.

↳ Do the institutionalized punishments include ostracism:

— No

Notes: Not exactly, as the term 'ostracism' is referred to in the context of the Athenian democracy. However, in the Roman legislation (of the period) the combination of exile, property penalties, and the parallel deprivation of Roman citizenship (all applied to Manichaeans) all coexist in the severe form of exile which is called 'deportatio' (CTh 16.5.40).

↳ Do the institutionalized punishments include seizure of property:

— Yes

Notes: The Roman law deprived the Manichaeans of the right that all Roman citizens had to inherit, bequeath, transfer or donate their property, except when it would pass into non-Manichaean hands (CTh. 16.5.7). Besides, Manichaeans were forbidden to buy, to sell, to make contracts. Any property found in the hands of Manichaeans had to be confiscated (CTh 16.5.40). The Roman policy of infamia deprived Manichaeans of the right to own property.

Reference: P. R. Coleman-Norton. *Roman State & Christian Church Volume 2*. Wipf and Stock Publishers. isbn: 9781725255654.

Reference: P. R. Coleman-Norton. *Roman State & Christian Church Volume 1*. Wipf and Stock Publishers. isbn: 9781725255647.

Does the religious group in question have a formal legal code:

— No

Notes: As a persecuted minority-religious group, they did not have a formal legal code. Yet, the Manichaean beliefs entailed very specific and strict codes of behavior and rules for everyday life. The most discussed commands in both Manichaean and anti-Manichaean literature are the so-called "three seals" (particularly applicable to the Elect), which are: "the seal of the mouth" which means fasting; "the seal of the breast" which bans marriage and procreation; "the seal of the hands" the command to avoid injury to the Living Self (see 1Keph. 79-81; 2PsB 115.28-116.16-18).

Reference: Iain Gardner. *The Kephalaia of the Teacher*. BRILL. isbn: 9789004328914.

Reference: C.R.C. Allberry. *A Manichaean Psalm-Book: Part II (Manichaean Manuscripts in the Chester Beatty Collection)*. Stuttgart: Kohlhammer.

Are the group's adherents subject to a formal legal code provided by institution(s) other than the religious group in question:

— Yes

Notes: Roman Manichaeans were subjected to the laws promulgated by the Roman State.



## Warfare

Does religious group in question possess an institutionalized military:

– No

Do the group's adherents participate in an institutionalized military provided by institution(s) other than the religious group in question:

– Yes

Notes: Athanasius of Alexandria's testimony (Athanasius, *Apologia de fuga sua* 6-7; Athanasius, *Historia Arianorum* §59-63, pp. 216-18 and §70.3-73.2, pp. 221-23), that the Manichaean Sebastian was a high-ranking commissioner in the Roman army, has been challenged by some researchers since the Manichaean doctrine was against the taking of any form of life (Lieu 1994, 102-03). However, it seems reasonable to guess that a Roman citizen, who became a Manichaean catechumen, would not have any reservation for serving in the army, regardless of how high-ranked he was. Besides, the view that there were indeed Manichaeans in the imperial military service is further supported by the Roman imperial legislation. According to the CJ (1.5.16.1), officials in the army were asked "to investigate whether anyone among them" was a Manichaean, "and to reveal him when found" to the authorities.

Reference: H.-G. Opitz. *Athanasius Alexandrinus Werke*, vol. 2.1 (*Historia Arianorum*: pp. 183-230). Berlin: de Gruyter.

Reference: J.M. Szymusiak. *Athanase d'Alexandrie: Apologie à l'empereur Constance: Apologie pour sa fuite*. Paris: Éditions du Cerf.

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Are the group's adherents protected by or subject to an institutionalized military provided by an institution(s) other than the religious group in question:

– No

## Written Language

Does the religious group in question possess its own distinct written language:

– Yes

Reference: Desmond Durkin-Meisterernst *MANICHEAN SCRIPT*

Is a non-religion-specific written language available to the group's adherents through an institution(s) other than the religious group in question:

– I don't know

Is a non-religion-specific written language used by the group's adherents through an institution(s) other than the religious group in question:

– I don't know

## Calendar

Does the religious group in question possess a formal calendar:

– Yes

Reference: Werner Sundermann FESTIVALS ii. MANICHEAN

Is a formal calendar provided for the group's adherents by an institution(s) other than the religious group in question:

– No

## Food Production

Does the religious group in question provide food for themselves:

– Yes



Please characterize the forms/level of food production [choose all that apply]:

– Gathering

– Small-scale agriculture / horticultural gardens or orchards

– Other [specify in comments]

– I don't know

Notes: The "seal of the hands" was a command forbidding the Elect Manichaeans from being preoccupied with the gathering, procurement, and preparation of food. So, according to the Manichaean normative code of behavior, the production of food (at all levels) was a task laid upon the catechumen Manichaeans. One of the three primary duties of the catechumens was to feed the Elect daily.

Reference: Iain Gardner. The Kephalaia of the Teacher. BRILL. isbn: 9789004328914.

Is food provided to the group's adherents by an institution(s) other than the religious group in question:

– No

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