

Paradise, New World and Frashgird in Mani's Shâbuhragân

The Question of Eschatology and Dualism

In the Shâbuhragân, a didactic treatise written by Mani at the request of Shâpur I, the term 'frshygyrd', ('Frashegird')¹ is mentioned several times, along with 'New Paradise' and 'New World', or 'Aeon'. These terms should be placed in the context of Mani's eschatological vision. Each of them points to a well-defined event in the final stage of mankind and cosmos.

Many questions arise when we try to make a distinction between the three terms quoted above. Frashgird, often translated as 'end of the world' or 'restoration of the original condition', is not the same as the New Paradise, nor is it identical to what in the Shâbuhragân is referred to as the New World. Although Frashgird occurs at 'the end of the world' it should not be considered itself as being the end of the world. Some scholars understand Frashgird as the "destruction of the existing cosmos, i.e. heavens and earths".² Our opinion is that at the moment Frashgird occurs, the destruction of the cosmos has already come to an end. Another question is whether there is indeed a 'restoration' of the old order, or is it rather a 'renewal'?

- Our aim is to demonstrate that Frashgird is not the same as 'the end of the world', but the creation of a new world order, which means that in turn the two principles must necessarily be transformed and renewed according to this new world order.
- Further, we want to demonstrate that this renewal of the two principles has the effect of revealing the essential nature of each of them. They are essentially

¹ Frashgyrd, , prshgyrdn , prshykyrd, prsh(y)qyrd, Pa, MP, frashgird, n. 'end of the world, restoration of the original condition,' Mackenzie, 1979, 503, n.13
MP prshqyrd SHBRG (23) M473a+ 1 R 23 , Shbrg, (170) M 482+ 1 V 2 Shbrg a M537a+ 1V 19; Shbrg fh M 537c A 2(43).

² "frashgird, (...) in the teaching of Mani meant the destruction of the world' and also 'the end of all transformations will be the time of "peace" and "silence"' W.Sundermann, 'Manichaean Eschatology', E. Ir. VII, Costa Mesa 1998, 569-575.

more ‘themselves’ after the occurring of Frashgird, than they were before the start of the creation process.

- The conclusion will be that in the same way as the two principles were present *before* the start of the creation, they go on subsisting *after* the destruction of the created world. What has changed dramatically is their mutual relationship. Exactly by this change in their relationship it is proven that Frashgird is not to be understood as a return to the original condition of the two principles. On the contrary, it signifies a new relationship between the two principles. In other words: a new world order.

A closer investigation of the meaning of Frashgird has, necessarily, to start with an overview of the doctrine in which the term appears. For, one of the characteristics of the Manichaean system is precisely that it is impossible to single out one of its elements, separating it from its context. An understanding of Mani’s teachings presupposes an understanding of how each element receives its relevance through the position it occupies in the whole of the system as well as by being connected with the other elements.

In investigating the notion of Frashgird, the following issues are at stake:

1. A demonstration of the importance of the notion Frashgird in order to obtain a clearer understanding of the proper nature of the two principles as originally outlined in Mani’s earliest writing, the *Shâbuhragân*.
2. An exploration of the specific function of Frashgird in the context of the whole of the Manichaean system and, more specifically, as a core element of the eschatological vision in the *Shâbuhragân*.

1. Significance of the Shâbuhragân

The *Shâbuhragân* occupies a unique position among the extant Manichaean documents in Middle Iranian. Composed at the very start of his mission, ‘for the Enlightenment of Shapuhr I’, it is probably the earliest of Mani’s books directly

attributable to him. It is, at the very least, a document through which it is possible to hear the *'ipsissima vox'* of the Prophet himself.³ In the subsequent spread of Manichaeism towards the East, although not on the list of the canonical scriptures, the *Shâbuhragân* became one of the major doctrinal texts of the Eastern Manichaean Church and was translated into several languages. It is also noteworthy that in the course of the further development of Manichaeism, the treatise became known as the *Book on the Two Principles*. In the *Shâbuhragân*, a heading is repeated several times throughout the text: *'dw bwn y's (b)whrg n'*, 'The two principles of the *Shâbuhragân*', sometimes also with the designation *'wzrg'*, 'The two *great* principles of the *Shâbuhragân*'.

This explicit and frequent reference to the two principles as the core element of the Manichaean doctrine confirms the importance of the *Shâbuhragân* as a major source for the Manichaean system and its doctrinal contents.

2. *Composition of the Shâbuhragân.*

2.1. Notwithstanding the extremely fragmented condition of the manuscripts, it is possible to reconstruct the basis of the composition of the text as a whole.⁴

At the centre of the cosmogony and the eschatology are, indeed, the *'dw bwn'*, the two principles. They go through a process of change, corresponding to the Three Epochs, or times.

³ 'Daraus ergibt sich dass das *Shâbuhragân* unter den erhaltenen iranischen Texten zum Manichäismus das höchste Alter aufweisen kann und praktisch die *ipsissima vox* des Propheten wiedergibt.' Manfred Hutter, 'Das Erlösungsgeschehen im Manichäisch-Iranischen Mythos', in: *Das Manichäische Urdrama des Lichtes, Teil 2*, Wien 1989, 157.

⁴ Mary Boyce, *A Catalogue of the Iranian Manuscripts in Manichaean Script in the German Turfan Collection*, Berlin 1960 and *The Manichaean literature in Middle Iranian*, Handbuch der Orientalistik, I-4, Iranistik, 2, Literatur, Lfg 1, London 1968.

S.N.C. Lieu, *Manichaeism in Central Asia and China*, NHMS 45, Leiden, New York, Köln 1998.

W. Sundermann, *Mittelpersische und parthische kosmogonische und Parabeltexte der Manichäer*, BTT 4, Berlin 1973.

D.N.MacKenzie in BSOAS, XLII, 3, 1979 and BSOAS XLIII, 1980.

Manfred Hutter, *Manis kosmogonische Shâbuhragân-Texte, Edition, Kommentar und literaturgeschichtliche Einordnung der manichäisch-mittelpersischen Handschriften M 98/99 I and M 7980- 7984*, Wiesbaden 1992.

Werner Sundermann, *Mitteliranische manichäische Texte kirchengeschichtlichen Inhalts*, Berliner Turfantexte XI, Berlin 1981.

- Epoch I The two principles in a state of rest or inactivity (*initial condition*).
- Epoch II The two principles in a dynamic of mixture (*cosmogony*).
Creation of the cosmos (Heavens and Earths) and of Gêhmurd and Murdiyânag.
- Epoch III The two principles in a process of separation (*eschatology*).
Creation of a new paradise and a new world.
- The time of Frashgird (*final condition*).

The start of mixture as an ongoing intrusion of the beings of Darkness in the realm of Light is at the same time the start of the creation process. But the initiative is in the hands of Az and her helpers, countered only by the messengers sent from the realm of Light.

The interaction between the two principles during Epoch II calls forth an opposing interaction in Epoch III, during which the initiative is in the hands of the beings of Light. If mixture is the result of the dramatic struggle between the powers of Light and the powers of Darkness, what follows as the process of separation can be understood only out of this context. Without mixture, no separation; without creation, no salvation. The outcome of this is the creation of a new condition: Frashgird.

Mixture, ‘gumezishn’, has its structural counterpart in separation, ‘wizarishn’, the central ‘actors’ of both processes being the two principles.

Mixture can be described as a process of interference by means of which the two principles mingle ‘substantially’. The light element is integrated in the Darkness. In the course of this process, both principles, each according to its own nature, participate in the creation of the cosmos and the human being.

Separation, as the counterpart of mixture, is the result of a process of disintegration by means of which the two principles gradually regain their own essential nature.

Mixture: integration of the two principles = condition necessary to the Creation.

Separation: disintegration of the two principles = condition necessary to Frashgird.

2.2. Commentary

1. The Shâbuhragân as a doctrinal treatise, in its reconstructed form, gives a complete account of both the origin and the finality of the creation, its beginning (cosmogony) and its end (eschatology), as well as what lies in between (sometimes also called ‘anthropology’). This corresponds to one of the core elements of the Manichaean system: the three times or Three Epochs.
2. The two principles are the key elements which pass through all the successive stages of this process, at each stage in a different relationship and in a different condition.
3. Mixture and separation are the key notions indicating the main conditions through which the two principles evolve.
4. At the beginning as an initial condition, there is the state of rest or inactivity. The dynamic interaction between the two principles has not yet started.
5. At the end, there is as a final condition, the state of Frashgird. The dynamic interaction between the two principles has come to an end.

3. *Frashgird in context*

3.1. In both the cosmological and the eschatological fragments, Frashgird appears a number of times. When mentioned in the cosmological fragments, it points to future events in the form of a prediction or a prophecy (M7980-84). In the eschatological fragments it appears in the context of the final events, such as the Great Fire, the New World and the New Paradise.

3.2. The main source for the Manichaean eschatology are the fragments edited by D.N. MacKenzie.⁵ Their relatively fragmented condition can be compensated for by comparing their content to the ‘second homily’ or ‘Sermon on the Great War’, a Coptic text attributed to Kostaios, who is also mentioned in the CMC as a direct follower of Mani.⁶

2 nd Coptic Homily	Shâbuhragân
1. Error, War, Decline	
2. 1 st Restoration of justice and faith Rule of the Great King.	
3. New period of error and war Anti-Christ, False Prophets	False Prophets
4. Jesus the Splendour Judgment	Xradeshahr, Judgment
5. Separation, New Aeon, Hell	Separation, New Aeon,
6. Second Restoration, Ohrmazd	Second Restoration, Ohrmazd, Mihryazd
7. Ascent of Gods, Final Collapse	Ascent of Gods, Final Collapse
8. Great Fire - Prison	Great Fire – Prison
9. Final Statue, the Bolos, Prison	Final Statue(?) the Bolos, Prison
10. New Paradise and Kingdom of Light	

⁵ For a complete list of the eschatological fragments see D.N. MacKenzie, *Mani's Shâbuhragân*, in BSOAS, Vol. XLII, 1979 and Vol. XLIII, 1980. D.N. MacKenzie gives an overview of the status of the MSS concerning the eschatological fragments of the Shâbuhragân in his introduction to Mani's Shâbuhragân, I and Mani's Shâbuhragân II, in his edition in BSOAS.

⁶ H.J. Polotsky, *Manichäische Homilien. Manichäische Handschriften der Sammlung A. Chester Beatty*, Stuttgart 1934.

Third and final Restoration	
11. Father of Greatness : Unveiling of the Face	

3.3. Commentary

1. A threefold build-up of war and chaos, each time followed by a threefold restoration leads to the final achievement.⁷
2. As is the case with mixture, separation can be obtained only through a process of intensification of the ongoing dynamic. The dynamic of separation is to be defined as the reverse of the dynamic of mixture.
3. Frashgird, as the final condition of the two principles, occurs in the context of the threefold⁸ restoration throughout the process of separation and its final outcome.

4. *Frashgird in the eschatological fragments*

‘Then Xradeshahr (the god of the world of wisdom) –he who first (gave) that male creation, the original First Man (noxwîr, Adam), wisdom and knowledge and ((who)) afterwards from time to time and from ((age)) to age sent wisdom and knowledge to mankind- *in that last (age) close to the Renovation*, that Lord Xradeshahr, together with all the gods and the religious [exiled?]. . . will then stand [up?] in the [heavens] and a great call will resound and it will become known to the whole universe.’ (M 519 I line 17-28)

⁷ L. Koenen, ‘Manichaean Apocalypticism at the Crossroads of Iranian, Egyptian and Christian Thought’, in *Cologne .Mani Codex. Atti del Simposio Internazionale*, (Rende-Amantea 3-7 settembre 1984) a cura di L. Cirillo con la coll. di A. Roselli, Cosenza 1986, 285-332.

⁸ See diagram above: 2nd Coptic Homily 2, 6, 10 – Shâbuhragân 6.

-‘Then of the cosmos of earths and heavens [it will be] *the time of Renovation* and from the whole world they will cause [the dead] to go out and raise the religious up to [Paradise]...’ (M 482 I line 169 – 172)

‘[When ? it] is the *Restoration*, [then ? he will be] bound eternally in that prison (...)’ (M 537 a I line 43)

4.1. Commentary

These three quotations (being the only ones that can be attributed to the Shâbuhragân with certainty) have in common the notion of Frashgird having a direct connotation with the element of time.

- M 519 : ‘nzd’w prsh(q)[yrd]’ , nazdike frashgird.

The last age, close (‘nazdik’) to Frashgird, which means that Frashgird will come, as announced, immediately after that last age.

- M 482 : ‘prshqyrd zm’(n)’ , frashgird zaman’

The time of Frashgird is also announced here as a well-defined event.

- M 537 : *when ...then* : again the announcement of an event situated in time.([‘ k’ prsh]qyrd bwy[d’...) . The verb ‘bw’ meaning to become, to be.

5. *Paradise and New Paradise in the eschatological fragments*

Paradise (‘wahishtaw’) and New Paradise (wahishtaw-e nog’) are mentioned several times in the eschatological Shâbuhragân fragments. We have selected those fragments, where there is mention of both Frashgird and of the New World. From this context it becomes clear that Paradise, although it is to occur in the course of time, is not a time event itself, but a realm.

-‘Then of the cosmos of earths and heavens [it will be] the time of Renovation and from the whole world they will cause [the dead] to go out and raise the religious up to [Paradise] ...’ (M 482 I line 169 – 172)

‘And that New World and the prison of the demons, which the New-World-creating God forms, will be fixed [to] Paradise and made [fast]...’ (M 482 I line 180 – 184)

‘they (...) will stand on that structure of the New Paradise, around this conflagration.’ (M 497 b line 308)

5.1. Commentary

M 482 I line 169 – 172: In this fragment there is evidence of a clear distinction between Frashgird (Frashgird is announced as that which has a connection to *time*) and Paradise, which is a *place, a realm* to which the religious will be raised, to sit on their throne of Light. As used here, the term Paradise leaves unanswered the question of whether it is identical to the Kingdom of Light or a new realm that is to be created in the course of the final events. Naturally, we should not interpret ‘place’ too literally, because Paradise is at the same time a state of joy and bliss! See for instance: ‘And in *Paradise*, he becomes [joy] full’ (M v line 565) or ‘I will give you Paradise as a reward!’

M. 482 I line 180 – 184: Before the outburst of the Great Fire, the ‘*nog shahrpur yazd*’, the ‘New-World-creating God’ has already started constructing the ‘*shahr-y nog*’, the New World, together with a (new) prison for the demons. Although a New World (*shahr* meaning also ‘realm’, ‘region’) is announced, here Paradise is referred to without any distinction being made between the (old) Kingdom of Light and the New Paradise. But here too, there is evidence of a distinction between what is referred to as ‘Paradise’ and what is the creation of a God (‘*yazd*’) whose specific task it is to construct a New World. In both cases, Paradise and New World, we have to do with realms, not with time-events. This becomes even clearer when the New World has to be fixed to the Paradise (‘*hs’cyh’d*’ p. 510).

M 497: While the great fire is raging, the gods and the blessed ones are gathering around, standing on the New Paradise (‘*whysht’w ‘y nwg*’, ‘*wahishtaw-y nog*’)⁹. Here, there is clear mention of a New Paradise that is to be distinguished from

⁹ “They, together with their own (people) and (helpers) will stand on that structure of the new paradise”, MacKenzie 1979, 517.

Paradise as such. Moreover, there is written ‘on that structure’, which suggests that the New Paradise has been newly constructed.

6. The term ‘whole’, in the eschatological fragments

- ‘**May you not arise whole**’ (M 474 a I)
- ‘**They (‘i.e. the gods and their helpers), they too in Paradise will again become as whole (...)**’ (M 487 b (1) line 247-250)
- ‘ **[And when] you rise [again] whole**’ (M r line 536)
- ‘**[whole]ness...**’ (M 519 II line 10)

6.1. Commentary

Whole, dorust, ‘dryst’¹⁰ is closely connected to the instauration of Frashgird. If Frashgird is to be considered a specific manifestation at the end of time, then ‘whole’ or ‘wholeness’ is the result of Frashgird for the individual soul. Not to arise ‘whole’ means that - as an individual soul - one will not be part of Frashgird and will, therefore, have to remain ‘imprisoned’ after all the purified light has ascended to Paradise.

7. The role of time in the final events

- The process of separation, exactly as in the case of mixture, has to go through successive stages of a time process. Contrary to mixture, separation is a process of dissolution and dismantling. What has been mixed must now be disentangled. This is what is called ‘final events’.
- The final events represent an alternation between destruction and restoration.
- The final events are organized around a central pivot: *the final judgment*, with events announcing and preparing the final judgment and events as a follow-up of the final judgment.

¹⁰ ‘Dryst’ in Modern Farsi has become ‘dorust’, which means : right, correct, true. In the time of Mani, the term was also used in a welcome formula ‘dryst ‘wr’, drist away! See also Mary Boyce, Word-List p. 35

- The final judgment is preceded by the Great War and succeeded by the Great Fire.
- The final judgment is the factual separation between the two principles. The separation has now become a fact.
- After this central event, the separation still continues in order to complete the task. The final collapse of heavens and earths, the Great Fire and the final imprisonment of the remaining demons are the outcome of the ongoing separation process.
- At the same time, while the righteous ascend to Paradise, a New Paradise and a New World are created.
- The separation process has come to an end.

Summary

- a. From the coming of Xradeshahr to the final Judgment
- b. The final Judgment: the definite separation
- c. From the final judgment to the creation of a New World and a New Paradise

7.1. Commentary

As with the entire Manichaean system, the structure of the episode of separation represents a threefold characteristic of its own, with the final judgment at the centre of its unfolding. Frashgird is announced, but does not play an active role in the final events while the actors, as said earlier, are the two principles.

Due to the fragmentary condition of the MSS, it is not possible to determine with certainty the exact number of times the notion of Frashgird is mentioned in the

eschatological fragments. But each time it is mentioned there is emphasis on an event still to come, in the near future.¹¹

The conclusion is that Frashgird can only become manifest, after the separation has been accomplished. Frashgird has to do with time, but is not an event in the time process as such needed to accomplish the separation. As announced, it will come later on, but 'close to that last age'.

8. *The role of time in mixture and separation*

Both mixture and separation are part of clearly delineated phases in the process of interaction between the two principles. They represent distinct episodes in the framework of what is referred to as the 'three epochs' or 'three periods' formula, one of the key notions of the Manichaean doctrine. In respect of this concept, we can observe differences between, on the one hand, Iranian and Chinese sources and, on the other hand, Coptic sources. Gregor Wurst¹² in 'Zur Bedeutung der "Drei-Zeiten-Formel"' in den Koptisch-Manichäischen Texten von Medinet Madi' gives an overview of these differences in interpretation, including also some passages from the CMC .

In the Iranian tradition, the three periods are to be distinguished as follows:

Period I *Before the creation.*

The two principles are contiguous, but do not intermingle.

First Transition

Period II: *The creation of the cosmos and human being.*

The two principles are in the condition of being mixed.

¹¹ In fragment M 519? Frashgird is mentioned on the occasion of the coming of Xradeshahr : as a future event : 'in that last age, close to Frashgird'.

In fragment 482 I 'the time of Frashgird' is mentioned after the ascension of Xradeshahr , but again as a future event.

Fragment M 537 is still under discussion regarding its exact position in the Sh. MSS, but also there Frashgird is a future event.

¹² G. Wurst, 'Zur Bedeutung der "Drei-Zeiten"-Formel in den koptisch-manichäischen Texten von Medinet Madi', in: A. Kessler, T. Ricklin, G. Wurst (Hg.), *Peregrina Curiositas. Eine Reise durch den orbis antiquus* (NTOA 27), Freiburg, Göttingen 1994, 167-179.

Period III: *The creation of a New World and a New Paradise*

Second Transition

The two principles are in the condition of being separated.

There are two crucial events which occur at a particular moment during this process and which operate as a transition from the one epoch to the next.

First Transition: at the end of Period I.

The **first transition** occurs at the end of Period I and makes possible the transition to Period II. It is the assault of the forces of Darkness, followed by the sacrifice of Primeval Man and his descent into the Darkness. This gives way to the beginning of the mixture.

Second Transition: at the start of period III.

The **second transition** is the apparition of Xradeshahr, preceded by a great sign, at the start of period III. This initiates the transition to the separation actualized by the final judgment.

8.1. Commentary

In Period I, time did not exist. There was only duration or timelessness that was disrupted by the assault of the forces of Darkness (first transition).

In Period III, the coming of Xradeshahr (second transition) puts an end to the time-element. This appears to be directly related to the weakening of the power of Greed and Lust.

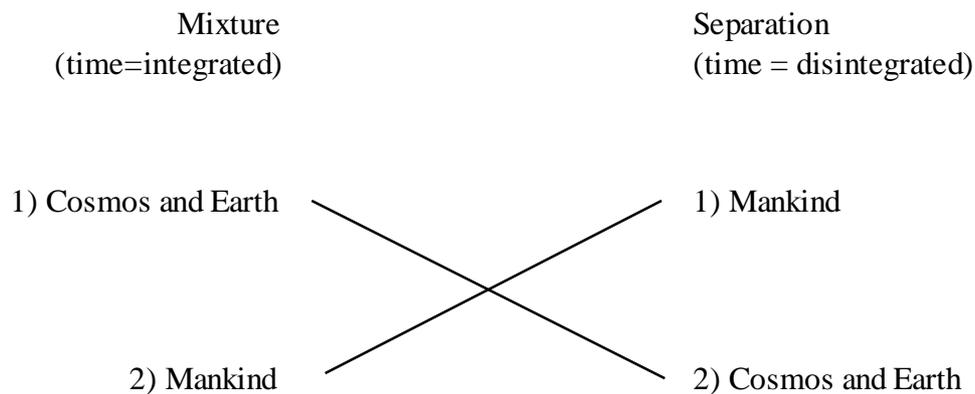
'And when god Xradeshahr will care for the world, then will day, month and year come to an end and weakness will befall Greed and Lust (...)' (M 477 I line 130-132)

8.2. Conclusion

This means that what is considered ‘the time-element of the created world ’ exists only between the first transition and the second transition. We could say that mixture, with all the violence and struggle that accompanies it, has the time-element as an accompanying phenomenon. Once the separation has started, this time-element gradually disappears.

The sequence of the events, as they occur in both the process of mixture and that of separation, mirror each other, but inversely! What takes place during mixture comes at the end during separation, and vice versa.

In the case of mixture, first heavens and earths are created and only at the end the first human being. In the case of separation, first there is the final judgment which means that within mankind a separation of the righteous and the evil-doers takes place. Only afterwards comes the final collapse of the entire cosmos with all the heavens and the earths.



9. *Frashegird* - Final Conclusions

9.1. Etymology of *Frashegird*¹³

‘*Frashegird*’ goes back to ‘*frasho-kereti*’ as it appears several times in the Avesta.¹⁴

¹³ ‘*frashygyrd, prshygyrd, [frashegird]* c. ‘end of the world’, Mary Boyce, *Acta Iranica, A Word-List of Manichaean Middle Persian and Parthian*, 40.

¹⁴ ‘Middle Persian *prsh(y)g/k/qyrd*, ‘die Erneuerung des ursprünglichen Zustandes der Welt durch Auflösung des aus den Himmeln und Erden bestehenden Kosmos’ (W.B. Henning,

‘May we be the ones that ‘renew’ existence!’ (Yasna 30.9). Frasho-kereti, literally the making (*kereti* from the root *k(a)r, to make and *frasho*: new, excellent, wonderful, ‘fresh’). The meaning of Frashgird is therefore: making new, making wonderful.

When MacKenzie (1979, p. 504, note 12) gives a status quaestionis of the different interpretations of this notion, he quotes, among others, W.B. Henning who defines Frashgird as follows: ‘die Erneuerung des ursprünglichen Zustandes der Welt durch Auflösung des aus den Himmeln und Erden bestehenden Kosmos’. MacKenzie, in the same note, quotes M. Molé who interpreted Frashgird as ‘Renovation’, and J.P. Asmussen and S. Inssler who understand *frasho*, as ‘whole’, this ‘frasho’ then being understood as the decisive element, for it denotes what ‘kereti’ is about, a ‘healthy integrum’.

There are, therefore, at least two key-elements that are essential to the meaning of ‘frasho’ in Frashgird: ‘to make new’ (Erneuerung, Renovation) and ‘to make whole’. These elements should be understood as complementary and as taking place simultaneously.

9.2. Frashgird and the initial state of the two principles

Frashgird will be realized after the process of separation has come to an end. If time is the element which becomes actualized between the start of mixture and the end of separation, it means that Frashgird is not part of the time process. In that way, it can be characterized as a state of being. Yet, as a state of being, it can only be understood as the outcome of what has preceded. Without the definite separation of the elements of light and darkness, Frashgird cannot occur. Therefore, Frashgird is not to be identified with the initial state of timelessness in which the two principles are still at rest. Because this initial state is to be situated before time appears, while Frashgird manifests itself after the time-element has ceased.

Mitteliranische Manichaica aus Chinesisch-Turkestan, I, Berlin 1932, 222) is a term taken directly from Zoroastrianism, Pahlavi *prshkrt*, Avestan *frasho-kereti*, literally, ‘making excellent’ (...) and M. Molé, *Culte Mythe et Cosmologie dans l’Iran Ancien*, Paris 1963, 34 ff on *frasha-*, and passim *fraskert*, ‘Renovation’. That, in the Manichaean interpretation [frashgird] means that everything becomes ‘healthy’, ‘integrum’ (= *frasha-*) (...) seems to conform with S. Inssler’s recent reinterpretation of G. Avestan *ferasha-* (...) ‘healed,’ ‘repaired’. (*the Gatha’s of Zarathustra*, (Acta Iranica 8, Teheran-Liège 1975, 172) in MacKenzie (1979) p. 503, note 13.

9.3. Frashgird and the new world order

What Frashgird renews and makes whole is not the world, in the sense of the created world, but the world order itself! The created world is the outcome of the process of mixture and we have seen that Frashgird is outside both this process and the process of separation. There is no indication that the renewal concerns any kind of restoration of the initial state of the two principles.

On the contrary, we have to do with a *new* world order which can be made explicit by the striking image of a set of concentric circles. In the centre is the prison or the ‘bolos’ in which the beings of Darkness are imprisoned. Around this centre are organized the New Aeon, the New Paradise and the Kingdom of Light, enclosing, as it were, the Darkness in their midst.

9.4. Frashgird and the final status of the two Principles

Frashgird brings about a new situation. Now that the two principles are separated, their essential nature is more manifest than ever. The principles remain opposed, but on different grounds. While in their initial status they were opposed because of their inherent nature (order versus chaos), now they are opposed due to their changed condition (bliss versus bondage). But what has changed in the most radical way is their position vis-à-vis one another.

Before the period of mixture started, sharing one border, there was a situation of contiguity. After the period of separation ended, hell (or the eternal prison) is encircled by the renewed Kingdom of Light. The final status of the two Principles is in every aspect different from their initial status.

This proves once more that Frashgird does not mean a return to the old order and even less the destruction of the existing world, for the collapse of heavens and earths takes place during the period of separation, i.e. before Frashgird.

	Period I	Period III
Opposed:	By their inherent nature Order – Chaos etc...	By their transformed condition Bliss - Bondage etc...
Separated:	Two distinct realms One boundary adjacent	Two distinct realms Heaven encircling Hell

The struggles that have taken place, even the Great War, do not result in a victory of the one principle (in this case the principle of Light) over the other! For the principle of Darkness subsists at the outcome of the period of separation. It is still there. A ‘military’ reading of the Manichaean myth with armies, combat and the final destruction of one of the two enemies, all too frequent in the polemical writings, does not bring about any deeper understanding. The struggle between the two principles is not so much an account of a battle as of a profound change in their respective substance and relationship. The expressions borrowed from military strategy should be read in the context of a transformation, not as a report from the battlefield! Often when military expressions are used, a profound transformation in the condition and the relationship between the beings of the Kingdom of Light and those of the Kingdom of Darkness is at stake. Combat and war are part of a ‘mystery’.¹⁵ It is this transformation, rather than a victory of the one over the other, that is at stake. The true outcome of this long sequence of struggles, from period to period, is the renewal. *Frashegird is the real victory of the Kingdom of Light.*

9.5 Frashegird and the renewal of the two principles.

The Light as a substance, i.e. the essence (*essentia*) of a Being throughout the evolving dramatic episodes, has become more truly itself than it was at the beginning before the interference of the powers of Darkness. At the outcome of the final stages of Separation, the Light is able to create a New Paradise out of the ‘ruins’ of the old world order. But also the principle of Darkness has become more truly itself and, ultimately, reveals its nature of subjection, of bondage (the prison). As long as mixture was the reigning condition, neither Light nor Darkness could fully manifest their essential being. The outcome of the separation, with all the cataclysms it has caused, is that both Light and Darkness can finally manifest themselves in their true nature. In their initial state, the two Principles were so to speak ‘dormant’. They did not reveal their true being. After the separation has come to an end, and the time of

¹⁵ In the Kephalaia, 15, Mani teaches his disciples in the following way: ‘Hr (the Paraclete) revealed to me (...) the mystery of combat and of War (...), quoted by H.J.W. Drijvers, in ‘Conflict and Alliance in Manichaeism, *Struggles of Gods*, ed. H.Kippenberg, with H.J.W. Drijvers & Y. Kuiper, Berlin 1984, 101-102

Frashegird has come, the two Principles reveal their true nature. This is the result of Frashgird as a 'renewal'.

Light and Darkness, maintaining their initial dualist nature after having been mixed, now resurge even more distinct, due to the transformational effect of Frashgird. The more the divine light elements are liberated and gather in a move of elation and blissful joy, corresponding to their renewed state, the more the demonic powers are compressed ('squeezed') and bound into themselves, weakened and deprived of the power they could exercise during the time of mixture.

10. *Summary*

1. Frashgird creates a new (and final) world order in which the two principles, each according to its essential being, can manifest who they are (renewal) and thus occupy the 'place' which corresponds to this final manifestation of their being.
2. The renewed world order is nothing less than a transfiguration, a 'Wiedergeburt' of the former one.
3. When Frashgird has come about, the two principles prove to be what they have always been throughout all three periods: two 'essences' or 'ousiai', each with its own nature and distinct from one another.
4. The two principles, as the main actors of the three periods, are, due to their changing interaction, also the 'motor' of those periods and their successive dynamics.
5. Mani's dualist vision is ontological: the two principles are 'essences' or beings.
6. Mani's dualist vision is radical: throughout the entire process, from the old to the new world order, the two principles, as the main actors, remain in opposition to each other, notwithstanding their changing role. During the period of mixture as well as during the period of separation, each of them has a different task to fulfill. Their actions remain conform to their task - which leads them through successive stages, but keeps their radical opposition intact .

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