

## Mani's Living Gospel A New Approach to the Arabic and Classical New Persian Testimonia

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In order to reconstruct the contents of the most famous work of Mani, *Living Gospel* (written originally in Syriac), we have to use the Arabic and Classical New Persian texts containing accounts and even indirect quotations of this book. One of the most remarkable points in these accounts is that they clearly show that an important part of the *Living Gospel* contains the Manichaean "Myth of the Creation," the topic which is usually supposed to have no relation with Mani's *Gospel*. The Coptic Manichaean *Synaxeis* also supports the hypothesis that there were thematically some basic similarities between the *Living Gospel* and the *Ewangelyōnīg* hymns. According to the Arabic and Classical New Persian sources, some of the more important subject matters of Mani's *Gospel* were the Land of the Light and of the Darkness, the Mixture and process of the *liberatio* of the Aeons. These are some of the themes in Mani's *Gospel* that can also be seen in the *Ewangelyōnīg* hymns. In this article, some of the previous interpretations in this regard have been critically analyzed and challenged.

**Keywords:** Islamic accounts, Mani's Gospel, *Ewangelyōnīg* hymns, Arabic and New Persian Testimoniess

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### Introduction

Thanks to A. Afshar-Shirazi, who has collected 194 Arabic and New Persian texts as supplements to the well-known work of S. H.

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Taqizadeh (1956), we have twenty-two Islamic works mentioning Mani's *Living Gospel* and occasionally presenting its contents. Among them, however, I chose fourteen of the most important attestations. All of these have recently been presented in Reeves (2011),<sup>3</sup> in addition to four other accounts, which are of vital importance to this study (the quotations III-V of 'Abd al-Jabbar and IX of Marwazi that will follow).<sup>4</sup> After this short introduction, my commentaries following the testimonies will rather deal with the contents of the *Living Gospel* reflected in the Islamic world.

**Testimonies**

I. Al-Ya'qubi (d. 897/8) (1883, I, 181.9; Afshar-Shirazi 1956, 104):

“And among those (books) which he (Mani) composed was his book which he named *Treasure of Life* . . . and a book which he named *Book of Guidance and Organization*<sup>5</sup> and twelve <read twenty-two> ‘gospel(s)’, naming each gospel by a letter of the alphabet, (in which) he spoke of prayer, and what one must necessarily do for the redemption of the soul” (Reeves 2011, 90).<sup>6</sup>

II. al-Mas'udi (c. 896-956) (1967, 135.10-13; Flügel 1969, 356-357; Afshar-Shirazi 1956, 134):

“And the Manichaean Companion says that he (Mani) is the Paraclete,<sup>7</sup> the one whom Christ promised (would come) and<sup>8</sup> Mānī

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3. Unfortunately some of Reeves' translations are not entirely accurate.

4. Among the Islamic sources which mention Mani's *Gospel*, Ibn al-Nadim's account (See De Blois [2005, 37 ff.]) is among the most comprehensive ones, but unfortunately lacking both the word “Gospel” and the book's title, just as is the case with Augustine in the West, while both have presented the most valuable information about Manichaeism; See Schmidt-Polotsky (1933, 36 [37]). Did, therefore, Ibn Nadim not know about Mani's *Gospel*? This is hard to believe, at least for the reason that it was he himself who offered in his *al-Fihrist* a long list of Mani's treatises and epistles as well as another list of the content of the *Book of Mysteries*. So, how is it possible that *al-Fihrist*, in which the most detailed information is preserved, makes no mention of the *Gospel*? Perhaps the matter is related to the poor state of preservation of the manuscript and due to gaps between damaged *folia* (See Ibn al-Nadim [1970, xxiii-xxxiv]). But I would like to point out that in the description of some of Mani's writings there are lacunae in this part of the book. In fact, the extant manuscripts of Ibn al-Nadim are lacunose where we would expect to find a synopsis of their chapters. I agree with Reeves (2011, 109 no. 163) that “it is quite possible that [the] *Gospel* is actually the intended referent.” The *Kanz al-ahyā'* in *al-Fihrist* is without a doubt the *Treasure of Life* (cf. Testimonies I and VIII, below), not the *Gospel* (But see Reck [2013, 172]). Anyway, one can unfortunately gain no information from this so important source about Mani's *Gospel*.

5. Unknown.

6. Slightly altered.

7. Or “According to the Manichaean Companion, he (Mani) is the Paraclete.” Reeves' translation (2011, 90): “And the doctrine of the Manichaean sect holds him (Mani) to be the Paraclete.”

speaks of this in his *Gospel*<sup>9</sup> and in his book which was translated as *Shāburaqān*, and in the *Book of Mysteries*,<sup>10</sup> as well as the rest of his writings” (Reeves 2011, 91).<sup>11</sup>

III. ‘Abd al-Jabbar (935-1025) [a] (‘Abd al-Jabbar 1966, 114.13-15, *apud ibid.* 95):

“But you surely know that Mānī the priest claims precision about Christ that he (claims to be) among his followers that no one follows his (Christ’s) religious laws and injunctions except for he (Mani) and his followers, and that the *Gospel* which he has is his (Christ’s) gospel” (Ibid.).

IV. ‘Abd al-Jabbar [b] (‘Abd al-Jabbar 1966, 184.13-14, *apud ibid.* 96):

“But nevertheless they (the Manichaeans) claim that they are followers of Christ and of the religion of Christ, and that the *Gospel* which they possess is the authentic one. The one which you (Christians) possess is inferior” (Ibid.).

V. ‘Abd al-Jabbar [c] (‘Abd al-Jabbar 1966, 184.13-14, *apud ibid.* 101):

“As Mānī says in first part of the *Shāburaqān*:<sup>12</sup> ‘The Ruler of the Word of Light is in all of His land: nothing is devoid of Him, and He is both visible and concealed. He has no end apart from where His land ends at the land of His foe.’”

VI. Biruni (973-1048) [a] (Biruni 1878 [=1923], 23.9-15; Afshar-Shirazi 1956, 200-201; Reeves 2011, 96; cf. Kessler 1889, 206-207):

“And each one of the sects of Marcion and of Bardaiṣan possesses a gospel whose parts disagree with parts of those (other) gospels. The adherents of Mānī have a separate *Gospel*, filled from beginning to end with differences from the Christian (version), but they adhere to

8. Added by me, as can be seen in the Arabic text.

9. In the text, as الجبله *lǧblh*, a corruption of انجيله *ngylyh* “his Gospel.” Browder (1988, 25) translates it as follows: “The sage Mani related in Chapter A of his *Gospel* ...” Due to mistakes in copying Arabic manuscripts which mentioned Mani’s writings, some scholars thought that Mani had a book entitled *al-Ġib(i)lah* “the Nature,” one of Mani’s lost work. In the Arabic manuscripts, these forms occur as follows: الجبله (*l-ǧblh*), حبله (*hylh*), الحبله (*l-hylh*), الحبله (*l-hblh*), الخليه (*l-xlyh*), حله (*hl(h)*).

10. In the text, the “*Book of Books*,” which is clearly a corruption of the *Book of Mysteries*.

11. Slightly altered, see the previous footnotes.

12. Cf. Shahrestani (text X below) and Ibn al-Murtadha [b] (text XII below).

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these faithfully and say that it is correct and that it is in conformity with the one by Christ and the one which He brought. Any other one is false and those who would follow such are mistaken about Christ. There is copy of it<sup>13</sup> called the *Gospel of the Seventy* which is attributed to Balāmīs [rather *bl'ms*].<sup>14</sup> It begins by saying that <Salām b.><sup>15</sup> ‘Abdallāh b. Salām wrote it down at the dictation of Salmān al-Fārsī [Salmān the Persian/the Iranian]. Whoever examines it will easily see that it is a forgery; neither the Christian nor anyone else acknowledges it. Thus one finds there are no gospels informed by the writings of the prophets upon whom one might rely” (Reeves 2011, 96; cf. Puech 1991, 380; Klimkeit 1998, 203).

**VII.** Biruni [b] (1878 [=1923], 207-209.18-21; Afshar-Shirazi 1956, 204):

“‘I (am) Mani, the Apostle of the God of truth in the land of Babylon.’ And he says in his *Gospel* – which he compiled following each letter of the twenty-two letters of the *abjad* alphabet – that he is ‘the Paraclete’ announced by Christ and that he is ‘the Seal of the Prophets’<sup>16</sup> and the stories about the coming into existence and condition of the world are inconsistent with what results from empirical evidence and proofs. He (Mani) invoked the realm of the Worlds of Light, Primal Man, and the Living Spirit. He said (that) Light and Darkness were without beginning and uncreated.” (Reeves 2011, 97; *ibid.* 201; Epiphanius of Salamis 1985, 34, footnote on ll. 2 ff.)

**VIII.** Biruni [c] (1878 [=1923], 208.13-15; Afshar-Shirazi 1956, 205):

“He composed many books such as his *Gospel*, the *Shāburaqān*, the *Treasure of Life*, the *Book of Giants*, the *Book of Mysteries*, and numerous (other) treatises. He said in it <sup>(sic)</sup> that he explained what Christ had said as a mystery” (Reeves 2011, 93).

**IX.** Marwazi (1056/57–1124/25), *Ṭabā’i’ al-ḥayawān* (MS. UCLA Ar. 52 fol. 5b.19-21, as published by Kruk, “Marwazī,” 65. *Apud ibid.* 97):

13. “It is doubtful whether Biruni is still speaking of Mani’s *Gospel*, but some scholars think that is the case” (Reeves 2011, 96 no. 62).

14. Comparable to the slightly variant text of al-Maqrizi (1364-1442), *Al-mawā’iz wa al-i’tibār fī ḍikr al-ḥiṭaṭ wa al-āthār* (*apud* Afshar-Shirazi [1956, 304]).

15. Delete these two words. Reeves (2011, 96 no. 64).

16. Cf. ‘Itedhad al-Saltaneh, *Ṭabaqāt al-Moḍallīn*, Tehran University MS, *apud* Afshar-Shirazi (1956, 534).

“He [Mani] composed many books like his *Gospel*, which he compiled following each letter of the twenty-two letters of the *abjad* alphabet, and he maintained that he was ‘the Paraclete’ announced by Christ and that he was ‘the seal of the prophets’.” (ibid.)

**X.** Shahrestani (1086–1153) (1951-1955, 1:628.11-629):

“And the sage Mānī<sup>17</sup> related in the chapter *Aleph* of his *Gospel* and in the beginning of the *Shāburaqān* says that the King of the World of Light is in all of His land: nothing is devoid of Him, and He is both visible and concealed, and that He has no end apart from where His land ends at the land of His foe. He says also<sup>18</sup> that the King of the World of Light (is situated) in the center of His land. He mentions<sup>19</sup> that the ancient mixing was a mixing of heat, cold, moisture, and dryness; but the recent mixing is one of the Good and Evil” (Cf. Kessler 1889, 191; Adam 1954, 6 [both in German]; Browder 1988, 25 [in English]).

**XI.** Ibn al-Murtadha (1363-1432/?) [a] (Afshar-Shirazi 1956, 299; Kessler 1889, 346):

“And among his books are the *Gospel* and *Shāburaqān*” (Reeves 2011, 97).

**XII.** Ibn al-Murtadha [b] (Afshar-Shirazi 1956, 301; Kessler 1889, 349):

“And Mani maintained in the *Gospel* and in the *Shāburaqān* that the Ruler of the Word of Light was in the center of His land, but he states in the chapter *Aleph* of his *Gospel* and the beginning of the *Shāburaqān* that He (i.e., the Ruler) is in all of His land, and that He is both visible (and) hidden, and that He has no end part from where His lands ends at the land of His foe” (Reeves 2011, 97-98).<sup>20</sup>

**XIII.** Ibn Sina (Avicenna) (Afshar-Shirazi 1956, 373):

“And as for books by prophets, such as the book *Avesta*<sup>21</sup> and the *Zand* and *Bāzand*<sup>(sic)</sup> (i.e. the *Pāzand*) of Zaradusht of Ardabīl . . . (an unknown word), and like the book *’Ang(e)lyōn*<sup>22</sup> (i.e., Mani’s

17. The use of *al-ḥakīm* “sage” for Mani means that the writer did not believe in Mani’s prophecy.

18. It seems that the *Gospel* and the *Shāburaqān* are still the sources.

19. I think the *Gospel* is the source. Cf. Biruni’s account in the testimony VII.

20. See also Kessler (1889, 354).

21. “*Al-Āstā* (i.e., the *Avesta*)” in Reeves (2011, 107).

22. In the MS: *’nklywn*.

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*Gospel*)<sup>23</sup> and the *Book of the Mysteries*<sup>24</sup> of the deceitful dualist” (Reeves 2011, 107).<sup>25</sup>

XIV. Mirkhwand (1433/34–1498) (Afshar-Shirazi 1956, 525):

“Account of Mānī the painter. It is written in some books, when the *zindīq* heard that Jesus (upon whom be peace!) said: ‘After me it shall come to pass that the Paraclete will be sent. You should command your children that they become his followers’, Mānī pretended that the term ‘Paraclete’ referred to himself. The fact is that this auspicious word is among the special names of the blessed Prophet [viz. Mohammad] (may God bless and reward him). Consequently he falsely imagined that he could lay claim to prophetic status. He would show a book <by the name of> the *Gospel* and would say: ‘This book has come down from heaven’” (cf. Reeves [2011, 189]).

### Commentary

There is no doubt that the above-mentioned accounts were at one time a part of our most important documents in Manichaean studies. And although our knowledge about Manichaeism and Mani’s writings is satisfactorily increased through the discovery of the numerous texts of the Manichaean community (especially, those discovered in Turfan and North Africa), their great value remains as before. Therefore, the point is true that most of these testimonies (i.e. all of those used here) either are unique or support our other documents. In this material, there are points that are of importance for this article. The most important point is that they contain the contents of the *Living Gospel*. These are not direct quotations. Another point is that in several accounts (testimonies II, X, XII), the content of the chapter *Aleph* of the *Gospel* is identified with the content of the beginning of the *Šābuhragān*. This is something that we can understand *only* through the Muslim authors’ accounts. This can also be inferred from ‘Abd al-Jabbar’s citation, as his account corresponds to that of Shahrestani (X) and of Ibn al-Murtadha (XII), where, according to both, this content also occurs in the chapter *Aleph* of the *Gospel*. The surviving Turfan fragments of the *Šābuhragān*, which refer to eschatological events, do not seem to be the beginning of the work. But, by contrast, we possess the Arabic quotations of it, shared with the chapter *Aleph* of the *Gospel* (X of Shahrestani; cf. XII of Ibn al-Murtadha, above). According to Shahrestani (X), these passages are “in the chapter *Aleph* of his *Gospel* and in the beginning of the *Shāburaqān*.”

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23. “*Ankyōn*” (*Gospel?*) (Ibid.).

24. “*The Book of Books*” (ibid.), which is in fact a corruption of the “*Book of the Mysteries*,” a mistake in Reeves’ edition.

25. Slightly altered.

Since there were several gospels in the early centuries AD, in mentioning Mani's *Gospel*, the Muslim authors usually used the expression *Engīlahu* 'his *Gospel*' to exactly determine that the *Gospel* of Mani is meant, and nobody else's (II, VII-X, XII). They, including Biruni, who was one of the most important amongst them, understood the differences between the gospels. Biruni (VI) clearly says that "the adherents of Mānī have a separate *Gospel*, filled from beginning to end with differences from the Christian (version)." His account (Schmidt-Polotsky 1933, 36 [37]) and the report of 'Abd al-Jabbar (III, IV) indicate that Mani and his disciples claimed that the *Living Gospel* is a uniquely "correct" (*saḥīḥ*) gospel and a unique representation of Christ's sayings "and any other one is false and those who would follow such are mistaken about Christ"; In other words, as 'Abd al-Jabbar (III) states as well, in the Manichaeans' view, the *Gospel* which he (Mani) has is the same as Christ's gospel and, as Mīrkhwānd says (XIV), it was revealed from heaven.<sup>26</sup>

But here let us survey a quite complicated phrase of the testimony VI, which belongs to Biruni and reads, "There is copy of it<sup>27</sup> called *The Gospel of the Seventy* which is attributed to Balāmīs" (Reeves 2011, 96; cf. Puech 1991, 380). In this context, Puech, who finds the interpretation of this part of Biruni's account "exceptionally difficult," does not discuss enough and prefers to present the theories of K. Kessler (1889) and P. Alfarcic (1919) who dealt prior to him with the above-mentioned citation. Kessler was of the opinion that *al-Engīl al-ṣabi'īn* (*The Gospel of the Seventy*) refers to the *Living Gospel* of Mani (Kessler 1889, 208, *apud* Puech 1991, 380)—an opinion that was countered by Alfarcic who claimed that the *Gospel of the Seventy Apostles* of Iklāmīs (i.e. Clement of Rome) is in fact the *Engīl al-ṣab'īn* (Alfarcic 1919, 177-180, *apud* Puech 1991, 380 ff.) In several ways, we can presuppose that the misunderstanding of this phrase would have arisen early from a corruption in the reproduction. One of them, which is of key importance is related to the word *bl'ms*. On this, Reeves (2011, 96 no. 63) mentions that it is "as Kessler and Puech suggest, presumably a corruption of the name *Iklāmīs*; i.e., *Clement*." This word also occurs in *al-Mawā'iz* of al-Maqrizi (Afshar-Shirazi 1956, 208, no. 6). But the editor, Gosten Withe (*Apud* Afshar-Shirazi

26. According to Chapter 148 of the Coptic *Kephalaia* (Funk 1999-2000, 355.8-9:202; Schmidt-Polotsky 1933, 355.8-9:85[86]), it is revealed as "the gift of the Messenger" from heaven, as it is addressed as "the Manna of the skies" (Allberry 1938, 139.58).

27. "It is doubtful whether Biruni is still speaking of Mani's *Gospel*, but some scholars think that is the case" (Reeves 2011, 96 no. 62).

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1956, 208), points out that *bl'ms* can also be compared with the forms *tl'ms* and *ml'ms*. He suggests that this can be a corruption of *tl'myḏ /talāmīd/* “disciples.” On the other hand, with the exception of the account of Biruni, none of the works (either western or eastern), to my knowledge, has referred to the so called *Gospel of the Seventy*. Biruni’s account as a whole, however, has a parallel in a brief account of Theodor Abu Qara (ca. 750-823), Melkite bishop of Harran (Carrhae), who says that he heard it, in his own words, from the Manichaeans. In his *Tractate on the Creator and the True Religion*, we read the following:

I separated myself from these, and there I met people of the Manicheans. These are they who are called the *Zanâdiqa*, and they said: Thou must attach thyself to the (true) Christians and give heed to the word of their *Gospel*. For the *true Gospel* is in our possession, which the twelve apostles wrote, and there is no religion other than that which we possess, and there are no Christians apart from us. No one understands the interpretation of the *Gospel* save Mani, our Lord. (Graf 1913, 27)

It is quite clear that this account is similar to Biruni’s (testimony VI); although, he (973-1048) and ‘Abd al-Jabbar (935-1025) may have made use of a certain source that is unknown to us. Here, I would like to deal briefly with two important words and a key phrase in the account of Abu Qara:

*The Zanâdiqa (Zandīgs)*

This word in this form (pl. *zandīq*; from MP *zandīg*) could either have been heard in an Arabic-speaking community or read in a Muslim author’s works.

*The true Gospel*

Among the Arabic Manichaica, another account by an unknown author refers to Mani’s *Gospel* as *al-Engīl al-ṣahīḥ (The True Gospel)*<sup>28</sup> too, as something similar to what occurs in the accounts of Biruni and Abu Qara. In their accounts, ‘Abd al-Jabbar, Abu Qara, and Biruni communicated the Manichaeans’ viewpoint that of all the gospels the only true gospel is the *Gospel* of Mani. The word *al-ṣahīḥ* here does not play the same role as, for instance, “living” for the *Living Gospel*. In other words, *al-ṣahīḥ* used by Manichaeans was only used for the description and qualification of Mani’s *Gospel*. But

28. In a work entitled *Al-tārīḫ al-Nasṭūrī* “histoire nestorienne.” See Afshar-Shirazi (1956, 381):  
و وضع اربعه كتب سماها بأسماء: احدها المملووالسراثر، والثاني الانجيل الصحيح، و الثالث معدن الكنوز،  
والرابع راس الجدال و المغالبه ...



in the above-mentioned unknown author's account, it seems to be an epithet of the *Gospel*. In fact, he considered it an inseparable part of the *Gospel's* title, probably in the same way as the Manichaeans believed it to be.

*The Gospel that the twelve apostles wrote (and not the Gospel of the twelve apostles, which is nowhere attested)*

Instead of this expression of Abu Qara, we have the *Gospel of the Seventy*, attributed to *bl'ms* in Biruni's account (VI). But because of the many errors frequently seen in the copies of Biruni's work, it is not unlikely that *sab'īn* (seventy) is in fact the corruption of *sab'a* (seven) and as above mentioned, *tl'ms/bl'ms* seems to be a corruption of *tl'myḏ /talāmīḏ/* "disciples." What occurs in Abu Qara's account should not be confused with Biruni's account (VI) of the twelve gospels (other testimonies prove that the 'twelve gospels' appearing in his account must be read as "twenty-two gospels"), something that was already emphasized by Puech.<sup>29</sup> In contrast to Kimkeit and others, Abu Qara has not recorded a Manichaean work under the title "*Gospel of the twelve apostles*." In fact, none of the sources mention the Manichaean *Gospel* by the title "*the Gospel of the twelve apostles*." Abu Qara mentions only the *Gospel* "*which [according to Manichaeans] the twelve apostles wrote*," while the Manicheans of whom he speaks saw no difference between this *Gospel* and Mani's *Gospel*. What Klimkeit (Puech 1991, 379)<sup>30</sup> says of the "twelve gospels" in the Coptic anti-Manichaean account of Shenute of Atripe, I cannot find in Shenute's writing, edited and commented by Klein (1992, 369 ff), where we read the following: "In a testimony from Shenute of Atripe (d. 466), he reproaches the heretics for saying that there are 'twelve Gospels'. He must have had the Manichaeans in mind" (Klimkeit 1998, 203). Perhaps the "twelve apostles" in the testimony of Abu Qara denotes the same twelve *magistri* (*'mwcg'n*) in the Manichaean church. It might be that this *Gospel which the twelve apostles wrote* was the *Living Gospel* with a gloss produced after Mani in the eastern Manichaean communities. If this supposition was

29. As Puech (1991, 379) rightly pointed out, "'twelve' is here an error for 'twenty-two'; from the context, it is evidently a reference to Mani's *Living Gospel*, which was divided into twenty-two chapters or sections."

30. Here he cites, however, no quotation of Shenute, but only states that "perhaps we may here adduce a little-known testimony from Shenute of Atripe (d. 466), who reproaches the heretics for having said that there are 'twelve Gospels' (Coptic text in C. Wessely, *Studien zur Paläographie und Papyruskund* IX, Leipzig 1909, 104). The heretics in question must in fact have been Manicheans" (and its footnote: "Cf. W. E. Crum, *Jurnal of Egyptian Archaeology* 19, 1933, 198.").

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correct, this copy of the *Gospel* would be the *Living Gospel*. It is therefore difficult to agree with Klimkeit that “it is not possible to be certain about the content of the work (i.e. the *Gospel of the Seventy* in Biruni’s account) in question. We only know that there was a work regarded as written by the seventy disciples of Christ and that the Manichaeans referred to it” (Klimkeit 1998, 203). His attempt to find a connection between “*the Gospel of the twelve apostles*” (rather read, as it occurs in the text, “*the Gospel which the twelve apostles wrote*”) and the (so-called) *Gospel of the Seventy*, which appears in Biruni’s testimony (VI) seems strange. Without coming to a satisfactory result, he finally writes: “It is difficult to access appropriately both the (Manichaeon) *Gospel of the Twelve Apostles*, and the (Manichaeon) *Gospel of the Seventy*” (ibid.).<sup>31</sup>

The best form, closest to the original, of the name *Gospel* (of Mani) is attested in an account of Ibn Sina (Avesina), as ‘*Ang(e)lyōn*, testimony XIII.

The above-mentioned Muslim authors’ testimonies of the content of Mani’s *Gospel* are without a doubt very valuable. Although we may not be able to regard them as completely accurate, we have no reason to reject them either. And for the reasons given below, I think they are quite reliable:

1. Some phrases are close to the authentic Manichaean texts, even if they are not quite similar to the original Manichaean texts, such as “the King of the World of Light is in all of His land: nothing is devoid of Him. . . He has no end apart from where His land ends at the land of His foe” (testimonies X and XII).
2. They include some familiar phrases such as “I (am) Mani, the Apostle of the God of truth in the land of Babylon” (testimony V).<sup>32</sup>
3. The usage of respectful concepts such as “he (*viz.* Mani) is ‘the Paraclete’ announced by Christ and . . . he is ‘the Seal of the Prophets’” (testimony VII).
4. Accurate details, such as the division of the *Gospel* into twenty-two chapters (testimony V<sup>II</sup>).

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31. For a *non-Manichaean* gospel with the title “*Gospel of the Twelve*” (or of the Twelve Apostles), see Puech (1991, 374 ff.).

32. This expression reminds us of the famous self-introduction in the Parthian fragment M4a/I/V/4-6(*mwqr'nyg b'š'h*): ‘*bjyrw'ng šnw'hrq hym cy 'c b'byl zmyg wyspryxt hym . . .*’ (Müller 1904, ii: 52; Salemann 1908, 5; Boyce 1975, 162, text cv: 21-22; Durkin-Meisterernst 2004, 95): “A thankful pupil am I, I who have come from the land of Babylon.”

5. Reference to a quotation of a certain oral source, for instance: "And the Manichaean Companion says that he (Mani) is the Paraclete"<sup>(testimony<sup>11</sup>)</sup>.
6. From the beginning, Manichaeism was confronted with Christianity and Zoroastrianism, and not Islam. Therefore, it is natural to expect Christian authors, such as Augustine, and Zoroastrian writers, like Mardānfarrox Ōhrmazddādān (the author of the *Škand-Gumānīg Wizār*), to write against Manichaeism. In this context, Böhlig rightly points out that "these (accounts) have their special importance in that they have been transmitted by historians and not by polemicists, a fact which vastly increases their quality. The most important account about Mani's system is probably courtesy of Abū 'Isā al-Warrāq, on whom the great accounts of Ibn an-Nadim, Shahrestani, and the short ones with Ibn al-Murtadā<sup>[sic]</sup> and al-Ya'qubi go back. ... In opposition to that the Christian Arabic writers Eutychius, al-Makīn and Barhebraeus<sup>33</sup> give us nothing relevant" (Böhlig 1980, 9-10. See also Reck 2013, 174-175).<sup>34</sup>

For ease of access to the disparate subject matters in the Islamic works, I provide a classification of the contents of the *Living Gospel* (as reflected in the Islamic sources) below:

1. Creation and the Divinities in the Realm of Light
  - 1.1. The World of Light and the King of Light (the Father of Greatness), in V. 'Abd al-Jabbar [c]; VII. Biruni [b]; X. Shahrestani; XII. Ibn al-Murtadha [b]
  - 1.2. Other Divinities: the Primal Man and the Living Spirit, in VII. Biruni [b]
  - 1.3. Creation of the World and the Mixture, in VII. Biruni [b]; X. Shahrestani
  - 1.4. The Nature of the Light and the Darkness, in VII. Biruni [b]
2. The Living Gospel: the True Interpretation of Christ's Saying, in VIII. Biruni [c]

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33. This opinion is not correct at least about Grigor Abu al-Faraj al-'Ibri (bar Hebraeus). In his *Mukhtaṣr Tārīkh al-Duwal* (*A Short History of Nations*; translated also as *History of Dynasties*), he says: "Then evil moved to the south to establish a world there and rule over it" (Kessler 1889, 401, *apud* Bennett 2001, 71). This report corresponds to the above-mentioned Greek anti-Manichaean accounts, as Bennett (2001, 71) has shown.

34. Reck refers also to de Blois (2005, 167-178).

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3. Mani: the “Paraclete” and the “Seal of the Prophets,” in II. al-Mas‘udi; VII. Biruni [b]; IX. Marwazi; XIV. Mīrkhwānd
4. Religious Practices, in I. al-Ya‘qubi

These are all the quotations in the Islamic sources on Mani’s *Living Gospel*. The following table shows the several Manichaeian subject matters and their occurrences in the Islamic sources as a whole:

Nr.	Subject	occur rence	Testimonia and their own occurrences
1.1	<i>The World of Light and the King of Light</i>	4	V <sup>1</sup> , VII <sup>5</sup> , X <sup>2</sup> , XII <sup>1</sup>
.2	<i>Other Divinities: the Primal Man, and the Living Spirit</i>	1	VII <sup>5</sup>
.3	<i>Creation of the World, and the Mixture</i>	2	VII <sup>5</sup> , X <sup>2</sup>
.4	<i>Nature of the Light and the Darkness</i>	1	VII <sup>5</sup>
2	<i>The Living Gospel, the True Interpretation of Christ’s Saying</i>	1	VIII <sup>1</sup>
3	<i>Mani: the Paraclete and the Seal of the Prophets</i>	4	II <sup>1</sup> , VII <sup>5</sup> , IX <sup>1</sup> , XIV <sup>1</sup>
4	<i>Religious Practices</i>	1	I <sup>1</sup>

According to the above table, the seventh account has dealt with the *Gospel* (5 occurrences). This record belongs to Biruni of Khwārazm (Khorezm). His information here includes five topics. The remarkable thing is that most occurrences are in the contexts of the World of Light and Creation (see above the table, number. 1.1-1.4). The subject matter “Mani as the Paraclete” with four occurrences is situated, as might be expected, in the second rank. The *Living Gospel* as the true paraphrase of Christ’s saying and the religious practices, with one occurrence each, can be seen in the lowest rank of the table. But this does not mean that their importance or their content’s bulk was actually placed in the *Gospel* in the last rank. The above table shows only the extant testimonia in the Islamic material. For some of the above-mentioned accounts there is no proof to support them, although one of them is perhaps related to some of the Greek anti-Manichaeian works presented above. It is through these Islamic accounts that we know that Mani also

included some of the religious practices in his *Gospel* (testimony I), which seems to be his 'Commandments' to *wcydg'n* (*electi*) and *nywš'g'n* (*auditors*). It is interesting to note that in these accounts Mani's *Gospel* was not referred to as the "Living" *Gospel*, because the Muslim authors probably believed that Mani's *Gospel* is in no position to bear the high epithet "living." However, perhaps the most remarkable point in these accounts is that they clearly show that an important part of the *Living Gospel* contains the Manichaeic "Creation," the topic which is usually supposed to have no concern with Mani's *Gospel* and is excluded from the subject matter of this work. Hence, these important accounts seem to establish a reasonable connection between the contents of Mani's *Evangel* and of the surviving fragments of the *Ewangelyōnīg* hymns.

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## انجیل زنده مانی: رویکردی نو به شواهد عربی و فارسی قدیم

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برای دست‌یازی به محتوای مشهورترین اثر مانی، انجیل زنده (در اصل نوشته شده به سریانی)، به استفاده از متون عربی و فارسی قدیم که مشتمل بر گزارش‌ها و حتی نقل قول‌هایی مستقیم از این اثر هستند، ناگزیریم. یکی از مهمترین نکات در این گزارش‌ها این است که متون مزبور آشکارا نشان می‌دهند که بخش مهمی از انجیل زنده مشتمل بر مطالبی در باب «اسطوره آفرینش» مانوی بوده است؛ موضوعی که معمولاً تصور می‌شود ارتباطی با انجیل مانی ندارد. متن قبلی مانوی سینکسیس نیز به فرضیه ما کمک می‌کند که میان انجیل زنده و «سروده‌های انجیلی» از نظر محتوایی شباهت‌هایی وجود داشته است. بنا بر منابع عربی و فارسی قدیم، سرزمین روشنی و تاریکی، آمیختگی و رستگاری پاره‌های روشنی برخی از مهمترین موضوعاتی بودند که در انجیل زنده آمده بود. خصوصاً در انجیل مانی وجود دارند که می‌توان آنها را در «سروده‌های انجیلی» نیز یافت. در بحثی منطقی برخی تفسیرهای قدیمی در این مقاله اصلاح شده است.

واژگان کلیدی: گزارش‌های اسلامی، انجیل مانی، سروده‌های انجیلی، شواهد عربی و فارسی قدیم.

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