

Inventing Prophethood?

Baraies the Teacher and His Homily

Sometime in early third-century Mesopotamia, a young man named Mani began to see visions. They appeared like flashes of lightning, brief and bearable at first but increasing in intensity and terror as he grew older. In these visions, divine beings commanded him to abstain from the rituals of baptism that his community practiced. He heard the cries of wheat stalks as they were cut for harvest and saw their blood pour out from the wound. He saw the leaders of his Baptist community swept away in dark waters. These visions culminated in the appearance of a being who introduced himself as his Divine Twin and the source of his visions. Upon recognizing his true self through his Divine Twin, Mani remembered his earthly mission, why he had been sent into this world and to this generation: he was the Apostle of Jesus Christ, the long-awaited Paraclete, who had been sent to remind his community how to liberate the divine light – the suffering Christ – trapped within evil matter. As the Apostle to his generation, he could no longer simply abstain from practicing his community's rituals of baptism; he now began to oppose them. He called for his Baptist community to return to the true commandments of the savior Jesus Christ, which they had once followed but had since forgotten. In response, his community promptly expelled him and, following the advice of his Divine Twin, Mani began to travel throughout the newly established Sasanian Empire, preaching his gospel and gathering disciples. In the course of his time as the Apostle of Jesus Christ, he wrote books about the nature of the world and how it might be saved. His teachings eventually caught the ear of the Sasanian emperor, Shapur, who welcomed him into his retinue. Yet court intrigue overtook Mani and under the machinations of the powerful Zoroastrian priest Kartir, the emperor Bahram I called for his execution.

Bahram's soldiers flayed, stuffed, and hung Mani's body in front of a gate to the city of Gundeshapur.¹

So ended the life of Mani. Yet Mani had been rather successful in making disciples during his long life and, when he died, he left behind pockets of followers throughout the Sasanian Empire and the Roman Near East. And, despite ongoing persecution by Sasanian authorities and the deep antipathy of other Christian communities, Mani's church thrived. It spread west through Syria deep into the Roman Empire, finding converts among philosophers and commoners alike. It made its way eastward through the so-called "Silk Road," eventually reaching China, where it would persist deep into the next millennium.² Mani's disciples produced literature in various genres, including anthologies of his teachings, homilies, psalms, and even "biographies" of Mani's life. They established festivals commemorating Mani's death and began to invest Mani's brutal death with the soteriological significance of his most famous predecessor and returning messiah, Jesus Christ.

At the same time, we should not let this optimistic long-durée account unduly influence our reading of specific texts. In fact, all was not well for the followers of Mani, especially in the first few decades following Mani's execution.³ We find evidence of deep communal rifts in an extensive homily embedded within a late third or early fourth-century account of Mani's life that scholars call the *Cologne Mani Codex* (CMC).⁴ Scholars attribute this homily to a certain "Baraies the Teacher," an early follower of Mani whose name is attested in other texts as well.⁵

¹ *Man. Hom.* 60.2–16. On the historical and interpretative problems of Mani's death, see now: Gardner, *Founder*, 59–82.

² See especially Samuel N.C. Lieu, *Manichaeism in Central Asia and China* (Leiden: Brill, 1998).

³ The fragments of Mani's letters that we do possess show Mani in a pastoral light and suggest the persistence of communal discord even within the prophet's lifetime. See Iain Gardner, ed., *Mani's Epistles: The Surviving Parts of the Coptic Codex Berlin P. 15998* (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 2022); idem, *Kellis Literary Texts: Volume 2* (Oxford: Oxbow, 2007), 11–83. At the same time, assumptions about rampant anti-Manichaean persecution may overstate reality and function instead as discourse. See Mattias Brand, "In the Footsteps of the Apostle of Light," in *Heirs of Roman Persecution: Studies on a Christian and Para-Christian Discourse in Late Antiquity*, (ed. É. Fournier and W. Mayer London and New York: Routledge, 2019), 112–134.

⁴ CMC 45.1–72.7. I consider the short homily of CMC 72.8–74.5, which is also attributed to Baraies, as a separate unit.

⁵ J. Tubach, "Die Namen von Manis Jüngern und ihre Herkunft," in *Atti del Terzo Congresso Internazionale Di Studi 'Manicheismo e Oriente Cristiano Antico': Arcavataca di Rende, Amantea 31 agosto–5 settembre 1993* (ed. L. Cirillo and A. Van Tongerloo; Louvain: Brepols, 1997), 375–393.

In it, Baraies argues that Mani had received the same apostolic commission that had been given to the ancestors, which includes figures like Adam, Sethel, Enosh, Shem, Enoch, and the Apostle Paul. Just as these ancestors had been raptured by divine beings, spoke about their revelations to their contemporary disciples, and wrote down their revelations for future disciples, so too did a Divine Twin rapture Mani, who in turn spoke about his revelations to his Elect community and wrote them down for his future spiritual children. By explicitly delineating such criteria, Baraies constructs what we might call a typology of prophethood. Yet he does so not out of intellectual whimsy but in response to a communal crisis. He directs his homily against those whom he claims had “turned away (μεταβληθεῖς)” and are “clothed in unbelief (τῶν ἐνδεδυμένων τὴν ἀπιστίαν).”⁶ He concludes by describing them as fools who “suppose something (incorrect) about this revelation and vision of our father (οἰομένων τι περὶ ταύτης τῆς ἀποκαλύψεως καὶ ὀπτασίας τοῦ πατρὸς ἡμῶν).”⁷

Baraies’ polemical tone evokes a community haunted by Mani’s absence. Since Mani can no longer defend his own revelation against his opponents, Baraies must step up to defend it in his place. He had to rely on his own rhetorical skills and training. The newness of Baraies’ homily directs us squarely back to a late antique Mesopotamian community negotiating its way following the death of their most recent prophet.

I stress this point here in order to distinguish my approach from that of other scholars, who have tended to look through the homily rather than at the homily to understand Baraies’ immediate situation. To that end, they have not only highlighted the similarities between Baraies’ homily and other Manichaean texts but have also seen it fruitfully as a window into a broader Syro-Mesopotamian milieu deeply infused with its own sort of “gnosis.”⁸ At the same time, such an approach risks turning

⁶ CMC 46.3; 71.13–14. The translations of the CMC were done in consultation with other translations, including Ron Cameron and Arthur J. Dewey, *The Cologne Mani Codex (P. Colon. Inv. Nr. 4780): “Concerning the Origin of his Body”* (Missoula: Scholars Press, 1979), and the standard text edition: L. Koenen and C. Römer, *Der Kölner Mani-Kodex: Über das Werden seines Leibes; Kritische Edition* (Opladen: Westdeutscher Verlag, 1988).

⁷ CMC 71.14–17.

⁸ As noted already by Eibert Tigchelaar in “Baraies on Mani’s Rapture, Paul, and the Antediluvian Apostles,” in *The Wisdom of Egypt: Jewish, Early Christian, and Gnostic Essays in Honour of Gerard P. Luttikhuisen* (ed. A. Hilhorst and G.H. van Kooten; Leiden: Brill, 2005), 429–441, at 431 n. 8. For example, see Reeves, *Heralds*, esp. 209–211; Tardieu, “La chaîne des prophètes,” 363–364, who assumes that the peculiar

Baraies' particular construction of prophethood into a mere precipitate of earlier doctrines rooted in Mani, or a de-contextualized, and hence ahistorical, expression of doctrine. To do so would be to ignore the palpable sense of urgency that animates Baraies' homily. As this chapter argues, Baraies was not channeling an earlier prophetological doctrine, but making his argument as he went along, embedded within a context that could only have emerged after Mani's death.

Of course, if Baraies' homily dates to the late third or early fourth century, so too does the CMC itself. This means that the account of Mani's life narrated at the beginning of this chapter emerged only after Mani's death. To read the CMC as a "post-Mani text" has significant consequences for how we understand the emergence of Baraies' homily and the text as a whole. It demands that we read the CMC as a text by and for a post-Mani Manichaean community rather than as a window into the historical Mani. This difference is perhaps best illustrated in the supposed "parting of the ways" between Mani and his Baptist community.⁹ Scholars tend to read the CMC's account of Mani's debate with his fellow Baptists over the efficacy of baptism as if it documents the real historical cause for a rift between the Baptists and Mani in the mid-third century.¹⁰ This in turn informs a metanarrative that the "parting of the ways" between Mani and the Baptists took place within Mani's lifetime or that their separation was a foregone conclusion, rather than a contingent and contested series of events that all "partings" inevitably are.

prophetologies in the introduction to the *Kephalaia* and in Baraies' homily are rooted in Mani. Albert de Jong (*A Quodam Persa*, 99) argues against this harmonization. While Julien Ries is correct in situating Baraies' homily at the turn of the fourth century as a defense of Mani's apostolate, he nevertheless orients his reading of the homily backwards for its "contribution to our understanding of Mani's doctrines." Julien Ries, "Baraies le Didascale dans le Codex Mani: Nature, Structure et Valeur de son Témoignage sur Mani et sa Doctrine," in *Atti del Terzo Congresso Internazionale Di Studi 'Manicheismo e Oriente Cristiano Antico': Arcavataca di Rende, Amantea 31 agosto–5 settembre 1993* (ed. L. Cirillo and A. Van Tongerloo; Louvain: Brepols, 1997), 305–311, at 305.

⁹ Readers familiar with the debates regarding the Jewish/Christian "Parting of the Ways" will recognize some of this chapter's guiding assumptions and strategies of reading, foremost among them is the idea that categories like "Jewish" and "Christian" – or in our case, "Baptist" and "Manichaean" – should be read as textually produced for contingent reasons, rather than necessarily descriptive of social realities. See especially, Adam H. Becker and Annette Yoshiko Reed, "Introduction: Traditional Models and New Directions," in *The Ways that Never Parted: Jews and Christians in Late Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages* (ed. Adam H. Becker and Annette Yoshiko Reed; Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2007), 1–33; Judith Lieu, "'The Parting of the Ways': Theological Construct of Historical Reality?," *Journal for the Study of the New Testament* 56 (1994): 101–119.

¹⁰ CMC 79.14–100.1.

But “stories are not lived but told”¹¹ and the CMC is most assuredly a story. Without denying the possibility that this debate did occur in the mid-third century, one must also ask why the CMC as a text from the turn of the fourth century chose to focus on this event as a key point in its broader argument that while Mani did grow up among the Baptists, he was never one of them. We will discuss this point further below. For now, I suggest that we read the CMC not only or even necessarily as evidence for the third-century “historical” Mani, but for ongoing debates between later followers of Mani and Baptists in the late third and early fourth century over how to understand Mani vis-à-vis his home community of Baptists. In other words, the tendentious narrative of Mani’s life presented in the CMC is only one voice within a larger debate that emerged *after* Mani, a debate that this chapter will argue included both partisans of Mani like Baraies and the larger Baptist community. If so, this in turn raises a rather interesting question for our analysis of Baraies’ homily: What sorts of tensions and fault lines become visible when we discard the assumption that “Manichaean” always and everywhere designates an autonomous and fully formed “religion” separate from the Baptists?

This chapter offers a rereading of Baraies’ homily with these points in mind. It argues that Baraies and his brothers are not members of an already distinct and independent Manichaean community, but a faction of teachers in an already existing community attempting to understand Mani’s place within that community. Baraies’ homily thus offers a snapshot of a religious community in the process of becoming, not evidence for the existence of an already distinct community. It will argue further that this community is none other than the Baptist community in which Mani was reared. Baraies’ “invention” of prophethood emerges from this fraught context as part of his larger argument that Mani stands in continuity with the ancestral forefathers; just as these forefathers had been raptured, chosen an Elect community, and inscribed their revelations for posterity, so had Mani. This ultimately means that Baraies argues for the inclusion of Mani within *Baptist* history, not as a point of departure from it.

In brief, my argument proceeds as follows. Since Baraies claims that he wrote his homily to correct his opponents, we can suppose that the lines of communication between Baraies and his opponents were still open,

¹¹ Louis O. Mink, “History and Fiction as Modes of Comprehension,” *New Literary History* 1.3 (1970): 541–558, at 557.

though strained. He also notes that he is responding to people who have already read a “rapture” of Mani, which we will argue refers to the scenes in the CMC where Mani encounters and unifies with his Divine Twin. In effect, the CMC narrates Mani’s encounter with his Divine Twin as part of its broader argument that the Baptist community contributed nothing to Mani’s theological or intellectual development; it was the Divine Twin who revealed all those cosmic mysteries to him, not the Baptists. Baraies’ opponents responded violently to this very claim. Moreover, since Baraies argues that Mani should be *included* in an already existing roster of “our ancestral forefathers (τῶν προγόνων ἡμῶν πατέρων),”¹² for Baraies’ rhetoric to work at all on his opponents, then he and his opponents must have shared a set of ancestral forefathers. If they shared a set of ancestral forefathers, then they shared a common lineage, which strongly suggests that both Baraies and his opponents were members of the same community. If so, this means that Baraies and his faction are not members of a distinct and independent religious community, but a faction of an already existing community. Finally, the very fact that Baraies’ opponents would take umbrage at the argument that the Baptists contributed nothing to Mani’s revelation suggests that this shared religious community was none other than the Baptist community from which Mani emerged.

If Baraies’ homily does not offer evidence for the existence of an independent Manichaean religious community, it does offer evidence for how Manichaean teachers like Baraies sought to renegotiate a community’s relation to the past and the future. While the argument between Baraies and his opponents is *about* how one should understand Mani’s place in relation to the Baptist community, i.e., either as a human teacher or a prophet like the “ancestral forefathers,” I argue that it is *over* the question of who gets to determine the heritage and trajectory of that community. As we will see, Baraies claims that all the ancient prophets wrote for those who “will understand the sense of his (the Holy Spirit’s) voice” (γνωσομέ[νων τῆς] φων[ῆς αὐτοῦ] τὴν ἀσθησιν),¹³ by which he means those who can properly understand the community’s ancient literary archive. While Baraies is, of course, referring to himself and his faction as those most capable of interpreting the ancestral archive, he also presents his faction as “the seal of his apostolate” [οἱ δὲ μαθηταὶ αὐτοῦ ἐγίγνοντο σφραγίς αὐτοῦ τῆς ἀποστολῆς],¹⁴

¹² CMC 71.8–9.

¹³ CMC 62.22–63.1.

¹⁴ CMC 72.4–7.

who are uniquely poised to authenticate the revelation and apostleship of the earlier prophets. Thus, according to Baraies, the trajectory of Baptist history not only bends toward Mani but also toward his disciples. Ultimately, Baraies' homily is a performative tour-de-force intended to demonstrate his mastery over the ancestral archive, thereby arrogating to himself and his faction the right to determine not only the position of Mani within the community, but its ancestral heritage and by extension, the future trajectory of that community itself. As such, we might read Baraies' homily as a symptom for the ascendance of a "Manichaean" scholastic community.

THE GENRE AND PRODUCTION OF
THE COLOGNE MANI CODEX

Before we enter into our analysis of the text, however, we first need to clarify what we mean by "Baraies' homily" and its relation to the larger work in which it is embedded – the *Cologne Mani Codex*.¹⁵ In brief, the extant CMC is an early fifth-century or late fourth-century Greek translation of an Aramaic text written somewhere in Mesopotamia at the turn of the fourth century. Its inscribed title is not, of course, the *Cologne Mani Codex* but "On the Generation of His Body" (περὶ τῆς γέννης τοῦ σώματος αὐτοῦ). Scholars agree that "his" refers to Mani but disagree on what "body" means. Recent scholarly opinion seems to have swung back in the direction of interpreting "body" as the larger Manichaean Church, and not Mani's physical body.¹⁶

As for the genre of the CMC, one of the original editors of the CMC, Albert Henrichs, suggested that it was similar to both the Greek "biography" and the "apocryphal Acts of the Apostles."¹⁷ Without drawing

¹⁵ Although the name itself is now lost, the identification of this unit with "Baraies the Teacher" is reconstructed in comparison with other textual units that are securely attributed to Baraies. See A. Henrichs and L. Koenen, "Der Kölner Mani-Kodex (P. colon. inv. nr. 4780) Περὶ τῆς γέννης τοῦ σώματος αὐτοῦ: Edition der seiten 1–72," *ZPE* 19 (1975): 1–85, 80 n. 80.

¹⁶ See, e.g., L. Koenen, "Augustine and Manichaeism in Light of the Cologne Mani Codex," *ICS* (1978): 154–198, at 164–165. Gardner, *Founder*, 28.

¹⁷ A. Henrichs, "Literary Criticism of the Cologne Mani Codex" in *The Rediscovery of Gnosticism II: Sethian Gnosticism* (ed. B. Layton; Leiden: Brill, 1981), 724–733, at 725. See also, idem, "The Timing of Supernatural Events in the Cologne Mani Codex," in *Codex Manichaicus Coloniensis: Atti del Simposio Internazionale (Rende-Amantea 3–7 settembre 1984)* (ed. L. Cirillo; Cosenza: Marra Editore Cosenza, 1986), 183–204, at 183–187.

a hard boundary between the two, the latter is much more likely. The CMC is not interested in detailing the peculiarities of Mani's life in the manner of Porphyry's *Life of Plotinus* or, as Henrichs suggests, Philostratus' *Life of Apollonius*. Rather, like other "apocryphal" Acts literature, the CMC is most interested in narrating the spread of the Gospel and the beginnings of the Church in a particular region of the world through an Apostle of Jesus Christ, in this case, Mani. Indeed, it rehashes many themes found in this genre, including the call to apostleship,¹⁸ the trope of a reluctant Apostle,¹⁹ healings,²⁰ disputations with different religious communities,²¹ and the conversion of powerful figures.²² Peculiar to the CMC, however, is the interpolation of a discrete homily attributed to someone other than the Apostle of Jesus Christ, in this case, to a certain "Baraies the Teacher." None of the more relevant "Acts" literature, for example, *Acts of Thomas* or the *Doctrina Addai*, have this feature. Indeed, its inclusion is all the more perplexing since it severely interrupts the flow of the narrative, which simply picks back up as if the homily did not intervene.²³

This leads us to consider the composition of the CMC. While scholars more or less agree that the extant Greek CMC dates to the late fourth or early fifth century, they also point to the process of redaction that lie behind it. This process is evident from the fact that the CMC is not a continuous literary composition but an anthology that narrates Mani's career as the Apostle of Jesus Christ through the selection and juxtaposition of discrete textual units. With the exception of the unit that we have identified as "Baraies' homily," as well as another "mini-homily" of sorts (also attributed to Baraies) that follows directly after "Baraies' homily,"²⁴ all the other units narrate a particular episode from Mani's life, with Mani often speaking from the first-person perspective "I." The anonymous redactor then cleverly ordered these units in such a way as to create a sense of narrative progression and movement through time.

Intriguingly, and somewhat like rabbinic literature, each textual unit is attributed to a member or members of the early Mani movement, including figures like Zabed, Koustaios, "the Teachers," and, of course,

¹⁸ CMC 104.10–105.8.

¹⁹ CMC 101.19–104.10.

²⁰ CMC 122.10–14.

²¹ CMC 137.1–140.7.

²² CMC 130.11–135.4.

²³ CMC 74.8.

²⁴ CMC 72.9–74.5.

Baraies. Following Henrichs and Koenen, scholars tend to identify these named figures as the real authors responsible for creating the textual unit itself, and consequently, as the tradents through whom that unit was transmitted from Mani to the anonymous redactors responsible for the narrativization of these units.²⁵ Nevertheless, I think it is wiser to begin with the assumption that these attributions are the products of a tradition of attribution, rather than evidence that Zabed or Koustaïos were the real authors of the textual units now attributed to them.

In fact, this identification of the attributed names as the authors of individual textual units serves a key function within the current paradigm for explaining the textual emergence of the CMC as a literary work. Henrichs himself had proposed a model of three moments, each of which composed “separate and successive stages of redaction.”²⁶ It began with Mani himself narrating events of his life to certain disciples, who in turn wrote down what Mani had narrated and whose names were affixed to each unit, and finally, an anonymous redactor who ordered these textual units in a particular way to create a sense of narrative progression.²⁷

I am skeptical of this model. Among other reasons, it takes the CMC’s artifice of orality at face value, as something that might tell us something true about the process behind the emergence of the CMC. In contrast, I begin with the assumption that orality, as depicted or narrated within a text, is already a textual reflex, and therefore expresses the characteristics of a particular genre or literary form. Whether or not the narrativized depictions of orality within the CMC or the attribution of textual units to specific names tell us something true about the process of textual formation, transmission, or redaction must be assessed without taking the literary features of the CMC at face value. In fact, as we will see in Chapters 2 and 4, the discourse of orality in a different Manichaean genre, that is, the *Kephalaia*, functions in specific interested ways and cannot be read as a neutral account of textual formation.

²⁵ A. Henrichs and L. Koenen, “Ein griechischer Mani-Codex (P. colon. inv. nr. 4780),” *ZPE* 5 (1970): 97–216, at 110–114.

²⁶ Henrichs, “Literary Criticism,” 726.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 726–728. Reinhold Merkelbach suggests that the redactors might have accessed these textual units either in written or oral form. See R. Merkelbach, “Wann wurde die Mani-Biographie abgefaßt, und welches waren ihre Quellen?” in *Studia Manichaica II. Internationaler Kongreß zum Manichäismus* (ed. G. Wiefner and H.-J. Klimkeit; Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz, 1992), 159–166, at 162.

For the moment, let us critique this three-moment model as strongly as we can without getting bogged down by the details. Our goal is not to propose a new way of understanding the emergence of the CMC as much as it is to theorize alternative possibilities for its textual emergence. This, in turn, will afford us space to argue that the unit that we have identified as “Baraies’ homily” was not “originally” a part of the first publication of the CMC (if indeed the idea of “publication” even makes sense when we consider its anthological nature), but that it was interpolated later. This will then allow us to argue that Baraies’ homily is, in fact, responding to critiques of the CMC among its earliest readers, which I will argue included Baptists.

First, it is problematic to begin with the assumption that Mani’s real words lie at the bottom of each textual unit. In fact, Manichaean literature is filled with examples of later Manichaeans putting impossible words into Mani’s mouth. The two massive codices of the *Kephalaia* spring to mind. Extensive monologues ostensibly uttered by Mani in the last days of his life, presumably in prison, can also be found in the Manichaean Bema Psalms.²⁸ There is no reason why this particular genre of Manichaean literature should be considered any more trustworthy a priori.

Second, Henrichs suggests that these attributed figures were the authors of each textual unit. One could, however, just as easily decouple the attributed name from the textual unit. The reality is that we do not know when these textual units were attributed to these named figures or by whom. It may be the case that the attribution of textual units to specific names is a later editorial feature rather than an original or essential part of the textual unit. In fact, the presence of textual units with multiple attributions offers a range of different possibilities for the act of attribution. For example, did the historical Abiesus and Innaios collaborate with one another to author a single textual unit (CMC 74.8–77.2), as Henrichs’ model would assume? If they did collaborate, it could not have been for the sake of the CMC, since that model requires these moments to be completely separate. There must have been a different occasion for their collaboration, if indeed they did. What was that occasion?

Or, as I think is more likely the case, did a later redactor have access to two similar textual units, one attributed to Abiesus and another to Innaios, and combined these attributions so as to present one of those textual units as doubly verified by tradition? If so, one could argue instead

²⁸ See, for example, *Man. Ps.-Book* 18.11–19.28.

that the presence of two similar textual units with two different attributed names is strong evidence for the unreliability of Manichaean practices of attribution. After all, if one textual unit is attributed to Abiesus and a similar unit to Innaios, then the accuracy of both attributions is thrown into doubt.

Furthermore, we have one unit that is attributed to “The Teachers say (οἱ διδάσκαλοι λέγουσιν).”²⁹ Are we to imagine that all “the Teachers” sat together and agreed that Mani had narrated the event in the textual unit now attributed to them? Or that the Teachers to whom Mani first spoke is the same group of Teachers who later recounted what Mani had said? This seems unlikely. The practical mechanics of transmission pushes us to think about “The Teachers say” not as a description of an actual event, but as part of the rhetorical fabric of the CMC as a whole. Indeed, the presence of the verb “say” suggests that “the Teachers” in this attribution are not the writers of this textual unit. It strikes me as more likely that a person outside of the immediate context of utterance would write, “The Teachers say,” rather than the Teachers awkwardly declaring to themselves at that moment that they have spoken.

This gets to a related problem regarding “remembrances,” which does a great deal of clandestine work in establishing a link from Mani to the anonymous redactors of the CMC. At least according to the current model, the named authors/tradents simply “remember” what they had heard Mani say, which are then textualized and made available to later redactors. Yet, there is no articulation of a memory outside of specific occasions, occasions that inevitably inform which memories are made relevant for that moment. This applies not only to the moments when Mani (supposedly) recounted his own memories to his “tradents,” but also when and where the “tradents” themselves textualized their memories of Mani’s remembrances. In other words, since memories are not ethereal bodies of pure information floating in the noosphere, but preserved, circulated, and textualized within specific embodied contexts for specific reasons, “remembered” texts like the CMC may tell us quite a bit about who is remembering, for what reasons, and the occasion for the act of remembering, rather the historical accuracy of the remembrance itself.

Finally, we should be critical of Henrichs’ teleological assumption that each moment composed a “separate and successive stage of

²⁹ CMC 26.5.

redaction.”³⁰ If Manichaeans circulated textual units about Mani’s life before the CMC existed, there is no reason to suppose that they stopped once it was made. Nor is there any reason why the textualization of remembered utterances should mark the end of oral transmission; both oral and written media “interpenetrate” one another, as scholars of rabbinic literature in particular have demonstrated.³¹ Consequently, there is no reason to suppose that all the textual units that are now in the extant CMC were incorporated at the same moment in some sort of final redaction. In fact, the very nature of the CMC as an anthology allows for the inclusion and deletion of textual units quite easily. As long as the general arc of the narrative is maintained, one could fill out the perceived gaps within Mani’s life with additional textual units through a process of textual agglutination. Indeed, as we will argue below, one could imagine an earlier or parallel form of the CMC that did not include Baraies’ homily and thus continued the narrative seamlessly from Mani’s encounters with his Divine Twin to his expulsion from his local Baptist community.

Again, my point is not to offer an alternative account of the emergence of the CMC, but to undermine an undertheorized model of textual formation. We simply do not have enough information to trust the redactor or the “authors” of the textual units. As a result, we will need to sidestep the issue of whether the “real” historical Baraies ever wrote the homily now attributed to him in the CMC. When we refer to Baraies, we will be referring to the inscribed Baraies, that is, the Baraies of the CMC, not the Baraies of history. Our focus will fall squarely on what the homily attributed to him might tell us about the early history of the Manichaean Church. From there, we will be able to assess the context and even the “religious identity” of its author, whether or not that author can be positively identified as the “historical” Baraies.

REREADING BARAIES’ HOMILY

Before wading into the weeds of textual analysis, allow me to first provide an overview of my rereading of Baraies’ homily.

³⁰ Henrichs, “Literary Criticism,” 726. I am inspired in this aspect by the work of Judith Hauptman, who demonstrates that the extant Mishnah responds to an earlier Ur-Mishnah and the Tosefta. For a concise version of Hauptman’s argument, see J. Hauptman, “The Tosefta as a Commentary on an Early Mishnah,” *JSIJ* 4 (2005): 109–132.

³¹ See, for example, Martin Jaffee, *Torah in the Mouth: Writing and Oral Tradition in Palestinian Judaism, 200 BCE–400 CE* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 100–125.

Baraies' homily presents one side of a debate that arose following the first "publication" of the CMC. As mentioned, the CMC narrates the arc of Mani's life from his youth in a Baptist community, his call to apostleship through and by his Divine Twin, and his travels throughout the Sasanian Empire as the Apostle of Jesus Christ. Its anthological structure means that it is the work of multiple writers. In this sense, it is a "new" narrative, despite the fact it presents itself from Mani's first-person perspective. Some early readers of the CMC, however, took offense with this "new" narrative of Mani's life, especially the scenes where Mani recounts his encounter and unification with his Divine Twin, who in turn revealed all the cosmic secrets to Mani. These early readers of the CMC interpreted such scenes as a "rapture" and could not tolerate the astounding claim that Mani had learned everything from a divine source and without human intervention, or more specifically, without Baptist contributions to Mani's revelation.³² Consequently, they accused those who wrote Mani's "rapture" – that is, the CMC – as arrogant fools motivated only by a desire to lionize Mani over and against other teachers. They thus undermined both the divine origin of Mani's revelations and the integrity of the CMC as an account of Mani's life.

Baraies had to respond. The problem, however, was that his opponents were right: Baraies did believe in the utter superiority of Mani over other teachers and that this superiority was due to Mani's reception of divine revelation. Rather than disputing these points, Baraies opted to undermine his opponents' assumption that the CMC's depiction of Mani's "rapture" was unique. He sought to present Mani's "rapture" in the CMC as simply following ancient precedent. After all, Baraies argues, Mani was not the only prophet who was raptured and received divine revelations. In fact, all the ancestral prophets had received the same commission: they all were raptured, received divine revelations that they showed to their chosen Elect community, and wrote down those

³² As Eibert Tigchelaar has stressed (Tigchelaar, "Baraies on Mani's Rapture," 439–440), the CMC does not actually present Mani as having been "raptured" by his Divine Twin as much as it narrates their earthly encounter and unification. In fact, not even those excerpts from Mani's own writings found later in Baraies' homily suggest that Mani was "raptured." If neither Mani nor the CMC actually depict a moment of rapture, then the concept of "rapture" might not have been original to the early followers of Mani. Rather, I suggest that Baraies appropriated his opponents' language of "rapture" for his own ends; he latches onto their misinterpretation of Mani's encounter with his Divine Twin as a rapture and uses it against them.

revelations for their spiritual posterity. These ancestral apostles included Adam, Sethel, Enosh, Shem, Enoch, and the Apostle Paul. Since all these had written down their rapture, when the Manichaeans “wrote a rapture of their teacher,” they were simply presenting Mani in a traditional light. Had Baraies’ opponents properly understood the writings of their own ancestors, which they clearly did not, and read the CMC together with these ancestral apostles, they would not have been scandalized when they read about Mani’s “rapture.” Thus, Baraies’ argument itself is evidence for the superiority of Baraies and his faction for understanding the true importance of ancestral history.

Baraies’ Opponents as Early Readers of the CMC

The strongest evidence that Baraies is responding to early readers of the CMC comes from the fact that the anonymous redactor interpolated this lengthy homily immediately after the scenes narrating Mani’s unification with his Divine Twin. Since the CMC is a carefully ordered anthology of discrete textual units, we should expect the same level of redactional intent for this homily; its location matters. Indeed, as the original editors had already recognized, the homily functions as a sort of concluding “excursus” for these preceding pages.³³ The redactor was even willing to sacrifice the flow of narrative, perhaps because he wanted to ensure that the readers would understand Mani’s “rapture” properly and not in the manner of Baraies’ opponents.

Moreover, the opening lines of the homily itself presuppose knowledge of the previous pages. Baraies begins by exhorting his brothers to “Know therefore (τοίνυν) and understand, oh brothers, everything (πάντα) that has been written here (τὰ ἐνθάδε γραφέντα) and the manner in which the apostleship (of Mani) had been sent in this generation, just as we had been taught by him, and also about his body.”³⁴ The “therefore” (τοίνυν) is a giveaway that Baraies is building thematically upon an earlier written account that is close at hand, “here” (ἐνθάδε).

While one could assume that “everything that has been written here” refers to Baraies’ homily itself, this is unlikely since this written document must contain something “concerning his (Mani’s) body” (περὶ τοῦ [σώ]ματος [αὐτοῦ]), which Baraies’ homily does not, regardless of whether “his body” refers to Mani’s physical body or to the

³³ Henrichs and Koenen, “Ein griechischer Mani-Codex,” 106.

³⁴ CMC 45.1–8.

Manichaean Church.³⁵ In contrast, the narrative of the CMC is saturated with references to Mani's physical and incarnate body.³⁶ Or, if one defines Mani's body as the larger Manichaean Church, then one simply needs to read the rest of the CMC, which narrates Mani's travels and success as an itinerant preacher. Either way, the "generation of his body" must refer somehow to the contents of a written document that is beyond the homily yet also close at hand, "here" [ἐνθάδε]. A good solution is that this written document is the CMC itself.

Second, this written account must include a discussion on the "manner in which the apostleship (of Mani) had been sent in this generation" (περὶ τοῦ τρόπου καθ' ὃν ἀπεστάλη ἦδε ἡ ἀποστολή ἢ κατὰ τήνδε τὴν γενεάν). While Baraies' homily is concerned about how one understands the apostleship of Mani vis-à-vis the ancestral apostles, it is not interested in narrating how Mani became the Apostle to this specific generation. In contrast, the CMC narrates how Mani met his Divine Twin and began his mission following his expulsion from the Baptist community, which might be characterized neatly as "the manner in which the apostleship had been sent in this generation." Indeed, the very phrasing of "in this generation" (ἢ κατὰ τήνδε τὴν γενεάν) parallels the Divine Twin's address to Mani as the apostle "to this generation" elsewhere in the CMC.³⁷

One potential problem with the identification of the written document with the CMC is the phrase "Just as we had been taught by him" (καθὼς ἐδιδάχθημεν παρ' αὐτοῦ). Though one could interpret this phrase as evidence that Baraies was taught directly by the "real" Mani, there are other options. For example, it could simply mean that Baraies and his brothers learned about the "manner in which the Apostleship had been sent" from one of Mani's books, not from Mani himself. Or we might consider something like the *Kephalaia*, which presents itself as Mani's own words, despite the fact that it was produced by later Manichaean teachers. This suggests that one could be taught by Mani but through later Manichaean

³⁵ Similarly, CMC 46.8–10 says: "Also, (he[?]) wrote) concerning the generation of his body..." (πάλλιν δὲ καὶ περὶ τῆς γέν[νη]ς τοῦ σώματος αὐτοῦ [ἔγρα]ψ[εν]).

³⁶ See all extant 27 references to Mani's body in the CMC (not including Baraies' homily) in: L. Cirillo, *Concordanze del Codex Manichaicus Coloniensis* (Bologna: Edizioni Dehoniane Bologna, 2001), 215.

³⁷ According to his Divine Twin, Mani is the "leader of the apostleship to this generation" (κορυφαῖος τῆς κατὰ τήνδε τὴν γενεάν ἀποστολῆς; CMC 17.5–7). He also revealed secrets to Mani "as is appropriate to the generation in which you were revealed" (πρὸς τὸ πρέπον τῆι γενεᾷ καθ' ἣν ἀπεκαλύφθης; CMC 39.1–2). Also, see CMC 38.14.

teachers. Or, if my argument that Baraies has in mind the CMC is correct, the phrase might simply refer to the manner in which CMC presents Mani in the first-person perspective. In other words, Mani taught Baraies and his brothers not in a face-to-face encounter, but indirectly through the inscribed Mani of the CMC, who speaks as an “I.”

Unfortunately, the next thirteen lines of the text are lost, so what follows is necessarily speculative. Nevertheless, Henrichs, Koenen, and Römer reimagine this lost section somewhat plausibly as follows: What *Mani* had written down, he left behind for his disciples so that no one would doubt concerning “this apostleship of the spirit of the Paraclete and, turning away, say: They alone wrote a rapture of their teacher in order to boast (... τῆς ἀποστολῆς ταύτης τοῦ πν[εύματος] τοῦ παρακλήτου καὶ μεταβληθεὶς εἶπη ὅτι οὗτοι μόνοι γεγράφασιν ἀρπαγὴν τοῦ διδασκάλου αὐτῶν πρὸς καύχησιν).”³⁸ The key point in their scenario is that *Mani* wrote about his own rapture and revelation, and left those writings behind to his disciples as a safeguard against future apostasy. While such a scenario fits well with the general argument of Baraies’ homily, it aligns poorly with the available snippets of text around the missing lines. I suggest instead a slightly different scenario: What *we* (or any other group like “the brothers” or “the teachers”) had written down, *we* (or they) wrote so that no one would doubt “this apostleship of the spirit of the Paraclete and, turning away, say: *They* alone wrote a rapture of their teacher in order to boast.”

The primary difficulty in the editors’ scenario is that the opponents’ accusation implies the presence of multiple writers. From the available text, we know that the opponents had read something about the “apostleship of the spirit of the Paraclete,” which they interpreted as a rapture since it caused them to say, “*They* alone wrote a rapture of their teacher in order to boast!” The opponents clearly have in mind a number of people who directly or indirectly contributed to the writing of a text that they interpreted as a rapture. If we follow the editors’ scenario, the opponents must be mistaken since there was only one writer – Mani. Naturally, one must then account for why the opponents were mistaken about the number of writers.

This problem disappears the moment we get rid of Mani as the writer. Instead of trying to explain away the presence of multiple writers in the opponents’ accusation, let us use it as a clue for what the missing lines might have been. After all, the sentence points to a causal relationship

³⁸ CMC 46.3–7. Koenen and Römer, *Der Kölner Mani-Kodex*, 29.

between reading and accusing; the opponents read something about “this apostleship of the spirit of the Paraclete” which caused them to say, “*They* alone wrote...” This naturally suggests that many people contributed to this written text that discussed the “apostleship of the spirit of the Paraclete.” Moreover, since the opponents direct their accusation against Mani’s disciples, not Mani, it follows that the text in question must have been written by a “they.”

We know of two Manichaean texts written explicitly by a “they.” The first is a now-lost Manichaean Church History and the second, the CMC itself.³⁹ After all, each textual unit of the CMC is attributed to a named figure(s). I thus suggest that this accusation is responding directly to the anthological nature of the CMC. The “they” refers to the named tradents, for example, Innaïos, Zabed, Koustaïos, and of course, Baraies himself.

Such an argument may help sharpen the nature of Baraies’ opponents’ accusation. After all, scholars tend to translate the accusation as, “They alone wrote *about* a rapture of their teacher in order to boast,” thereby inserting a non-existent “about” (περι) before “rapture.”⁴⁰ To be fair, most appearances of the word “rapture” in Baraies’ homily appear as something like “about his rapture” (περι τῆς ἀρπαγῆς αὐτοῦ).⁴¹ Yet that is not in the Greek here. I suspect that the insertion of the “about” in some translations stems from an unintentional conflation between the act of writing and the function of authorship. In brief, writing a text is not the same as assuming authorship over it; one can write a text but ascribe its author to someone else. Once we decouple one from the other, we can instead take this accusation as straightforwardly as possible: There were a group of Manichaeans (a “they”) who wrote (οὔτοι... γεγράφασιν) a rapture of Mani, with the “they” referring to the named attributions of each textual unit.

While no single piece of evidence is probative, the cumulative weight of these points suggests that we should identify the “everything that is written here” (πάντα ταῦτα τὰ ἐνθάδε γραφέντα) in the introduction to Baraies’ homily with the narratives that immediately precede Baraies’ homily, which feature Mani receiving divine revelation from his Twin while he was living in the Baptist community.

³⁹ C. Schmidt and H.J. Polotsky, *Ein Mani-Fund in Ägypten: Originalschriften des Mani und seiner Schüler* (Berlin: Verlag der Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1933), 26–29.

⁴⁰ See, for example, Koenen and Römer, *Der Kölner Mani-Kodex*, 29. It is translated as: “Erst diese haben über die Entrückung ihres Lehrers geschrieben, um sich (damit) zu brüsten.”

⁴¹ CMC 48.14. See Cirillo, *Concordanze*, 35.

Baraies and the Role of Textual Excerpts

In the first major section of his homily, Baraies offers textual proof for his tripartite claim that all the ancestral prophets were raptured, preached about what they saw and heard to their immediate community, and wrote down their revelations for future generations.⁴² To make his case, Baraies excerpts passages from various apocalypses attributed to Adam, Sethel, Enosh, Shem, Enoch, and from the letters of Paul. One can imagine Baraies scouring the ancestral archive for textual evidence that would support his argument. Whenever he came across a passage that seemed apt, he strung it together with other passages from the same text to create an argumentative whole. He neither hides his sources nor does he seek to incorporate them into a smooth literary composition. He presents his curated work as if he is merely letting his sources speak for themselves, as if they simply say what he has been arguing all along. He claims he brings nothing new to the table, yet we should not be fooled.

We will not spend much time on the excerpts themselves since they are not our focus. In fact, Baraies himself offers little actual commentary on these excerpts. Nevertheless, to get a sense of how Baraies makes his case, let us turn briefly to those excerpts from an otherwise unknown apocalypse of Enoch.⁴³ Baraies says,

And again Enoch spoke in this way in his apocalypse (πάλιν καὶ ὁ Ἐνώχ τοῦτον τὸν τρόπον ἔφη ἐν τῇ αὐτοῦ ἀποκαλύψει):

“I am Enoch the righteous. Great is my distress and there is a streaming of tears from my eyes, because I have heard the slander that came from the mouth of the impious.”

He (Enoch) said (ἔλεγεν δὲ [ὁ]τι):

“With tears in my eyes and an entreaty in my mouth, I saw standing before me seven angels descending from heaven. When I saw them, I was shaken with fear, so that my knees knocked against one another.”

And again he said thus (καὶ πάλιν εἶπεν οὕτως):

“One of the angels, Michael by name, said to me, ‘For this reason I have been sent to you, so that we may demonstrate to you all works and reveal to you the realm of the pious, and that I may show to you the realm of the impious, and what the place of punishment of the lawless is like.’”

He said again (φησὶ δὲ πάλιν ὅτι):

“They seated me on a chariot of wind and carried me off to the ends of the heavens. We passed through the realms, the realm of death and the realm of

⁴² CMC 48.16–62.9.

⁴³ Reeves, *Heralds*, 183–206. See also, David Frankfurter, “Apocalypses Real and Alleged in the Mani Codex,” *Numen* 44 (1997): 60–73.

darkness and the realm of fire. After these things, they brought me to the richest realm, most glorious in its light and more beautiful than the luminaries that I saw.”

He beheld everything and questioned the angels. Whatever they said to him, he would inscribe in his writings (πάντα δὲ ἐθεώρησεν καὶ ἐξήγησεν τοὺς ἀγγέλους καὶ, εἴ τι αὐτῷ εἶπον, ἐνεχάραξεν αὐτοῦ ταῖς γραφαῖς).⁴⁴

I cite the entirety of his excerpts from an apocalypse of Enoch to stress one obvious point: Baraies’ typology of prophethood is his own, not Enoch’s. Enoch never says that he chose an Elect community; neither he nor the other ancestral apostles know of such a thing. Nor does Enoch say that he “wrote down” his revelation for the sake of posterity. Baraies simply assumes that the textualization of this apocalypse is evidence that it was written for later generations. Enoch does mention that the angels “seated me on a chariot of wind and carried me off to the ends of the heavens,” which Baraies presents as an example of rapture. Nevertheless, as a whole, it is clear that Baraies is reading his understanding of prophethood into his sources.

We can see how Baraies produces a synthetic argument from these discrete examples by turning briefly to his other excerpts. We have just seen that Enoch made no mention of writing for posterity. Neither do Baraies’ excerpts from the apocalypses of Sethel and Shem nor from the letters of Paul. Nevertheless, Baraies does find textual evidence for this claim in two other passages. The first is from an apocalypse of Adam: “I am Balsamos, the Greatest Angel of Light. Receive from me and write these things I reveal to you on the purest papyrus (ἐν χάρτηι καθαρωτάτῳ) which is not perishable nor liable to worms.”⁴⁵ Baraies reads Balsamos’ command to Adam to write on imperishable papyrus as evidence for his point that all the ancestral apostles wrote down their revelations for posterity. Baraies reads the following passage from an apocalypse of Enosh in a similar manner: “Write all these secrets on bronze tablets and hide them in the ground of the desert. Everything you write, write very clearly. For this is my revelation that never perishes and it is ready to be revealed to all the brothers.”⁴⁶ As Baraies goes on to say, “Everything that he (Enosh) heard and saw, he wrote down and passed on to all posterity who are of the spirit of truth.”⁴⁷ Since Baraies both assumes and

⁴⁴ CMC 58.6–60.12.

⁴⁵ CMC 49.3–10.

⁴⁶ CMC 54.11–22.

⁴⁷ CMC 55.5–9.

argues that what happened to one prophet happened to all of them, he simply presents these excerpts from an apocalypse of Adam and Enosh as representative of all prophets, thus fashioning a synthetic argument from his excerpts. Unsurprisingly, one of the more consistent elements found across these excerpts is the “rapture.”⁴⁸ With the exception of the apocalypse of Adam, all the other excerpts either mention rapture outright or can be interpreted as an example of rapture, as in the case of Enoch mentioned above. Clearly, Baraies still has his opponents’ accusation ringing in his head.

While Sethel or Enosh might be forgiven for not presenting evidence that they share Baraies’ construction of prophethood, might Mani be forgiven? In other words, is Baraies simply transmitting a prophetology that Mani had already completely and finally announced? No. The newness of Baraies’ construction of prophethood is best demonstrated by actually reading his excerpts from Mani’s own writings. If Baraies is simply carrying forth tradition, one would expect that Mani’s writings to support this construction. Yet *none* of the excerpts from Mani’s writings bear evidence that Mani had himself conceptualized prophethood in the way that Baraies does; Mani simply does not say what Baraies wants him to say.

First, none of his excerpts ever mentions a rapture. Baraies is reading that notion into Mani’s writings. Second, while one of Baraies’ excerpts from Mani’s *Living Gospel* mentions that Mani chose his Elect and that he wrote down his revelation, the passage does not attempt to consolidate these discrete elements into a second-order category that we might call “prophethood.”⁴⁹ When Mani says that he wrote down his “immortal *Gospel* (τὸ ἀθάνατον εὐαγγέλιον),” he is simply introducing the occasion that led to the writing of the *Gospel*. There is nothing in that passage that says that he wrote the *Gospel* in order to fulfill his call as a prophet. Likewise, when Mani writes that he saw the “truth of ages (ἀλήθειαν αἰώνων)” in that same passage, he is drawing attention to the “eminent mysteries (τὰ τῆς ὑπερ[ο]χῆς ὄργια)” contained within the *Gospel*.

⁴⁸ Apocalypse of Seth, CMC 51.6–12; Apocalypse of Enosh, CMC 53.1–2; Apocalypse of Shem, CMC 55.15–19; Apocalypse of Enoch, CMC 59.16–20; From 2 Corinthians 12:1–5, CMC 61.7–9.

⁴⁹ CMC 67.7–68.21. This passage from Mani’s *Gospel* reads very much like an introduction, especially since it opens with Mani declaring himself as “I, Mani, an Apostle of Jesus Christ through the Will of God, the Father of Truth, from whom I also was born...” (ἐγὼ Μαννιχαῖος Ἰη(σο)ῦ Χρ(ιστο)ῦ ἀπόστολος διὰ θελήματος θεοῦ Π(ατ)ρ(ὸ)ς τῆς ἀληθείας ἔξ οὗ καὶ γέγονα...).

Again, there is no hint that Mani is trying to fulfill an abstract definition of prophethood by writing the *Gospel*. When we consider that Baraies had access to a wide range of Mani's writings, then the fact that he could not find a single passage that succinctly and clearly says what he wants Mani to say should strike us as quite odd. Presumably, had Baraies found a single passage written by Mani that stated explicitly that all the prophets received their revelations through raptures, preached about that revelation to their respective communities, and wrote down that revelation for posterity, then he would have excerpted that passage. But he does not, which suggests that Baraies' typology of prophethood is entirely his own, not Mani's.

With that, we can return to the ancestral apostles. Baraies concludes this discussion with the following summary, which reiterates the major points of Baraies' construction of prophethood, albeit in condensed form.

Finally, all the most blessed apostles, saviors, evangelists, and prophets of the truth, each of them beheld in so far as the living hope was revealed to him for a proclamation.

And they wrote down, left behind, and deposited as a remembrance for the future sons of the holy spirit and those who will know the sense of his voice.

καὶ τὸ πέρασ δὲ πάντες οἱ μακαριώτατοι ἀπόστολοι καὶ σωτῆρες καὶ εὐαγγελισταὶ καὶ τῆς ἀληθείας προφήται ἕκαστος αὐτῶν ἐθεώρησεν καθ' ὃν ἀπεκαλύφθη αὐτῷ ἐλ[πί]ς ἢ ζῶσα πρὸς τὸ κήρυ[γμα] καὶ ἔγραψαν καὶ κα[τα]λελοίπασιν καὶ ἀπέ[θεν]το εἰς ὑπόνησιν [τῶν ἐ]σομένων υἱῶν τοῦ [Ἀγίου Π]ν(εύματος) καὶ γνωσομέ[νων τῆς] φων[ῆς αὐτο]ῦ τὴν αἴσθησιν.⁵⁰

The ancestral prophets received divine revelations (καθ' ὃν ἀπεκαλύφθη) through a rapture, they chose an Elect community to whom they proclaimed (πρὸς τὸ κήρυ[γμα]) what they had seen, then they wrote and left behind books of revelation for their spiritual progeny. The last sentence in particular illuminates how Baraies saw himself in relation to the earlier prophets and to his contemporary opponents. We do not have to wonder whom Baraies is referring to when he says that all the "prophets of truth" wrote for "the future sons of the holy spirit, who will know the sense of his voice." Surely, Baraies is referring to himself and his brothers. These are not innocent declarations of one's identity. They are fighting words against his opponents who do not understand how to read their own ancestral archive.

⁵⁰ CMC 62.9–63.1.

Raptures and Arrogance: Baraies' Fighting Words

Let us situate these “fighting words” in relation to the whole of the homily. The goal of this passage is not only to present Mani as the most recent prophet in a line of ancestral prophets but also to position Baraies and his faction as the proper interpreters of the ancestral writings. Just as all the ancestral apostles wrote for the “future sons of the [Holy] Spirit who will know the sense of his voice,” so too did Mani “write to us and signify (σημαίνει) to all posterity” concerning his “rapture and revelation.” Together, these passages imply that there are those who can properly understand the ancestral archive and those who cannot. When we view what follows through this lens of intra-communal competition, we can further nuance the opponents’ accusation. After all, Baraies’ opponents were not offended by the mere fact that the Manichaeans wrote a “rapture.”⁵¹ The rapture itself is not the problem. The problem is that the Manichaeans dared to write one for Mani. The opponents saw the writing of a rapture as a symptom of a deeper problem among the disciples of Mani – hubris: “They *alone* wrote a rapture of their teacher in order *to boast!*” So why is writing a rapture a sign of arrogance?

To answer this question, we need to see how Baraies uses passages from Mani’s books to extend his argument. Baraies clarifies his position here and in the following pages by addressing his brothers once again: “We recognize that he did not receive the truth from men nor from listening to books, as our father himself says in the writings that he sent to Edessa.”⁵² In other words, one of the key things that Baraies says Mani “signified” in his books was that Mani’s wisdom was directly sourced from the Father through the Divine Twin, without any human intervention, or to be even more specific, without any contribution from the Baptist community in which he was reared for over two decades. The excerpts that Baraies lifts from Mani’s writings bear this point out, as

⁵¹ As implied by Henrichs and Koenen (Idem, “Der Kölner Mani-Kodex,” (1970) 106–110); idem, *ZPE* 1975, 80–81 n. 80. Michel Tardieu identifies Baraies’ opponents as “Manichaean renegades who doubted the authenticity of the visions of the founder and who claimed that Mani himself had never written anything on the subject” (Tardieu, “La chaîne des prophètes,” 362–363). Yet to call these opponents “Manichaean renegades” is to replicate Baraies’ polemical tone, not to analyze it. Eibert Tigchelaar breaks with Henrichs and Koenen and suggests that Baraies’ opponents “valued ‘apocalyptic’ visionary experiences and journeys as a source of revelation or as a token of having been sent” (Tigchelaar, “Baraies on Mani’s Rapture,” 429–441, at 435).

⁵² CMC 63.23–64.7.

do numerous passages from the CMC.⁵³ For example, Baraies quotes a passage from one of Mani's writings to Edessa.

The truth and the secrets which I speak about – and the laying on of hands that is with me – not from men have I received it nor from fleshly creatures nor even from studies of the scriptures (οὐκ ἐξ ἀν(θρώπ)ων αὐτὴν παρέλαβον ἢ σαρκικῶν πλασμάτων, ἀλλ' οὐδὲ ἐκ τῶν ὁμιλιῶν τῶν γραφῶν). But when my most blessed (Father), who called me into his grace, beheld me, since he did not wish me and the rest who are in the world to perish, he felt compassion, so that he might extend his well-being to those prepared to be chosen by him from the sects (ἐκ τῶν δογματῶν). Then, by his grace, he pulled me from the council of the many who do not recognize the truth (ἀπὸ τοῦ συνεδρίου τοῦ πλήθους τοῦ τὴν ἀλήθειαν μὴ γινώσκοντος) and revealed to me his secrets and those of his undefiled Father and of all the cosmos. He disclosed to me how they existed before the foundation of the world, and how the groundwork of all the works, both good and evil, was laid, and how they manufactured from the mixture in those (times).⁵⁴

Here, Mani writes that his Father had pulled him out of the “council of many who do not recognize the truth,” which according to the CMC, must be his Baptist community.⁵⁵ Baraies excerpts a passage from Mani's *Living Gospel* to similar effect, “When my father showed favor and treated me with pity and solicitude, he sent from there my never-failing Twin... and redeem me from the error of those of that law (ἐκ τῆς πλάνης τῶν τοῦ νόμου ἐκείνου)... He came and chose me in preference to others and set me aside, drawing me away from the midst of those of that law in which I was reared (ἐκ μέσου τῶν τοῦ νόμου ἐκείνου καθ' ὃν ἀνετρέφην).”⁵⁶ Baraies' other excerpts, all probably from Mani's *Living Gospel*, also emphasize that Mani received divine revelations from the Father.⁵⁷

Rather than taking Mani's words at face value, we can instead try to situate them within a broader conversation. One question that we might ask is why does Mani insist in so many of his writings that he is no longer (or never was) a Baptist? We can sharpen this question by

⁵³ See, for example, CMC 5.3–13, 6.2–6, 9.1–16, 25.1–15, 44.1–12, and especially the “mini-homily” also attributed to Baraies in CMC 72.9–74.5.

⁵⁴ CMC 64.8–65.19.

⁵⁵ The word “council” (CMC 74.8–16, 77.4–8) outside of Baraies' homily refer to Baptist leaders and may be related to the act of holding a “synod,” for example, “The multitude of his fellow Elders set up a synod on my account” (τὸ πλήθος τῶν ἐταίρων αὐτοῦ πρεσβυτέρων σύνοδον ἐποίησαντο ἐμοῦ χάριν; CMC 89.7. Compare with CMC 110.7).

⁵⁶ CMC 69.9–70.10.

⁵⁷ CMC 66.4–68.5, 68.6–69.8.

attending to chronology: Mani probably wrote his letter to Edessa and his *Living Gospel* years if not decades after his supposed final break with the Baptists. If so, why is he still harping about it? Perhaps it had become something of a textual reflex or habit for Mani, steeped as he was in the Apostle Paul's epistolary habits. Or perhaps some people continued to think that Mani was affiliated with the Baptists even decades after his supposed final break.

Moreover, we should recognize that Mani does not offer an objective account of events in his own life in the excerpts above. What he offers instead is an interpretation of events in his life. Indeed, a keen reader of the Pauline Epistles would immediately recognize that Baraies' excerpt from Mani's letter to Edessa appropriates and expands on Galatians 1:11–24: Like the Apostle Paul, Mani claims that he did not receive his revelation from humans nor his studies, but from God. And, when God felt compassion on Mani, he sent him to preach to "those prepared to be chosen from the sects," which mirrors Paul's claim that when God was "pleased" to reveal his Son to Paul, God called him to preach to the Gentiles. Thus, Mani has already molded events in his life to fit Paul's narrative in Galatians.

If we get past the assumption that Mani and the CMC simply tell the truth, then we can instead see them as presenting a single argument: the Baptist community contributed nothing to Mani's intellectual or theological development. He learned nothing from "men... fleshly creatures nor even from studies of the scriptures." Rather, according to the CMC, everything that Mani learned and taught was through the revelations he had received after having been "raptured" by his Divine Twin.

I do not think that modern scholars were the first to recognize the sheer impossibility of this claim. Baraies' opponents could not either. They totally rejected the hagiographic claims made about Mani's life in the CMC. What troubled them when they read the CMC was that it depicted a completely alien Mani, someone who never participated in the community in which he was raised, never acted nor thought like his Baptist peers, and who was "a stranger and a solitary one (ὁθνεῖωι καὶ μονήρει)" from the very beginning.⁵⁸ Note that this does not mean that they rejected Mani completely, only that they rejected the source of Mani's teaching. For all we know, they might have seen him instead as a teacher among other teachers, one who had learned what he taught through normal means of human instruction, and even perhaps as an important teacher with radical

⁵⁸ CMC 44.7, parallel in CMC 102.10. See also CMC 31.1, 31.4, 31.19, 104.19.

insights. What Baraies' homily suggests is that they were not prepared to accept that his teachings were divinely sourced.

Finally, Baraies concludes by explaining why he felt it necessary to write this homily in the first place. Even though he knows that Mani's revelation is superior to those of the ancestral apostles, he felt moved to write this homily to correct the mistaken opinions of his opponents. He writes:

In the books of our father are many such similar superior things (πλεῖστοι δὲ ὑπερβολαί) that demonstrate both his revelation and the rapture of his apostleship. For great is the superiority (ὑπερβολή) of this coming that comes to us through the Paraclete, the Spirit of Truth. For what purpose and reason are we moved to engage (περὶ γὰρ τούτων τίνος χάριν καὶ διὰ [τί κε]κίνηται ἡμῖν) with such things, we who are once and for all convinced that this apostleship is superior [ὑπερβάλλειν] in its revelations? We have repeated from our forefathers their raptures and each of their revelations for the sake of the reasonings of those who are clothed in unbelief and suppose something incorrect about this revelation and vision of our father (Mani), so that they might know that this same commission (ἡ διαταγή) was given to the ancestral apostles: For when each of them was raptured, all these things that he beheld and heard, he wrote them down and set them forth, and he himself became a witness of his own revelation, while his disciples became the seals of his apostleship (αὐτὸς αὐτοῦ τῆς ἀποκαλύψεως μάρτυς ἐγένετο. οἱ δὲ μαθηταὶ αὐτοῦ ἐγίνοντο σφραγῖς αὐτοῦ τῆς ἀποστολῆς).⁵⁹

Baraies orients his homily outward; although he is writing *to* his brothers, he is writing *for* his opponents. As we have already mentioned, for Baraies' argument to have had any hope of success on his opponents, he must have shared a common set of ancestral forefathers with them. Baraies concludes by reiterating his point that all the prophets were given the same "commission," what we have called his typology of prophethood. But it is the rather cryptic phrase that "his disciples would become the seals of his apostleship" that may demonstrate something important about this moment. Here, Baraies draws from 1 Corinthians 9:2, where the Apostle Paul calls the Corinthian community his "seal of apostleship."⁶⁰ I suggest here that Baraies' closing comment subtly shifts the locus of authority from the writings of the deceased prophet to his disciples who in turn authenticate those writings. One imagines that Baraies has in mind disciples like himself, who are members of a privileged group

⁵⁹ CMC 70.10–72.7.

⁶⁰ ZPE, 72 n. 138. Guy Stroumsa, *The Making of Abrahamic Religions in Late Antiquity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), 87–102. Tigchelaar, "Baraies on Mani's Rapture," 434–436.

of educated readers and writers who presented themselves as the authorized spokespersons for tradition: a “scholastic” community.⁶¹

THE OTHER SIDE OF THE ARGUMENT:
ONE COMMUNITY, TWO FACTIONS

We are now in a better position to identify Baraies’ opponents. In the concluding lines of his homily mentioned above, Baraies states his goal is to correct his opponents who misunderstood Mani’s commission as an Apostle of Jesus Christ. In the introduction, he mentions those who accused the followers of Mani of writing a rapture “in order to boast” about the superior revelations of their teacher. Yet the only way that the opponents could have declared that the Manichaeans *alone* wrote a rapture of their teacher is if they compared the CMC against an already existing literary archive. Baraies’ homily hints at what that archive included: ancient apocalypses or more generally, the writings of the forefathers. Naturally, this means that the opponents were educated and able to access the archive themselves. Furthermore, since the opponents accused the Manichaeans of boasting about their teacher, they might have had some stake in what it meant to be a teacher of a community. Indeed, these opponents had already developed their own opinions about the revelation of Mani, since Baraies concludes by stating that he wrote “for the sake of the reasonings of those who are clothed in unbelief and suppose something incorrect about this revelation and vision of our father (Mani).” Baraies’ opponents might be “supposing something incorrect” about Mani, but the fact that they are supposing something *at all* suggests that they were sophisticated thinkers in their own right. Perhaps they had even developed their opinions about Mani based on good faith attempts at understanding his teachings. Finally, we might

⁶¹ For more on the heuristic value of “scholasticism,” see Adam Becker, “The Comparative Study of Scholasticism in Late Antique Mesopotamia: Rabbis and East Syrians,” *AJSR* 34.1 (2010): 91–113, at 104–110. Also, Michael D. Swartz, “Scholasticism as a Comparative Category and the Study of Judaism,” in *Scholasticism: Cross-Cultural and Comparative Perspectives* (ed. J.I. Cabézon; Albany: State University New York Press, 1998), 91–114. On Manichaean “scholasticism” more broadly, see Iain Gardner, “Towards an Understanding of Mani’s Religious Development and the Archaeology of Manichaean Identity,” in *Religion and Retributive Logic: Essays in Honour of Professor Gary W. Trompf* (ed. C.M. Cusack and C. Hartney; Leiden: Brill, 2010), 147–158. For initial work into the comparative pedagogical cultures between rabbinic and Manichaean circles, see Jae Hee Han, “Mani’s *Metivta*: Manichaean Pedagogy in its Late Antique Mesopotamian Context,” *HTR* 114.3 (2021): 346–370.

suppose that Baraies' very mode of argumentation would reflect not only his intellectual training, but the register of the debate itself. As we have seen, his argumentation relies exclusively on accessing, curating, and presenting excerpts from a set of textual sources, which spanned ancient apocalypses, Paul's letters, and Mani's writings. Baraies would presumably not have presented his argument in such a way if his opponents were either incapable or unfamiliar with such a highly textualized mode of argumentation. Such signs suggest that Baraies' opponents were teachers in their own right.

We can also look closer into how Baraies addresses his opponents. As already discussed, we should immediately understand Baraies' claims that they had "turned away" and "clothed themselves with unbelief" as part of Baraies' rhetoric. If anything, such terms highlight that Baraies considered these opponents as intimate enemies. After all, Baraies cares enough of what they think to respond in depth. This suggests that Baraies and his opponents are on speaking terms, however strained, and that boundaries between them have not hardened beyond the point of no return.

In fact, I would go one step further. Baraies and his opponents must have recognized one another as part of a single community. After all, Baraies' argument works on the basis of comparison between Mani and a shared set of forefathers, the so-called "ancestral apostles" (τῶν προγόνων ἀποστόλων): Adam, Sethel, Enosh, Shem, Enoch, and the Apostle Paul. Indeed, Baraies takes this shared set of ancestral apostles as a given, not a point of contention. The only point of contention is Mani and where he fits within that lineage. This means that for Baraies' homily to have had even a ghost of chance of persuading his opponents, they must have also understood their lineage to be the same as Baraies' faction, which in turn suggests that Baraies is addressing teachers among his own community.

If so, it is a mistake to impose binary oppositions like Baptist/Manichaeen or even ex-Manichaeen/Manichaeen from the outset. Rather, Baraies is a member of an already existing community whose teachers are divided over the question of how to understand Mani's relationship to that community; he is not a member of a new and wholly distinct "Manichaeen" community. Moreover, since Baraies' argument works on the basis of including Mani into an already existing roster of ancestral apostles shared by both parties, then those who follow Mani are not relinquishing their prior "religious" affiliation or "converting" from one religion to another. Rather, they are extending their already existing "religious" identity to include Mani.

Baraies' Opponents as Non-Manichaean Baptists

What then is this “religious” community? While probative evidence is lacking, I suggest that Baraies is a member of the Baptist community similar to the one in which Mani was raised. One might qualify the category “Baptist” in some sense, for example, “reformed Baptist” or “Manichaean Baptist” to better align with Baraies’ allegiance to Mani. What is important for the moment is that we bracket the assumption that Baptist and Manichaean were always and everywhere mutually exclusive categories. We know from the CMC, for example, that Mani’s first followers were members of his own Baptist community. In that context, he must have been simply another Baptist teacher discussing matters peculiar to Baptists among Baptists he had known for over two decades. It would thus be a mistake to see what began as a local intra-Baptist disagreement as a definitive point of origin for a new religion altogether, even despite the CMC’s insistence that the Baptists contributed nothing to Mani’s theological or intellectual development. In fact, when we read certain passages of the CMC against the grain, we see that the way it depicts the relationships between Mani, his followers, and the Baptist community was more complicated than a straightforward reading would have us believe. The CMC protests too loudly that Mani was utterly unlike the Baptists and its assertion of his radical difference can only make sense against a backdrop of suppressed similarities. Thus, instead of simply acquiescing to and replicating the CMC’s rhetoric of Mani’s difference from his Baptist community, we will highlight the suppressed points of similarity, thereby reading the CMC against itself to offer a plausible identification of Baraies’ opponents as non-Manichaean Baptists.

Consider, for example, the fact that Mani never really left his community. True, he left his home somewhere near Ctesiphon, but two of Mani’s neighbors (Simeon and Abizachias) and his father (Pattikios) voluntarily left with him.⁶² Mani is not a lone figure heroically leaving his past behind to set out on his new mission. He travels with members of his home community, with his own father and neighbors, no less. Furthermore, Mani not only interacted with other Baptists in his travels,⁶³ he also continued

⁶² CMC 106.19, 111.5–8.

⁶³ Aside from CMC 140.11–143.12 discussed below, possibly, CMC 111.15–16, where Pattikios finds Mani in the “Church of the Holy Ones” (ἐν [τῆι ἐκ]κλησίαι τῶν ἁγίων). A fellow Baptist had informed Pattikios, who had been searching for Mani around Baptist “synods” (τὰς συνόδους τὰς πέριξ), about the location of Mani. Since Pattikios is

to visit Baptist churches and may have even participated in some of their rituals (except baptism, of course), albeit differently.⁶⁴ In one telling moment within a badly fragmented passage of the CMC, a Baptist from Pharat says to Mani's father, Pattikios, "... the wisdom is with your son as it is with the elders and the teachers. I have already seen in him that he bore witness to us with all wisdom, cleverness, and explanation of the scriptures (ὅτι [σὺν πάσῃ] τῇ σοφίᾳ κ[αὶ εὐμηχανί]αί καὶ σαφην[εῖα] τῶν) βιβλῶν ἣν μ[άρτυς πρὸς ἡ]μᾶς). But it is clear that he is different from our teachers."⁶⁵ This is an obvious hagiographic trope and attempts at uncovering a "historical kernel" are probably misguided. Rather, we can read this episode as a fantasy of how later Manichaeans imagined the spread of Mani's message among the Baptists. Mani comes bearing a type of wisdom shared by the Baptist elders and teachers, through which he clarifies the Baptist scriptures. Thus, Mani functions as a "Baptist" teacher clarifying Baptist scripture through superior wisdom even after his supposed final break with the Baptists. If so, the Baptist from Pharat is not converting from his "original" religion to Manichaeism as much as he is becoming a better "Baptist" through Mani's interpretations of his community's scriptures.

We can also turn to the moment when Mani is expelled from his home community. After being beaten and rejected by most of his community, he laments to his Divine Twin that just as the Baptists rejected him, so too will the world surely reject him as well. His reasoning is peculiar. He says:

How can I not be distressed? For those of that sect, among whom I was raised since youth, have turned away and become my enemies because I have separated myself from their law... When I was in this sect, whose followers had read about the Purity, the Mortification of the Flesh, and the keeping of the "Resting of the Hands," who all also recognized me by name and appreciated my body more than all the other sects, and among whom my body was reared, nursed, and raised in this sect, and with whom I also had contact with its overseers and

searching for Mani within Baptist communities, the "Church of the Holy Ones" may somehow be associated with the Baptists as well. Presumably, Pattikios searched for Mani in Baptist synods because he expected to find him there, among other Baptists.

⁶⁴ CMC 140.11–143.12. From the fragmentary text, it seems that Mani and his father Pattikios are engaging in prayer and the collection of alms together with the Baptist community in Pharat. Nevertheless, they do these rituals differently from the other Baptists. Yet this difference in practice is not indicative of two different religions, i.e., Manichaeism and Baptists, but could also be read as the possibilities for the divergent ways that a ritual might be practiced within a single community, in this case, the Baptist community of Pharat. Why must we imagine that the Baptists were completely unified in thought and practice?

⁶⁵ CMC 143.2–15.

elders, at least in relation to the rearing of my body. If these have offered me no room for the reception of truth, how will the world, with its princes or its teachings, receive me?⁶⁶

πῶς ἄρα μὴ λυπῶμαι; οἱ γὰρ ἐν τούτῳ τῷ δόγματι, μεθ' ὧν ἐκ νεότητος ἀνεστράφην, μετεβλήθησαν ἐχθροὶ μου κατασταθέντες διὰ τὸ διαστῆναί με τοῦ σφῶν αὐτῶν νόμου... ὀπηρῆκα δὲ ἐν τούτῳ τῷ δόγματι τῶν ἀνεγνωκότων περὶ ἀγνείας καὶ σαρκοδερίας καὶ κατοχῆς ἀναπαύσεως τῶν χειρῶν, ἔτι δὲ καὶ ἐξ ὀνόματος γινωσκόντων με πάντων... καὶ τὴν τοῦ σώματος. ἀξίαν μᾶλλον... τῶν δογμάτων – ὅτε γὰρ ἡ ἀνατροφή τοῦ σώματός μου καὶ ἡ τιθήνησις καὶ βαυκαλισμὸς ἐν ἐκείνῳ τῷ δόγματι γεγένηται μοι, καὶ τοῖς προεστῶσιν αὐτοῦ καὶ τοῖς πρεσβυτέροις συνάφειάν τινα εἶχον κατὰ τὴν τοῦ σώματος ἀνατροφήν. εἰ οὖν οὗτοι χώραν μοι μὴ δεδώκασιν πρὸς ὑποδοχὴν τῆς ἀληθείας, ποίῳ τρόπῳ ὑποδέξεται με ὁ κόσμος ἢ οἱ μεγιστᾶνες αὐτοῦ ἢ αἱ διδασκαλῖαι.

If those who knew Mani best rejected him, how much more would the world who do not already know Mani reject him! What is surprising about Mani's lament is the degree to which he admits just how well-integrated he was within the Baptist community: he was with them since youth, they knew him by name, cared for his body, and their overseers and elders "had contact" with him. Somewhat surprisingly, the Baptists had also read about the "Purity, Mortification of the Flesh, and the Keeping of the Resting of the Hands," all of which are now understood as doctrines particular to the Manichaeans!⁶⁷ It is even possible that they read about these things from texts written not by Mani, but by other Baptists, especially if we hold that Mani began to write about his revelation only *after* his expulsion.⁶⁸ Most importantly, the phrases relating to Mani's body, for example, "in relation to the rearing of my body" (κατὰ τὴν τοῦ σώματος ἀνατροφήν), are intended to demonstrate that the Baptists only knew Mani outwardly and not according to his true self. Yet such appeals to internal difference should hardly be trusted. After all, such internal differences are invisible to scrutiny and therefore unavailable as data; all we have are Mani's claims that he was like the Baptists only outwardly, but not inwardly. We have no reason to doubt the former since even Mani agrees that he was "outwardly" a Baptist, but every reason to doubt the latter, since no one can actually access Mani's interiority to discern whether he was, in fact, categorically different from his Baptist neighbors from the very beginning.

⁶⁶ CMC 101.11–104.10.

⁶⁷ Henrichs and L. Koenen, "Der Kölner Mani-Kodex (P. colon. inv. nr. 4780) Περὶ τῆς γέννησις τοῦ σώματος αὐτοῦ: Edition der Seiten 99, 10–120," *ZPE* 44 (1981):201–318, at 238–240 n. 325–327.

⁶⁸ As already suggested by Henrichs and Koenen. *Ibid.*, 238 n. 324.

In any case, we know that not everyone rejected Mani, since his father and his two neighbors had joined him on his travels. In fact, the acceptance of Mani's teachings among a certain segment of the Baptist community is narrated in the following episode prior to his expulsion:

When I (Mani) said these things to them, thereby undermining and destroying that very thing they were zealous for, some of them marveled at me and praised me and regarded me as a leader and teacher. But there arose much slander in that sect on account of me. Some of them regarded me as a prophet and a teacher. Some of them were saying, "A living word is uttered by him. Let us make him a teacher of our sect." Others were saying, "Has a voice really spoken to him secretly and is he really saying what was revealed to him?" They were saying, "Did something appear to him in a dream and is he really saying what he saw?" Others were saying, "Is this the one about whom our teachers prophesied, saying, 'A certain young man will rise up from our midst and a new teacher will come forth to trouble all of our teaching, just as our forefathers had when they spoke about the 'Rest of the Garment?'"⁶⁹

ταῦτα δέ μου εἶπόντο[ς] πρὸς αὐτοὺς καὶ κατα[λύ]σαντος καὶ καταργή[σαν]τός μου ἐκεῖνο ὅπερ[ρ] ἔσπευ[δο]ν, τινὲς μὲν ἐξ [αὐτῶν] εὐφήμεσάν μ[ε] θαυμάζ[οντες] ἐπ' ἔμο[ι] καὶ ὡσεὶ ἀρχηγόν καὶ δι[δάσκα]λον ἔσχον με. [πολὺς] δὲ ψιθυρισμ[ὸς] ἐγένετο ἐν ἐκείνῳ τ[ῷ] δόγματι τῷ ἐμοῦ χάριν. τινὲς δὲ ἐξ αὐτῶν εἶχόν με ὡσεὶ προφήτην καὶ διδάσκαλον. καὶ τινὲς μὲν ἐξ αὐτῶν ἔλεγον, "ζῶν λόγος αἰδεταὶ ἐν αὐτῷ. ποιήσωμεν αὐτὸν διδάσκαλον τοῦ δόγματος ἡμῶν." ἄλλοι δὲ ἔλεγον, "μήτι ἄρα φωνὴ αὐτῷ ἐλάλησεν κατὰ τὸ λεληθὸς κάκεινα ἅπερ ἀπεκάλυψεν αὐτῷ λέγει." καὶ οἱ μὲν ἔλεγον, "μὴ κα[τ'] ὄναρ ὤφθη τι αὐτῷ, [κἀ]κεῖνο ὅπερ εἶδεν λέγει." ἄλλοι δὲ ἔλεγον, "μή[τι] οὐ[τὸς] ἔστιν περὶ οὐ[τὸ] [ἐμ]προφ[η]τήτευσαν οἱ διδά[σκα]λο[ι] ἡμῶν λέγοντες, '[ἀ]ναστή[σεται] τις ἡῖθε[ος] ἐκ μέσ[ου] ἡμῶν καὶ [δι]δάσκα[λος] νέος π[ρο]σελεύσεται ὡς καὶ κινήσαι ἡμῶν τὸ πᾶν δόγμα ὄν τρόπον οἱ πρόγονοι ἡμῶν πατέρες ἐφθέγγαντο περὶ τῆς ἀναπαύσεως τοῦ ἐνδύματος."

The passage goes on to describe how a faction of Baptists thought that Mani was a charlatan who sought to overturn the Baptist community's traditions. Again, this is a highly tendentious account designed ultimately to show that Mani was not a prophet by his own agency, but the fulfillment of an ancient Baptist prophecy: "A certain young man will rise up *from our midst*." While this episode may or may not describe a real event, it is enough for our argument that the later Manichaeans responsible for relating this episode nevertheless portrayed Mani in continuity with Baptist prophecies. They had no problem presenting Mani as a "leader and teacher" and a "teacher of our doctrine" of the Baptists. In fact, much like Baraies who argues that Mani is a prophet like the ancestral prophets, so too do the Baptists here place Mani in a line of momentous events *within* Baptist history; in the same way that the Baptist forefathers

⁶⁹ CMC 85.13–87.6.

unsettled even earlier teachings through the introduction of their new doctrine of the “Rest of the Garment,” so too does Mani unsettle the laws of baptism and agriculture through his teachings. In other words, both past and future “ruptures” are moments within Baptist history, not points of departure from it.

Finally, we can revisit the passages in which Mani disputes the practices of the Baptists, especially the cultivation of agriculture and baptism.⁷⁰ Indeed, the very fact that Mani builds his case by appealing to past Baptist authorities, specifically Elchasai, Sabbaios, and Aianos, is proof enough that he does not, in fact, escape his particular upbringing within a Baptist community.⁷¹ Mani recounts four episodes from Elchasai’s life, and one each from Sabbaios and Aianos as part of his argument that ritual baptism is ineffective as a means of achieving ritual purity. The CMC presents Mani as triumphing over his Baptist neighbors by appealing to past Baptist teachers, whom he calls the “those of your Law” (ἐκ τοῦ νόμου ὑμῶν) and “your leaders” (τοῖς μείζουσιν ὑμῶν).⁷² Yet in the same breath that he declares that these are from “your” law, Mani recounts specific, one might even say granular, episodes from the lives of Elchasai, Sabbaios, and Aianos. Indeed, one gets the sense that Mani knows many stories about these figures and chose only those particular episodes that best fit his immediate argument. Yet from whom did Mani learn about these episodes in the lives of Elchasai, Sabbaios, and Aianos? Most likely from the very overseers and elders (τοῖς προεστῶσιν αὐτοῦ καὶ τοῖς πρεσβυτέροις) he mentions in his lament! In other words, Mani’s exempla themselves are informed by his deep engagement with “your laws,” which consequently throw into doubt his insistent claim that he was only outwardly a member of the Baptists.

Moreover, the very topic of discussion, as well as Mani’s radical position within the debate over the efficacy of ritual baptism, can be understood non-teleologically as part of an intra-Baptist debate, not an inter-religious debate between “the Baptists” and the “Manichaeans.” True, Mani adopts a radical position that overturns the laws of Baptism. Yet even then, the CMC stated that this “overturning of laws” is in fact the fulfillment of Baptist prophecy, as we had seen above. Most importantly, Mani’s “radical” position is still only intelligible when resituated within and in relation to his Mesopotamian Baptist community. In other

⁷⁰ CMC 79.14–99.9.

⁷¹ CMC 94.1–99.9.

⁷² CMC 94.3–4, 6–7.

words, Mani occupies an opposite position within a debate whose very terms are set by the Baptist community.

To conclude this part of our discussion, when we read the CMC against itself, we can critique its claim that Mani learned everything from his Divine Twin and that the Baptists contributed nothing to his intellectual or theological development. Rather, what it really does is suppress points of similarity to present Mani's claims of difference as unproblematically true. Once we "correct" for the CMC's tendentious manner of presenting Mani as utterly unlike his Baptist neighbors, and thus as a point of origin for a wholly new "religion," Mani ends up looking more like a Baptist teacher. A radical one, to be sure, but one whose radical ideas nevertheless only make sense in relation to his particular Baptist context.

I propose that such a rereading of the CMC offers a plausible context for identifying Baraies' opponents as non-Manichaean Baptists. If Baraies is indeed responding to a group who reacted negatively to their reading of the CMC, then it stands to reason that the people who would be most incredulous of its claim that the Baptists contributed nothing to Mani's theological development and that Mani received everything from a "rapture," would be the Baptists themselves. Such a scenario would help explain the accusation as well, as the Baptists would have recognized that the CMC's account of Mani's "rapture" was part of its broader argument that Mani was never a Baptist. Moreover, since Baraies and the Baptists shared a set of forefathers, this could only mean that both factions imagined themselves as sharing a common ancestral heritage, which suggests that Baraies and his brothers are also members of the Baptist community, albeit partisans of Mani within that community.

CONTESTING TRADITIONS AND TRAJECTORIES

At this point, we have come to a better understanding of the dispute between Baraies and his opponents, and possibly, the identity of Baraies' community. Yet what might this debate about Mani and the Baptist community tell us about what was at stake? As I will argue in this concluding section, while Baraies' homily is *about* how one should understand Mani vis-à-vis the Baptist community, it is *over* who gets to represent that community. By performing his textual mastery over the ancestral archive through his homily, Baraies presents himself and his faction as the proper inheritors of that archive and hence, as the true teachers of the community who are most capable of guiding it.

Baraies insinuates throughout his homily that he and his brothers are the only ones who can properly understand the ancestral archive. For example, having just cited passages from Galatians 1:1, 2 Corinthians 12:1–5, and Galatians 1:11–12, Baraies writes, “Now while he [Paul] was outside himself and raptured to the third heaven and paradise, he saw and heard, and that which he saw and heard he inscribed enigmatically (αἰνιγματωδῶς) in his writings concerning his rapture and apostleship for the fellow initiates of the mysteries (τοῖς συμμύσταις τῶν ἀποκρύφων).”⁷³ What might it mean that Paul wrote *enigmatically* and for his “fellow initiates of the mysteries?” At the very least, Baraies is suggesting that the true meaning of Paul’s letters lay underneath their plain sense. Paul’s letters encode what he had seen and heard during his rapture and, as such, must be decoded by a community of readers, whom Baraies refers to as Paul’s “fellow initiates” and who alone are capable of understanding the revelatory truths hidden within. We can thus detect in Baraies’ remarks the beginning of a shift in the locus of meaning away from the text, in this case, Paul’s letters, to a community of readers who can access their hidden meanings.

In fact, according to Baraies, the forefathers wrote their testimonies in this way so that those like Baraies could unpack the hidden mysteries submerged within their writings. Baraies writes:

Finally, all the most blessed apostles, saviors, evangelists, and prophets of the truth, each of them beheld in so far as the living hope was revealed to him for a proclamation. And they wrote down, left behind (καταλείπεισιν), and deposited as a remembrance (εἰς ὑπόμνησιν) for the future sons of the holy spirit and those who will know the sense of his voice (γνωσομένων τῆς φωνῆς αὐτοῦ τὴν αἴσθησιν).⁷⁴

Baraies invokes the language of inheritance, memory, and textual expertise all at once. His opening statement that “each of them beheld in so far as the living hope was revealed to him for a proclamation” juxtaposes nicely with the following passages where he says that Mani’s revelation was superior in content and scope to his forefathers. More importantly, Baraies claims that the earlier apostles wrote and bequeathed their testimonies specifically “for the future sons of the holy spirit and those who will know the sense of his voice.” Who were the rightful inheritors of these writings? Who would be so bold as to claim that they possess a “sense of the voice” of the ancient prophets? No doubt Baraies is referring to himself and his faction of teachers. Again, we see Baraies

⁷³ CMC 62.8.

⁷⁴ CMC 62.9–63.1.

moving the locus of textual meaning forward in time, shifting it from the moment of inscription to the moment of interpretation, from the pen of the prophet to a community of readers gifted with the textual expertise to delve deeper into these ancestral testimonies.

Not surprisingly, the same ability for understanding the “voice” of the Holy Spirit in the ancestral writings is also needed for the proper understanding of Mani’s writings. It is here in his discussion about Mani’s rapture and revelation where Baraies closes the stitch that he has been weaving all along. He writes:

In this way, it follows that the all-praiseworthy Mani, through whom and from whom the hope and inheritance of life has come to us, should write to us and to signify to all posterity (ἡμῖν γράψαι καὶ σημεῖναι τοῖς μεταγενεστέροις πᾶσι) and householders of faith and spiritual offspring, who are increasing through his very bright waters, so that his rapture and revelation would be made known to them...⁷⁵

Mani did not just write, he *signified*; he embedded his texts with enigmatic allusions to “his rapture and revelation” so that later followers like Baraies would know that Mani too was raptured and that he had received the entirety of his wisdom through his Divine Twin. Of course, Baraies is reading Mani’s writings to respond to his own contemporary moment. After all, Mani could not have known that “raptures” would prove so pivotal in a debate after his death, which would then require Baraies to “discover” allusions to raptures within Mani’s writings.

Finally, it is precisely Baraies’ ability to understand the “sense of his voice” that exemplifies his role as the “seal of his [Mani’s] apostleship” (συραγῖς αὐτοῦ τῆς ἀποστολῆς).⁷⁶ Baraies writes, “For when each of them [the ancestral prophets] was raptured, all these things which he beheld and heard, he wrote down and set forth, and he himself became a witness to his own revelation. But his disciples became the seal of his apostleship” (συραγῖς αὐτοῦ τῆς ἀποστολῆς). As many have noted, the term “seal of apostleship” draws on 1 Corinthians 9:2, where the apostle Paul calls the Corinthian community his “seal of apostleship” who verifies that his apostleship was truly from the Lord.⁷⁷ Baraies too seems to understand himself in this way. While Mani bore witness to his own revelation, it is Baraies and his faction who both verify and

⁷⁵ CMC 63.1–23.

⁷⁶ CMC 72.4–7.

⁷⁷ Stroumsa, *Making of Abrahamic Religions*, 87–102. Tigchelaar, “Baraies on Mani’s Rapture,” 434–436.

defend Mani's rapture and revelation. Put differently, Baraies' homily *performs* his claim that he and his brothers are Mani's "seal of apostleship." The proof of Baraies' expertise lies in his demonstrated ability to access the ancestral archive and to compose new arguments from it to meet local challenges.

If so, then Baraies positions his faction of Mani-followers as the guardians of tradition; they, and not his opponents, nor even the apostles themselves, are uniquely positioned to interpret and authenticate the ancestral writings as true testimonies of revelations. By extension, one can say that though Baraies' dispute was about how one should understand Mani in relation to the ancestral prophets, it was ultimately over the stewardship of the community's ancestral lineage. This was no accident since these ancestral texts served as the common ground for negotiation for both parties. Yet common ground easily gives way to schism. For his part, Baraies and his faction recognized these testimonies as reservoirs of deep communal history and sought to direct the flow of that history to the one whom he considered its latest culmination – the prophet Mani.

CONCLUSION

I have argued above that Baraies was not a mere tradent, but a bricoleur, cobbling together his response to urgent local problems with the resources available to him. It is only in the process of responding that he constructs what we might call a typology of prophethood. At the same time, I have stressed that we must see Baraies and his faction as members of an already existing community undergoing internal schism rather than a teacher of a new and already distinct "Manichaean" community suffering from a high rate of attrition. I identified Baraies' community with the Baptists, though probative evidence is and will likely remain absent. If my argument above is sound, then Baraies' homily presents one of the earliest snapshots of a Mesopotamian community at the turn of the fourth century debating the very terms used to delineate communal boundaries. Ironically, what began as Baraies' attempt to incorporate Mani into an already existing community might have ended up with precisely the opposite effect – the creation of a separate community that worshipped Mani as the promised Paraclete and Apostle of Jesus Christ.

Ultimately, Baraies' somewhat ostentatious performance of textual expertise and mastery stemmed from his claim that Mani represents the continuation of ancestral history, and by extension, that he and his

faction are the true inheritors of that history. We do not know, unfortunately, how successful Baraies was with his opponents; perhaps a few were sufficiently impressed by his performance and joined his faction. What we do know, however, is that Baraies' argument was successful among his own. Its incorporation into the *Cologne Mani Codex* guarantees that Baraies' vision of prophethood found wide purchase among the followers of Mani, especially throughout Mesopotamia and the Roman Near East. Yet, as I will argue in the next chapter, it would compose only one strand of a broader prophetological discourse that flourished in the century following Mani's execution.

There, I will trace how notions of prophethood in the *Kephalaia of the Teacher* and the currently edited sections of the *Kephalaia of the Wisdom of my Lord Mani* resonate and intersect with a range of parallel discourses and historical developments in other proximate communities, especially the rabbis and "Syriac" Christians. By switching the polarity of our attention away from Mani's past forward to his disciples' unfolding present, we will consider how followers of Mani used the available resources at their disposal to negotiate problems of their own time and place. From there, we might be able to see how these negotiations both resonate with and diverge from strategies found in other proximate communities. In other words, by focusing on discourses of prophethood as they lace outwards, we will be able to look at Manichaean prophe-tology as a peculiar – but not unique – cross-section of a late antique Syro-Mesopotamian world populated by Aramaic-speaking Christians and Jews alike.